

CHAPTER TEN

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

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

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

PREVIEWING IN OUTLINE FORM

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10:1-4

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

- V. Jesus Rewards Those Who Welcome His Servants (Mt. 10:40-42)
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Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE
APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

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

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

TEXT: 10:1-4

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

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

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

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

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

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUMMARY

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

NOTES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LISTS OF THE APOSTLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Alexander Maclaren, *PHC*, 246)

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

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

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

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

FACT QUESTIONS

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

SPECIAL STUDY

THE SUPREMACY OF PETER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

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

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

TEXT: 10:5-15

A. THEIR WORDS AND WORKS

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

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

B. THEIR EQUIPMENT AND CONDUCT

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

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

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

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

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

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

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

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

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

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

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

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

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

SUMMARY

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

NOTES

I. A PARTICULAR ZONE FOR A PARTICULAR PERIOD

(10:5, 6)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. A PARTICULAR MESSAGE FOR A PARTICULAR PERIOD.

(10:7)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why is this inquiry important? Three reasons suggest themselves:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To lie in sin and thus to perish is bad;

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

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

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

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

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

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

FACT QUESTIONS

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

CHAPTER TEN

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

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE
APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

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

TEXT: 10:16-31

A. PERSECUTION BY THE STATE "CHURCH"

(10:16, 17)

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

B. PERSECUTION BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT

(10:18)

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

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

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

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

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

E. PRUDENCE IN PERSECUTION (10:23)

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

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

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

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

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

2. BECAUSE OF THE RIGHT REVERENCE

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

3. BECAUSE OF THE CARE OF THE CREATOR

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

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

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

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

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUMMARY

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

NOTES

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

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

A. A GENERAL WARNING (10:16)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The following admonition sharpens this wariness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10:19 But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It may be helpful to note these similarities:

Mt. 10:22, 23

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

But he who endures to the end will be saved.

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

before the Son of man comes.

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

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

Mt. 24:9b-14

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

10 And then many will fall away

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

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

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

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

And then the end will come.

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

F. PRUDENCE IN PERSECUTION (10:23)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. THE RIGHT REVERENCE (10:28)

Right after picturing nothing better than "blood, sweat and

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

10:28 And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Those that kill the body is the way Jesus labels the enemy, and his disciples cannot miss the implication. Jesus spares no words now as He bares the horrible reality that lurks just ahead for His people! The early Christians, along with their thrilling stories of heroic martyrs, also honestly remember those black days for the Church when fear of physical death tempted many to deny any relationship with their Lord. But the fearful torments and horrible death to which the persecutors can put the human body are not to be permitted to dim the disciple’s view of God! Jesus wants His men to be able, even in the very face of their tormentors and murderers, to look up and see Him who is invisible, the real Governor and Judge of the universe. (Cf. Heb. 11:27) Their loyalty to Him and their even more painful awareness of His judgment, despite their seemingly endless pain, affliction and brutal death, are to hold them firm. (Cf. 2 Co. 4:7-

12, 16—5:11a; see how Paul develops this motif further.) How different is the ring of these words of Jesus from those frightened excuses of those moral cowards who would try to justify the committing of any sin, merely in order to have one's life! This is the kind of challenge that appeals to real men and contains within itself ample motive for enduring whatever suffering must be faced for Jesus' sake!

Right at the very heart of this bloody description of apparent defeat for the Christians is another bold declaration that guarantees victory for the man who accepts the presuppositions on which it is based. Those **that kill the body . . . are not able to kill the soul!** The presuppositions will be discussed later. Luke (12:4b), on another occasion, includes the victorious shout of the Christian, even while gasping his last: ". . . after these things, they **HAVE NO MORE THAT THEY CAN DO.**" Matthew's word is just as forceful: "**They CANNOT KILL THE SOUL.**" The frustrated murderers stand helpless before a broken hunk of human clay! Their prey has escaped beyond their grasp: the Christian witness has just been introduced into the presence of his King! But, mark, it is Jesus who makes this declaration, and it is Jesus who showed how to make it work. Morgan (*Matthew*, 109) puts it beautifully:

There is no utterance more vibrant with victory. . . . Presently this King went to the Cross without faltering, without flinching, with regal bearing, so that the man who condemned Him look for all time mean and contemptible in His presence.

The presuppositions involved in Jesus' demand cry out for examination, since He who created man (Jn. 1:3) and knows what is in man (Jn. 2:25) is making a clear pronouncement on human psychology, which at such a critical moment in the service of His servants, i.e. when they face trials, persecution and death for Him, must not be merely nice theory. Jesus must express something here that is fundamental to the very essence of humanity, if He would provide any real comfort to suffering disciples. Jesus states without explanation that **the soul** (*psychē*), as over against **the body** (*sōma*) is a reality to be reckoned with. Death separates **the soul** from **the body**, since persecutors and murderers were powerless to damage **the soul**. On the other hand, God could certainly touch the psyche, bringing both it and the (resurrected) body into judgment and condemn the whole man! (Cf. Jn. 5:24-29; Rev. 20:11-15; Ac. 24:15) Out of this information arise several important conclusions:

1. Man is not merely an animal, although his mammalian body certainly shares many characteristics with animals. The destiny of his psyche is not enmeshed with that of his body. (It is the other way around, Ro. 8:23) Therefore his morality must not be that of an animal morality devolving into "civilized bestiality." His psyche certainly lives in the body and is definitely influenced to a certain extent by it. (See I Pet. 2:11; 4:1-6; Gal. 5:17, 24; Ro. 6:1—8:39) But Jesus' demand (and the Apostolic theology of the NT backs Him up) is that man's psyche is that part of man which makes the decisions, hence is responsible to God. (Cf. Mt. 10:39; 16:24-27; Lk. 12:20; Rev. 6:9; 20:4; 2 Co. 5:10; Ro. 13:11-14)
2. Man's soul, contrary to the views of many, has real existence beyond the grave, and after the resurrection of the just and unjust (Jn. 5:28, 29) must stand whole, body and soul reunited, before his Maker to give account. And in this state God will destroy those fearful recreants who denied Jesus.

It is fruitless to speculate whether God intends to annihilate the wicked after their judgment ("destroy the soul and body in gehenna,") since many clear texts and single Greek words (like *apòllumi*, *apoleia*, *olethros*) solve the problem by stating in unequivocal language what the fate of the wicked shall be after a few billion years more or less. However, we must remember that human language is a very limited tool for describing the exact nature of the fate of the wicked, since that is not an experience which is common enough to humans to require words to express it. Even the best of human language to express this is figurative, since we have not experiences of infinity (boundless space) or eternity (endless time) or hell (endless punishment). So, every word God has used to warn us of the latter is a word borrowed from the usual human vocabulary, invented to describe the experiences we do have. (See below on "Gehenna" and compare the same figurative use of language to describe heavenly realities, Rev. 21, 22.)

So what the Scriptures actually do produce is a *picture* of what the fate of the wicked will be *like*. Just as the reality of God's plans for the saved will

be better than any word-picture He has drawn of it, so the reality of God's punishment for the wicked can be worse than any terms He has used to describe it.

Even if annihilation were the actual meaning of the Bible language, this offers no hope in any way to the sinner who hopes to have his way in this life, dash through God's judgment on his way out past a short period of punishment for his misdeeds, after which he just fades out into a blissful non-existence. There is no hope even in what the human sinner thinks will be "non-existence," since God is able to punish him even in that state which human beings describe as "non-existence." How? Even if God had used the word "non-existence" or "annihilation," it does not follow that the sinner fully understands the objective reality God is describing by that term, any better than he understands "inextinguishable fire" or "undying worms." (Cf. Mt. 3:12; Mk. 6:48)

In an excellent article that presents the view held by this author, James Orr (*ISBE*, 2501-2504), after giving practically unassailable Scriptural evidence for the view that the finally unrepentant will be eternally punished, still remarks:

While dogmatisms like the above (i.e. universal salvation, annihilation and second probation, HEF), which seem opposed to Scripture, are to be avoided, it is equally necessary to guard against dogmatisms of an opposite kind, as if eternity must not, in the nature of the case, have its undisclosed mysteries of which we here in time can frame no conception. The difficulties connected with the ultimate destinies of mankind are truly enormous, and no serious thinker will minimize them. Scripture does not warrant it in negative, any more than in positive, dogmatisms; with its uniformly practical aim, it does not seek to satisfy an idle curiosity (cf. Lk. 13:23, 24). Its language is bold, popular, figurative, intense; the essential idea is to be held fast, but what is

said cannot be taken as a directory to all that is to transpire in the ages upon ages of an unending duration. God's methods of dealing with sin in the eternities may prove to be as much above our present thoughts as His dealings now are with men in grace. In His hands we must be content to leave it, only using such light as His immediate revelation yields.

For further notes on the punishment of the wicked, see below.

3. Another important conclusion that comes out of this revelation of the dual nature of man is the realization that Jesus is challenging to the very core His disciples' real acceptance of the existence of the spirit world. In the most emphatic way the Lord is demanding that they decide immediately whether they believe in His dual-sided world view with its immediate, tangible, physical world so near at hand, and its invisible, apparently distant world of the spirit. This contrast will become even sharper as well as more evident later (vv. 32, 33): "men (here on earth)" versus "my Father who is in heaven."

But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Here again the Master puts the real faith of His people to the test by probing their grasp of this reality: "You stand, not before the judgment of human persecutors but before the bar of God!" (see on vv. 32, 33) He is sounding out the firmness of their real convictions about future, hence seemingly unreal, events. He does this, because He knows there is nothing so anchoring to the soul as a sound eschatology. **But rather fear him.** There is nothing basically wrong with being afraid, since God Himself created in us this drive to self-protection, of which fear is the emotional expression. The burning question is, then, not whether we should fear or not, but of WHOM should we be afraid, of dying men or of the living God? Bruce (*Training*, 114) reminds us that "the wisdom of the serpent lies in knowing what to fear."

That we may assume that **him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell** is God, and not Satan, is proved by the observation that, while "the tempter . . . is him who, when one is in danger, whispers, Save thyself at any sacrifice of principle or conscience," (Bruce, *Training*, 115), Satan is not the ultimate reality, not the final Judge with whom we have to do. It is true that his con-ning results in getting men *destroyed in hell*, but he himself will

suffer the same fate at the hands of the living God against whom he has led the human rebellion. (Rev. 20:10-15) So it is God who executes the sentence mentioned here and thus must be feared. Plummer (*Luke*, 319) is right to observe that "we are not in Scripture told to fear Satan, but to resist him courageously (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9); . . . 'Fear God and resist the devil' is scriptural doctrine."

But is **fear** a proper motive for ethical conduct? Jesus thinks so and does not hesitate to produce it in any disciple who is tempted to be disloyal. With so much at stake as the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and the salvation of men, especially the soul of the Christian witness himself, Jesus must appeal to the strongest motivation possible. Lenski (*Matthew*, 410) writes:

By the fear of God (He would) drive out the fear of men. . . . This is not childlike fear, the motive of filial obedience, but the terrifying fear of God's holy burning wrath which would strike us if we yielded to the fear of men and denied His Word and His will, Ps. 90:11; Mt. 3:7. This is the fear which really belongs to the enemies of God and Christ, the fear from which they try to hide by their self-deception, which yet will at last overwhelm them. It is really not to touch the disciple's heart save as a last extremity when nothing else will keep him true.

This is not a slavish fear, based only on the conviction of God's sheer power to destroy, a conviction bare of any sense of His love or justice. It is rather a fear of God because He is right. Our deep sense of the sheer holiness of God will not only deepen our fear that God will punish us, but it strengthens our fear that we should grieve His love. Here is a paradox: He teaches us to fear, that we might be fearless! The explanation: the man who fears God has nothing else to fear. Yes, fear is a worthy motive for ethical conduct. Bruce (*Training*, 114) points out that "there are two kinds of deaths, one caused by the sword, the other by unfaithfulness to duty." In so saying, he puts his finger on the menace of "the second death." (Cf. Rev. 20:11-15) Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 400) carries the thought further:

There are things which are worse than death; and disloyalty is worse than death. If a man is guilty of disloyalty, if he buys security at the expense of dishonour, life is no longer tolerable. He cannot face men; he cannot face himself; and ultimately he cannot face God. There are times when comfort, safety, ease, life itself can cost too much.

The most cruel persecution is child's play compared with falling into the hands of the living God! (Heb. 10:26-39) While fear is not the highest motive for ethical conduct and granted that love and a sense of duty should be the driving force that keeps a Christian faithful under fire, Jesus meets His disciples where they might be at their weakest. He says, "If you must fear, fear God!" (For the other side of the question, see my article "The Reasonableness of the Redeemer's Rewards for Righteousness," *Matthew*, I, 198-201.)

Destroy both soul and body in hell. Hell here is not a literal translation of Jesus' word, but it is a good paraphrase of His meaning. Jesus said "*Gebenna*," and, in so doing, illustrated perfectly the state of our knowledge (or better: our ignorance) of the spirit-world just beyond this life, as well as illustrating what is meant by the word "revelation." As stated above, we do not have any absolutely correct or even adequate concept of "hell," so anything God (or Jesus here) wants to say about His punishment of the wicked, He must reduce to human concepts, language and thought-forms. That is, He wants us to understand something significant about it; otherwise, He could "tell it the way it is" and still leave us in the dark about its nature, because of our inability to understand such profound concepts. Jesus makes a passing reference to a place where God destroys people, "*in Gebenna*," (*en geénnē*). Though *Gebenna* is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew *Gē-Hinnom*, "valley of Hinnom," referring to a ravine south of Jerusalem, its literal meaning has little to do with eternal divine wrath. But every time the word is used in the NT it designates the place of eternal punishment of the wicked. (See Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43; 45, 47; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6) How *Gebenna* came to mean *hell* is not so important at this point as the fact that it DOES mean it.

Two causes are offered to explain this use of the "valley of Hinnom" as the technical designation for the place of final punishment. This valley of Jerusalem has been the zone near Jerusalem where the abominable worship of Molech was perpetrated (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Ch. 28:3; 33:6). Due to this practice, when these repulsive idolatries were abolished by King Josiah (2 Kg. 23:10), the zone was defiled. Later Jeremiah (7:32; 19:1-13), in reference to this defiled area, prophesied that all Jerusalem would be so defiled. Refuse of all kinds, even human carcasses, was cast into this area, making it the garbage dump of the city. Fires were kept

burning to consume the rubbish. Gesenius (*Lexicon*, 872) takes "Topheth" as signifying a "place of burning (the dead)," and even "place of graves," although he admits that many commonly derive the word from a "place to spit upon," i.e. abhorred. However, since this place appears to have borne this name among even idolaters themselves, he prefers "a place of burning." It is this meaning that causes Isaiah to use the word *Topheth* metonymically of the burning place for the King of Assyria. The idea of Gehenna, or valley of Hinnom in which the Topheth was located, as a type of Hell seems to be derived by making a symbolic name from the above passages and from the horrible practices that took place in this valley. The continual burning of the garbage there may have also rendered the name synonymous with extreme defilement. (See *ISBE*, 1183, 1371; Edersheim, *Life*, I, 550, 551; II, 280, 281) The passage from earthly and temporal defilement in a place notorious for human sin and suffering, to the place where the wicked would be finally and eternally punished, then, becomes a natural step.

The point is that Jesus, in attempting to reveal to us what we cannot otherwise know or even imagine about the garbage dump of the universe, makes use of a well-known word that conveys to the Jewish mind all the abhorrence, defilement, pain and suffering associated with *Gehenna*, the garbage dump of Jerusalem. But this offal heap will be like no other destruction we have ever known, since its character is also like a "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14), "eternal fire" (Mt. 18:8); a "furnace of fire" (Mt. 13:42) and yet with all the light one usually associates with fire, the same place is called "outer darkness!" (Mt. 8:12), a place where men "gnash their teeth," even though they have been toothless for years. In order to form a clear idea about the revelation Jesus has given of the ultimate fate of the unrepentant, consult the following pertinent passages: Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:8, 9; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47, 48; Lk. 12:5; Mt. 23:15, 33; 8:12; 13:41, 42; 22:13; 25:41, 46; Jas. 3:6; Lk. 16:22-24, 28; Jude 12, 13; Rev. 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8; 2 Th. 1:6-9. Two excellent articles on the question are Foster's "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning Hell," (*The Final Week*, 102-119) and Orr's article "Punishment" in *ISBE*, 2501ff.

What a motive for endurance! Those who have put God in His rightful place in their scheme of things and fully understood what this must mean to them in the moment of trial before human tor-

mentors, have nothing more serious to fear than death from them. But those who have not settled this one fundamental question, or who have settled it wrongly, must necessarily find themselves prey to the usual human terrors and die a thousand times before their deaths. (Cf. Isa. 8:11-15; I Pet. 3:14; Heb. 13:6; Rev. 2:10)

3. THE CARE OF THE CREATOR (10:29-31)

Here is Jesus' next motive for steadfastness despite all that man can contrive. God is not merely the Judge before whom the disciples must stand: He is **your Father**, and, with this word that evokes all of the encouraging, comforting power of that relationship, the Lord excites all the unyielding incorruptible allegiance that family pride can demand. Here is the perfect mixture of a proper fear of the Lord nicely balanced with a confident love for the Father. Jesus is not satisfied to place before His people only the sterile fear of a critical Judge. Nor can He permit His children to conceive of Him as an indulgent "great Buddy in the skies," who has only endless love and requires nothing from those selfish monsters who would call themselves His people.

10:29 **Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?** Jesus' use of *ouchi* instead of *mē*, indicates that He expected His listeners to agree that this was the going price on these seemingly insignificant birds, incidentally informing us that **sparrows** were an article of commerce. *ISBE* (2839) comments: "This is a reference to the common custom of the East of catching small birds, and selling them to be skinned, roasted and sold as tid-bits—a bird to a mouthful." **And not one of them shall fall on the ground**, whether caught in a trap (cf. Ps. 91:3; 124:7; Prov. 6:5) or killed, **without your Father's** "knowledge and consent" (*àneu toú patròs humòn*, Arndt-Gingrich, 64). **Not one of them:** this is a bit more expressive than "none of them" taken in a collective sense, even though, ultimately, the general meaning is the same. This throws the emphasis upon the one bird: "Not even one of them," though many of them could be bought for little. The bird-seller in the market would cry "Two sparrows for one thin copper coin! Today five birds for the price of four, with one thrown into the bargain!" (Cf. Lk. 12:6) This means that even the odd sparrow, the one thrown in for good measure, is dear to God. Luke has "Not one of them is forgotten before God." Jesus could not have made it any plainer that each and every bird is individually present in God's mind when it dies. This will be driven home when He makes His application in verse 31.

Your Father is a far different concept from "the Creator of sparrows," as far different as the emotional impact that it makes. (See notes on 6:26, 32, Vol. I) While assuring us of God's omniscience, the Savior intimates that our Father not only knows such detailed information as the fall of sparrows, but feels and cares about us.

10:30 **But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.** Several commentators have insisted upon the difference between "counting" hairs and "numbering" them. Does the Greek word *arithméo* justify this distinction?

1. If so, then perhaps Morgan (*Matthew*, 110) is right in saying, Jesus said God *numbers* them. Counting is a human process. Numbering is more than counting. It is attaching a value to every one, almost labeling each; a far more wonderful thing than counting.

Or, as Lenski (*Matthew*, 412) has it:

Jesus says that each hair is not only counted as one but has its own number and is thus individually known and distinguished. So if any one hair is removed, God knows precisely which one it is.

2. However, Arndt-Gingrich (105) translate *arithméo* simply "count," which, in relation to the practical insignificance of human hairs in the universe, may merely affirm that Jesus' expression is but a proverbial expression, without intending to affirm that God spends His time operating a current file on the past, present and future vicissitudes of hairs! (Cf. I Sam. 14:45; 2 Sam. 14:11; Lk. 21:18; Ac. 27:34)

Thus, in these two parallel illustrations, Jesus advances His argument from God's interest and care about relatively minute things outside us, to God's care for minutiae connected with us. The smaller the object used as a basis of comparison, the less its value, the greater is the force of Jesus' argument: God knows what is happening to His children, and He knows how to care for them. This puts muscle into the demand the Lord had made earlier that the Apostles go out without what would seem to be absolutely necessary provisions. (10:9, 10)

10:31 **Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.** This deliberate understatement is similar to another: "If your Father notes the fall of the tiniest sparrow, do you suppose He could somehow miss a Boeing 747?" (Cf. Mt. 12:12)

Not only is man so much larger than a sparrow, and consequently would be more obvious visible to the gaze of God, but also man is of so much more consequence to God than any number of other creatures. But Jesus is not describing the importance of His Twelve Apostles alone, so much as He is pointing to the excelling importance of any disciple. (Cf. Lk. 12:6, 7)

Fear not therefore. This admonition connects this lovely picture of the love of God, with the horrible revelations of the uncertainties and the unknowns in the disciples' future, mentioned earlier. But this is just the point: God's concern for and care of His people is not just "pie in the sky by and by," but practical strengthening, comfort and provision in the present. **Fear**, then, is SIN and punishable in hell. The list of hell's inmates has "the cowardly, the timid, those without faith" at the top of the list! (Rev. 21:8) This is because **fear** presupposes that God is somehow paying no attention to our needs or else our plight could somehow escape His notice. **Fear** would even blame God for appearing not to care about us or feel our weakness or pain. **Fear** would hold that the mere mechanics of running the universe, a task suitable for an omnipotent and omniscient Being, could occupy the entire attention of Him who created man for His own fellowship! To this Jesus cries: "No! Your care, your needs, your struggles, your suffering—YOU are of more value to God than any combination of intricate or minute details involved in steering the stars or spotting sparrows!" What a motive for enduring faithfully whatever may come! Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 402) puts it so well:

God's love for men is seen not only in the omnipotence of creation and the great events of history; it is also seen in the day-to-day nourishment of the bodies of men. (Cf. Psa. 136, esp. v. 25) The courage of the King's messenger is founded on the conviction that, whatever happens, he cannot drive beyond the love and care of God. He knows that his times are forever in God's hands; that God will not leave him nor forsake him; that he is surrounded for ever by the care of God. And if this is so—of whom then shall we be afraid?

Is it possible to imagine, much less actually meet, the man who was in want, because he had trusted God too much and gave too much to Christ and His work? Even if that man loses every possession he ever owned and actually were wondering where his next meal were coming from, would he consider himself in want, so great is his love

for and dependence upon God? Jesus takes man's other responsibilities into consideration elsewhere (see notes on Mt. 6:19-34), so He is not encouraging indolence at all. Rather, the commands in this context require that the disciple work to the limit of his capacity as if everything depended upon his achievement, and God will provide his needs, since, ultimately, everything depends upon God.

FACT QUESTIONS

1. Explain the figures of speech involved in this section, showing to what Jesus referred by each figure: "sheep," "wolves," "serpents," "doves."
2. Name several occasions upon which the very things predicted in this passage actually took place in the life and ministry of the people regarding whom Jesus was here speaking. Show how they responded in splendid obedience to Jesus' instructions.
3. List the specific instructions Jesus gave whereby the disciples were psychologically prepared to avoid anxiety.
4. What does Jesus mean by the expression: "It is not you that speak but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you"?
5. To the end of what must the disciples endure?
6. Explain why the disciples were to flee to another city when they were not received in one city.
7. List some of the various explanations offered for the phrase: "till the Son of man be come," and then give your reasons why you accept the interpretation you do.
8. Explain what Jesus meant by the reference to students and teachers, servants and lords. How does this reference advance His argument?
9. Define the word "Beelzebul" and explain its reference in this context.
10. Explain the reference to revealing what has been covered or hid. About what part of the disciples' ministry was Jesus talking? Was this a promise or a threat, an encouragement or a warning, or both?
11. How did people account for the miracles of Jesus? How did others account for the miraculous phenomenon seen among the Apostles at Pentecost?
12. What is Jesus' meaning in His argument about who has real power to destroy both soul and body?
13. To whom does Jesus refer when He describes someone who can destroy both body and soul in hell?

10:32-39

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

14. In this serious discussion involving the life and death questions touching the survival of His disciples, what is the point of the reference to the price of sparrows?
15. In what other connections had Jesus used His argument based on the value of sparrows and the exact count of hairs on one's head? What is the underlying connection in each case that makes this a pithy proverb expressing a great truth?
16. Does the expression "destroy both soul and body in hell" refer to total annihilation of the wicked or those who deny Christ, or is this merely a vivid expression describing eternal punishment? On what basis do you answer as you do?
17. Give a short summary of the biblical teaching on the subject of "hell." In so doing, explain the reference to "Gehenna."
18. State the declarations in this text that suggest or openly emphasize Jesus' divine authority.

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE
APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

IV. JESUS REQUIRES AND REWARDS
LOYALTY OF HIS SERVANTS

TEXT: 10:32-39

A. THE SUPREME HONOR FOR LOYALTY (10:32)

32. Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.

B. THE SUPREME DISGRACE FOR DISLOYALTY
OR COWARDICE (10:33)

33. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

C. THE INEVITABLE ENMITIES INVOLVED IN
LOYALTY TO JESUS (10:34-36)

34. Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to

35. send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the
36. daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

D. THE SECRET OF SUCCESS THROUGH
SACRIFICE AND SURRENDER (10:37-39)

37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
38. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not
39. worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. This revelation of "blood, sweat and tears," of trial, suffering and death must have been very discouraging to Jesus' disciples as He sent them out. Yet Jesus considered this revelation absolutely necessary to the adequate accomplishment of their mission. Can you show several reasons why He would have predicted these painful pictures? This is surely no way to hold one's disciples, is it? Would this tactic win friends and influence people today? Why?
- b. In what way do you think Jesus had in mind that the disciples would be "confessing Him before men"? Under what sort of circumstances would they be doing this? Sometimes this passage is cited to indicate the necessity for a public declaration of one's willingness to follow Christ, a declaration which is made before the congregation of believers at the conclusion of a Sunday morning gathering for worship. Is this what Jesus had in mind? if so, how could such an application be justified? If not, why not? How does such an application fit the antithesis: "denying Him before men"?
- c. Have you ever denied Jesus before men since becoming His disciple? Be honest now. How, when, where and why did you do it? What encouragement do you find in this text that strengthens you against repeating that sin?
- d. Do you think it would have been better or worse for Jesus' disciples (you included) had Jesus not told this bitter truth about the consequences of being persecuted as His disciple? Why?

- e. Do you think that the Prince of Peace can be telling the truth when He denies that His purpose was to bring peace on earth? Did not the angels shout the news from heaven that Jesus' birth meant peace? How, then, can Jesus expect us to believe that His purpose for coming to earth was not to bring peace, but, rather, a sword? What kind of peace does Jesus reject and what kind of sword does He bring?
- f. Some think that Jesus did not intend to bring a sword to earth, that it was not His *purpose*, but only the *result* of His work. Do you agree? If so, on what basis? If not, why not?
- g. Do you think that it is right to go around splitting up families over religion? If so, then how do you understand the most basic of all commandments to "honor your father and mother" and similar commands regarding family care? If not, then how do you justify Jesus' avowed purpose to set members of the same family against each other?
- h. Do you think that Jesus knew from personal experience what He was here declaring, regarding "enemies in one's own home"? What makes you say this?
- i. Is there anyone really "worthy of" Jesus? Then, what does Jesus mean by declaring that anyone who does not make the necessary sacrifices is "not worthy of me"?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

"So every one who stands up and acknowledges that he is my disciple, I will gladly own him as my own in front of the great Judge, my Father in heaven. But I will repudiate before God anyone who either is afraid to stand up for me in front of men or else publicly denies being my disciple.

"You must never suppose that my mission is to bring peace on earth at any price. In fact, that kind of peace is impossible. My mission is rather to separate the wicked from the truly righteous, but this is going to cause trouble. I will not have peace at the expense of truth! Allegiance to me is going to cause, for example, a man to be set against his own father or a daughter against her own mother! A young wife will go against her mother-in-law. A fellow will find enemies right under his own roof!

"No one who cares more for his father or his mother than he does for me deserves to belong to me! The same is true of the man who holds his son or daughter dearer to him than he does me: he does not deserve to belong to me! Likewise the man who refuses to be

crucified, because he is walking in my footsteps, is not fit to be called my disciple! If you hold your own life dear, I can guarantee you that you will lose it. But the man who will let himself be killed for MY sake, saves his life forever!

SUMMARY

You, my disciples, do not stand before the judgment seat of Herod or imperial Rome: you stand before the judgment throne of the living God! You must decide now how it will fare with you then: I will own or disown you as my disciples before God, on the basis of your allegiance or disloyalty here on earth. This choice is not a simple one, because it is going to rearrange all your present loyalties. You will have to decide whether your family is to come first, ahead of your loyalty to me. This choice may lead you to your death, but remember: the prudent are damned! He who is willing to give up everything he holds dear—even his own life—just to please me, will be able to secure the only life that is worth living! But decide, and decide now.

NOTES

A. THE SUPREME HONOR FOR LOYALTY (10:32)

10:32 **Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men**, is the broad, general introduction to this audacious declaration of Jesus' regal authority. This dictum has to do with disciples in general. Its universal character becomes immediately clear if we artificially insert the word "apostle," so as to make the sentence apply only to the Twelve. While the Apostles themselves certainly and rightly took this admonition personally, nevertheless, its very general character is not only very apparent, but is also in perfect harmony with the more comprehensive tone of this entire concluding section (Mt. 10:24-42; see on 10:24). **Therefore** neatly links this marvelous promise to the warnings, the gentle coaxing, the facing of unpleasant realities and the challenges Jesus has just put before His people in the earlier minutes of this sermon. This is the logical conclusion especially of the demand that the disciple be absolutely fearless. (Cf. 10:19, 26, 28, 31)

While it would seem most appropriate to consider the word *oun*, here translated *therefore*, in this inferential sense, i.e. drawing a conclusion in relation to statements made before, yet the suggestion of Dana and Mantey (*Manual Grammar*,

255, 256) that *oun* here has an emphatic or intensive use, is not without merit. Some suggestive translations they would substitute for *therefore* are: "be sure that . . . , to be sure, surely, by all means, indeed, etc." Try inserting these words in place of *therefore* to feel the emphasis thus produced. However, despite the good examples adduced by Mantey, it may yet be wondered in Matthew's sentence here whether Jesus is not rather drawing a proper conclusion to all the precedes. If, then, *oun* may well have this special emphatic force, all the better for its ambiguity, since the sentiment expressed by Jesus in this sentence is easily inferential as well as emphatic.

The Master had already intimated that the disciples must fear only "Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (10:28) Here He makes this point explicit by stating it in two parallel phrases that leave little room for doubt. How well He knew the propensity of man to save his neck at all cost! Simply, almost quietly, he puts compelling authority into His speech. This is a precious promise, but its logical converse is necessarily a threat to the fearful and unbelieving, stating clearly whom we are to fear. It is Jesus who holds our fate in His hands.

Every one who shall confess me (*homologēsei en emoi*)

This seemingly unusual expression which uses the preposition *en* after the verb is not to be translated literally "confess in my case . . . I will confess in his case before the Father" (see Plummer, *Luke*, 320; Morgan, *Matthew*, 110), but is to be taken as an Aramaism because of the normal use of the preposition *be* after 'odi in that language. (Arndt-Gingrich, 571, Lenski, *Matthew*, 412). The confession involved here is an agreeing with something affirmed, and admission of one's own position, a declaration more or less public of what one believes, an acknowledgement to being or believing something.

What or whom is the disciple to confess? His belonging to a particular sect of the Church? His adherence to a temporary formulation of the Gospel, a creed? His support of certain ecclesiastical organizations and programs? His understanding or interpretation of certain Scripture texts? According to Jesus, what is the critical issue, the only really burning question? **Whoever shall confess ME.** What a man thinks about Jesus is the only important issue over which he should have to stand trial and give account, because if he be mistaken about this one question, how can he be right, or even significantly near it, in relation to any other issue? There is so much clear evidence for a proper decision regarding Jesus, that to

fail to decide rightly about Him, automatically affects one's ability to evaluate the evidence on all other significant questions. While it may be admitted that many wise and good men of earth have both studied the evidence about Jesus and have rejected Him as supreme Lord, still the Master Himself is here declaring that such men damn themselves, since the imperious nature of His double affirmation (10:32, 33) presumes that the evidence He has given to lead to a right decision has been both sufficient and clear. The problem lies then not in the nature of the evidence but in the moral makeup of the men whose intellectual bias did not permit them to evaluate properly the evidence or surrender their will to Him. The Judge here expresses His opinion on the "wisdom" and "goodness" of those men, who, whether ignorant, deceived or conceited, reject Him.

But does this confession of Jesus mean merely to acknowledge adherence to certain propositions regarding His identity, position and consequent authority? At least this, (Ro. 10:9, 10; Ac. 2:36; I Jn. 2:22, 23; 4:2, 3, 15; 2 Jn. 7, 9) But it is more, for how can one confess the absolute lordship of Jesus while at the same time ignoring the plain import of any command, declaration, promise or warning He gives? (Lk. 6:46) He is then to be confessed:

1. by our recognizing and responding to His position and function;
2. by our recognition of His authorized representatives (Mt. 10:40);
3. by our recognition of His message (Lk. 9:26; Jn. 12:47-50);
4. by our recognition of Him in His people (Mt. 25:40, 45; Ac. 9:4, 5);
5. by our joyful admission that we personally are committed to Him because we need, trust and love Him and try to serve Him as Lord of all lords;
6. by that obvious consistency between our profession of adherence to Him and our personal morality that truly and deeply affects all our attitudes and actions.

There may be other expressions of our confession, but these are sufficient to suggest that they all have importance because of what we think about Jesus. We will be willing to die before relenting on any proposition regarding Jesus' person. Witness the Virgin-birth controversy and the vigorous rejection of the modern Arianism of the Jehovah's Witnesses who, like Arius of Alexandria (c. 313 A.D.), deny the identity of Jesus with Jehovah God. We spend years of

Careful research, examining the authenticity, reliability and integrity of the documents of the Apostles, just because our confession of Christ depends for its content upon the dictates of those books. Witness the several hundred-years war that has raged in the field of biblical criticism. Further, our confession of Jesus drives us to "lay down our lives for the brethren," since, in confessing Him, we confess those who belong to Him.

But someone might object that, contextually, Jesus has in mind most probably a hostile situation in which the disciple is called upon to admit (or deny) his discipleship to Jesus on pain of death. But it is most significant that Jesus just ordered, "Confess me before men," without specifying which men, whether hostile, indifferent or friendly. Even otherwise friendly men (they might even be Christians!), who are themselves unwilling to pay the high costs of discipleship, can make it very difficult for the earnest disciple to confess his loyalty to Jesus in the little, but practical, business of everyday's living. They dampen his enthusiasm, lest his zeal expose their lack of it, when in reality their befouled conscience demands that they follow his good example. It may be even more difficult to remain morally alert and skillful in confessing Christ in some "Christian" environments than in those openly hostile. **Before men** only means "publicly" and reminds us of the earlier command to give Christ's message the widest possible coverage (10:26, 27, despite the ever-present menace of those who can kill the body. (10:28)) The only justification for the Church's existence is to "proclaim the wonderful deeds and moral excellence of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2:9) This is the work of the Church, as Morgan put it (*Matthew*, 107):

The work to be done is not described in detail here, but it is inferentially seen. It is that of confessing Christ, before men. That is the Church's work. It is all-inclusive. When we have said that, we have said everything we can say about the Apostles, the evangelist, the prophet, the pastor and teacher, and the disciple and servant. Whatever our gift may be within the Church, or as a member of the Church, our work is to confess Christ before men. . . . By confession we are to reveal Him; to flash His glory, to make Him known. The Church of Jesus Christ is not constituted in order to discuss philosophies or indulge in speculations. It is created to confess Christ, and it never ought to rest for one moment until the last weary, sin-bound soul, in the

furthest region of the world, has heard His evangel, has beheld His glory.

This confession is not merely that initial commitment to Jesus made at the beginning of our discipleship nor merely that bold declaration stated at trials where life or death is riding with the answer. It is, rather, the normal way of life and work of every single disciple whereby he shows who his real Master is.

Before men is not to be construed as contrasting with "before the saints," as if Jesus meant, "before men of the world and not before the Church." Indeed, there is no command or consistent NT practice for a guide to confession exclusively before the assembly of the Church. It is, of course, reasonable and proper to declare oneself a believer in the presence of the rest of the Church, before expecting to be admitted to the group. And yet some Christians act as if only a confession before the church were here intended, and as if the public confession of faith they once made at a meeting of the Church exhausted all their responsibility in this regard. **Before men** means good men and bad, poor men and rich, ignorant and learned, Christians or not.

Before men, it is true, may well mean, and in the case of many Christians it has meant, to stand in formal trials as before councils, synagogues, governors and kings, and declare one's allegiance to the Son of God. (10:17, 18) In this sense, the Church has only one justification for getting into trouble with the law: for exalting Christ as King above Caesar and as Lawgiver above Moses or another religious tribunal or authority. But as the individual Christian stands alone before these earthly potentates, he must remember the wide disparity between the judges before whom he must give testimony. Feel the contrast: **before men . . . before my Father**; the temporary versus the eternal; the corruptible versus the gloriously incorruptible. It is a temptation to ask the obvious: who would exchange the approval of God for the applause of men? But lest we answer this too glibly, we need to see with greater clarity the difficulty of refusing *this* world that seems so much more real, because it is so much more immediate and tangible. As in verse 28, so here, Jesus reminds His people that, in reality, though they are physically standing before the judgment of infinitely feeble human judges whose ultimate jurisdiction halts at death, even though they may now have the relative ascendancy for the present, yet in such moments these same disciples are under the even more critical scrutiny of the unseen, living God, the Judge whose unlimited authority and power

execute a verdict of infinitely greater consequence! The Savior knows that this dilemma between life, peace and security with the approval of earth's enemies of the faith on the one hand, and life, peace and security in the judgment of God on the other, is capable of resolution only to the man who has already died to this world and all its relationships. (See on 10:34-39)

What is to be gained by confessing Christ? **Him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.** Since Jesus has made ^{it} this clear beforehand, the disciple can have peace-bringing confidence throughout his life, since he need not fear the judgment. (Cf. I Jn. 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14; Ro. 10:9, 10; Heb. 3:6; 10:19-23, 35) While we actively confess Jesus Christ on earth, our prayers obtain a receptive hearing with God, for our Mediator through Whom we pray acknowledges that we are His, as our faithful confession testifies. (I Tim. 2:5, 6) There is the joy of sharing His suffering, since we see ourselves identified with the Lord Himself who has passed this moment of trial too. (Cf. I Pet. 4:13; Phil. 3:10; I Tim. 6:13) There is also that rejoicing that comes from an approving conscience that knows the gladness at having victoriously passed the critical moment of trial. (Cf. Ac. 4:23-31; 5:40-42) Sometimes during the days of fixing of the revelation, such bold confession was blessed with deliverance from danger. (Cf. Peter, Ac. 5:12-42; 12:1-17; Paul, 2 Tim. 4:16, 17) But not always, as the traditionally brutal deaths of these same Apostles testify. But the principle promise of Jesus here is that willing acknowledgement whereby Jesus endorses us as His disciples before the Father at the great accounting.

This is the fifth motive for enduring the dangers and hardships faced by disciples in this life. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine a motivation higher than this: to accept all the pain and death in the service of Jesus Christ and know that the conclusion of life brings us, not judgment, but joy! To be personally introduced to God just because we did only what it was our duty to do is nothing short of incredible! (Cf. Lk. 17:10) How many of the little people of earth long for just a glimpse of the earth's great ones! How very few are permitted a private audience with the great, or are privileged to be their intimate friends. But not only to be presented to God but also permitted to live with Him for eternity: this is too good to be true! (Rev. 3:5; 20:11-15; 21:1-7) But how can God permit so great a reward for so insignificant a response on our part? Two reasons:

1. Confession of Christ, with all that this involves, is not insignificant, since this affects every facet of our lives and is the very life-direction of a disciple.
2. Our Father intends to save the saveable on the basis of His mercy. None can presume to earn His reward by putting Him in debt to them merely because they, sinners, confess Jesus. On the other hand, God's plan is to draw us to Him by exalting Jesus. So if we but confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father, He is more than willing to consider us as righteous even though we are not, because we are willing to trust Him. (Cf. Ro. 3:21-26; 4:1—5:1)

The question arises at this point whether Christians will actually have to stand trial on that great day. This hesitant doubt is suggested by passages as John 5:24, "He who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life; he does not come into judgment (*krisin*), but has passed from death to life." (Cf. Jn. 5:29; 2 Pe. 2:9) But even these texts can be harmonized with the more numerous and more explicit passages which picture the believers as standing for judgment. (See passages below regarding the Judge.) They can be harmonized, since the believer accepts in Jesus Christ all the negative features of the final judgment: its revelation of the heinousness of sin, its condemnation and its sentence of punishment. These features were already accepted by him who understands the meaning of the cross, dies to himself in order to rise again to new life in the Beloved. (1 Pe. 2:24) From that moment on, all that the wicked may well fear at the hands of God, has become a matter of joyfully past history for the Christian. But it is this negative side of God's justice that is the import of the word "judgment" (*krisis*) in Jn. 5:24, 29 and 2 Pe. 2:9. The point is that every disciple will give account of himself before God and the criterion is settled by this text, since all other criteria mentioned elsewhere may be subsumed under these two words: **confess** (or *deny*) Christ before men.

But who will judge the world, God or Christ? The figure of Himself that Jesus presents here seems to be in the function of an Advocate. (Cf. I Jn. 2:1, 2) In the NT both figures are used: God is the Judge of all men (Heb. 12:23; I Co. 4:5; 5:13; Ro. 2:2, 3; 3:4-6; 11:33; 14:10; 1 Pe. 1:17; 2:23), but we must stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Co. 5:10; Jn. 5:22, 27; 9:39; Ac. 10:42; I Co. 4:4, 5; 2 Ti. 4:1). The harmony is to be found in the synthetic statement of Paul: God will judge the world by Jesus (Ac. 17:31; Ro. 2:16). What God does in the Person of Jesus, He may

be said to do for Himself. The marvelous revelation that results from these Scriptures is what the Lord actually affirms in Mt. 10:40, that he who deals with Jesus is dealing with Almighty God, and vice versa, he who would deal with God must answer to Jesus. This is the most fundamental doctrine of Christianity: only those who are recognized by Jesus are saved. Those who would climb in any other way are thieves and robbers! (Jn. 10:1-5, 7-18, 27-30; cf. Mt. 11:27; Jn. 14:6; 1 Ti. 2:5)

B. THE SUPREME DISGRACE FOR DISLOYALTY OR COWARDICE (10:33)

10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men . . .

These ominous words spell out the necessary antithesis to the glorious promise for loyalty just described. Just a glance at the sentence structure of the two declarations reveals how perfectly balanced is each element. Again the declaration is directed to any disciple, not merely the Apostles, who might be tempted to deny Christ. While this warning is specifically intended for the timorous person who, for fear of men, fails to acknowledge his allegiance to Jesus, nevertheless its practical impact will be felt by all whose lives and convictions reflect their rejection of all that He is and offers. So to **deny me before men** means to repudiate or disown Christ in any of the various expressions whereby one who is a loving disciple should have confessed Him. (Cf. Lk. 12:8, 9; Ac. 3:13, 14; Jude 4; 2 Pe. 2:1; Tit. 1:16; 1 Jn. 2:22; 1 Ti. 5:8; 2 Ti. 2:11-13; Rev. 2:13; 3:8)

To **deny me before men** has a more ominous side than most recognize. Even amateur philosophers can become quite adept at pointing out the fatal flaw in others' philosophies, or views of life. This fatal flaw is but that noticeable inconsistency between the official or stated conclusions of a theory, and the way that the philosopher himself lives or practices that theory. Many Christians speak loudly about the supreme lordship of Jesus of Nazareth, thinking thereby to do Him honor by so fine and public a confession. But in unguarded moments they damn themselves intellectually in the eyes of worldlings who really know something of the will of Christ, and they are probably damning themselves eternally in the eyes of Jesus, when they fail to produce in words or deeds or attitudes what their confession demands of them at those critical moments where their real religion may be tested most surely. Listen, for

example, to the comments, feelings or answers a given Christian expresses to the following questions:

1. Do you think some people are expendable if they refuse to support your church program?
2. In this modern world is it possible to practice the "other cheek policy," when the individual Christian is insulted?
3. Who do you think is really well off in this world?
4. Is the possession of wealth a necessary danger to a man's Christianity?
5. Should whites (or Negroes, Chinese, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or any other racial group being discussed) be permitted to take an active part in your church?

These deliberately loaded questions are samples of some of the ways in which a Christian unwittingly damns himself and denies Christ by allowing himself the liberty of opinion after Jesus has already spoken. Certainly there is grace and forgiveness for this, but it is important that the saint recognize that he is doing it that he might confess it, repent and be forgiven. Perhaps the esteem of the worldling may be regained too by that intellectual honesty and genuine humility that knows how to say "I have sinned, I have imperfectly represented Christ. You may judge me by Christ, but do not judge Christ by me." It is painfully obvious that I am not yet made perfect, but I thank you for pointing out my inconsistency to me!" A Christian's confession is not a long string of pretences with regard to himself, but the consistent admission to allegiance to Jesus. Hence, when he is overtaken in any fault, in humility he can emphasize once again his deep need for and dependence upon Jesus. A confession of this sort, growing as it does out of a practical denial, can be the most beautiful and most vividly remembered.

But why would men who have known and loved Jesus, men who have even been saved from death by His power, ever be driven to the point where they would actually refuse to admit any connection with Him? Ask Peter. (Cf. Mt. 26:30-35, 69-75; Mk. 14:26-31, 66-72; Lk. 22:31-34, 54-62; Jn. 13:36-38; 18:15-18, 25-27) In our hours of deeper reflection and honesty have we not had to weep bitterly with him, because we were not prepared for the crisis brought on by some of our own fears?

1. Our fear of being hated by men (Mt. 10:21, 22);
2. Our fear of being reviled (Mt. 10:25)

3. Our fear of being persecuted or murdered (Mt. 10:23; 5:10-12);
4. Our fear of merely losing the good-will of the people upon whom our business, our profit, our advantages and ultimately our success in life are based. (Lk. 6:22; Jn. 9:22; 16:2)

These fears and more are the precise reason why Jesus has pounded so steadily throughout this discourse on the theme: "Do not be anxious . . . Have no fear of them . . . Do not fear those who kill the body!" He knows that the fundamental instinct of self-preservation will be particularly strong in such crises. Yet even the most fundamental of human drives must never be permitted to loom larger than one's commitment to his God! Some disciples would certainly be tempted to prudence or compromise, when, in reality, this would mean a practical denial of their commitment to Him. All of the rationalizations that could be offered do not change the fact that those who make them are deceiving themselves. They but hide from themselves the real motive for their cowardice. The Master foresees and forestalls this by shouting the warning: "If to save your neck, save face, save your business, save your family, you deny your relation to me, you will lose your soul!"

Him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

The consequences of one's denial of Jesus, when properly evaluated, are, as Lenski exclaims, "terrible beyond all description!" And not all of the consequences are future:

1. The nagging awareness that the former disciple has failed under fire, that he has dishonored his Lord, is something not easily shaken off. The corrosive power of unrelieved guilt is incalculable. And Jesus' advance notice of how it will go with such a person at the judgment is deliberately calculated to produce this guilt, in the hope of hereby producing repentance. (2 Co. 7:8-11)
2. The result of a guilty conscience is a useless life, since the individual, who has once known Jesus Christ and faced the demands made upon his mind by the evidences of His Lordship, cannot find ultimate joy or contentment in lesser things. As a result he wanders from this to that, restlessly seeking some consuming passion to take the place of that Lord whom he has removed from the center of his existence. And, whether he admits, or even feels, the uselessness of his life thus lived, all the pseudo-gods he has

sought to serve prove worse than useless to help him when he stands before the living God.

3. For the man who dies in this condition, his last hours can be nothing but terrifying, since he must know that he is about to face the only Lawyer who could have pleaded his case (I Jn. 2:1, 2), but has now been raised to the bench to become his Judge (2 Co. 5:10). The sworn word of that Magistrate is: "*I will deny him!*" (Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26)

In short, from the moment of the denial, if unrepaired by repentance and vigorous confession, only a sinister future awaits this hopeless wretch. Oh my soul, can I grasp the horror, the pain and the regret of such a horrible eventuality? Can that proper fear of the Lord grip me so fast that all the menaces of men seem like the harmless barking of chained dogs?

Before my Father who is in heaven. All that has been said before about a holy God who wreaks vengeance upon impenitent sinners, and especially upon renegade disciples, is now felt in its full force. (See on 10:28) He who "falls into the hands of the living God" does so because of his failure to confess Jesus! Nothing is hidden that shall not be revealed!" (10:26) Denial of Jesus can be hidden for some time on earth, but it too will be unmercifully exposed with a finality that will last for eternity. Not only will Jesus deny the coward, the fearful and unbelieving **before the Father**, but also "before the angels of God." (Lk. 12:9) This suggests that, should even the slightest denial of Christ escape the notice of these ministering servants who labor continually on behalf of the saints, Jesus will expose even this. (Cf. Heb. 1:14; Mt. 18:11; Rev. 19:9, 10) Thus will God be fully vindicated in His judgment.

Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 403) indicated several practical ways men often deny Christ:

1. We may deny Him with our *words* . . . (Such a person) did not propose to allow his Christianity to interfere with the society he kept and the pleasures he loved. Sometimes we say to other people, practically in so many words, that we are Church members, but not to worry about it too much; that we have no intention of being different; that we are prepared to take our full share in all the pleasures of the world; and that we do not expect people to take any special trouble to respect any vague principles that we may have.
2. We can deny Him by our *silence* . . . (when there was) the opportunity to speak some word for Christ, to utter some

protest against evil, to take some stand, to show what side we are on. Again and again on such occasions it is easier to keep silence than to speak. But such silence is in itself a denial of Jesus Christ.

3. We can deny Him by our *actions*. We can live in such a way that our life is a continuous denial of the faith which in words we profess. He who has given his allegiance to the gospel of purity may be guilty of all kinds of petty dishonesties and breaches of strict honor. He who has undertaken to follow the Master who bade him take up a cross can live a life that is dominated by attention to his own ease and comfort. He who has entered the service of Him who Himself forgave and bade His followers to forgive can live a life of bitterness and resentment and variance with his fellow-men. He whose eyes are meant to be on that Christ who died for love of men can live a life in which the idea of Christian service and Christian charity and Christian generosity are conspicuous by their absence.

Our General Himself has come up through the ranks, has stood Himself precisely where He expects His troops to stand. (I Ti. 6:13; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:14-16; 5:7-9) So He is not requiring of His men one thing more than what He Himself has done. The Christian, when standing trial for his faith and adherence to Jesus in a thousand ways across the years, can take courage and remain confident, since he knows, "My Lord has stood here before!"

C. THE INEVITABLE ENMITIES INVOLVED IN LOYALTY TO JESUS (10:34-36)

After having outlined the disciples' relationships to their task, to the opposition they must expect, and to the Lord whom they serve, Jesus now describes the inescapable decisions to be made by His workers about their relationship to outsiders among whom they will live and work and to whom they are sent.

10:34 **Think not that I came to send peace on the earth.** Due to their misunderstanding of certain messianic prophecies, many Jews would have been inclined to think this very thing. (Cf. Isa. 2:2-4; 9:6, 7; 66:12; Ps. 72:7; see notes on Rabbinic thought in Edersheim, *Life*, II, 710ff.) We can sense the sheer, severe honesty of Jesus better when we remember that it was a popular Jewish conviction that the Christ would usher in an epoch of great prosperity and universal peace. This concept of Jesus not only does not

echo the materialistic expectations popular among His own people, but it also demonstrates the abyss that separated His vision of the Messianic Kingdom from theirs. The war pictured by Jesus, symbolized by the **sword**, is of an entirely different character than that envisioned by those who hoped for a monolithic national army of "Hebrews only," who would march under the Messiah against the nations of the world over which they would triumph. Jesus is no "creature of His period," but a revolutionary Creator whose original message comes from God. But those wild-eyed revolutionaries of every age who have attempted to claim Jesus' good name for their cause, or who would uphold Him as their example for disrupting normal society, must beware lest they find themselves and their declared aims in open contradiction with THIS Revolutionary! It is absolutely essential therefore that Jesus' followers not expect a fool's paradise. The painful honesty of Jesus here stands out in striking contrast to those wild enthusiasts who attract followers with seductive but delusive promises. Later, Jesus can temper the harshness of this statement, but even then, not too much: "I have said this to you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (Jn. 16:33)

I came to . . . What the Master now describes expresses the stated purpose of His earthly mission. So what He unfolds in this and the following verses is neither extra, optional nor unnecessary, since the result of this His work, the decisions His followers must make and the inevitable enmities which result are all intimately involved in Jesus' intended mission.

I came not to send peace (on the earth), but a sword. But how can this obvious declaration of the Messiah Himself be harmonized with the general picture drawn of Him as the great "prince of Peace"? (Cf. Isa. 9:6, 7; Lk. 2:14) There are two possibilities:

1. This is a Hebraistic expression, emphatically stated to carry a point without intending to exclude absolutely what is negated. (See e.g. notes on 9:13) Accordingly, Jesus is saying, "I came not only to bring peace, but also a sword." As indicated above, due to the preconceptions of that day, it was entirely essential to the successful communication of His divine message that Jesus startle His hearers, so that this particularly unwelcome news not slip past, quite unnoticed by unwary listeners.

2. Then, in harmony with the foregoing, it is also unquestionably true that Jesus did not come to bring **peace on earth** to just any and every rebel against God's good government. Though He came to bring true harmony between God and man as well as true brotherhood among men, yet to accomplish this magnificent mission, Jesus could not leave men the way they were.

But why cannot men have peace the way they are? Plummer (*Matthew*, 156) is right to point out that "peace cannot be enforced. Open hostility can be put down by force; but good will can come only by voluntary consent. So long as men's wills are opposed to the Gospel, there can be no peace." In fact, war, division and fire must necessarily break out where the claims of Jesus are proclaimed in a hostile world. Feel the intense emotion of the Lord as He speaks about this revolution. (Lk. 12:49-51) Plummer (*Luke*, 334), commenting on that text, shows the vigor and depth of His language:

The history of Christ's ministry shows that (the fire) was kindled. . . . Christ came to set the world on fire, and the conflagration had already begun. Mal. 3:2. *baptisma de echō baptisthēnai*. Having used the metaphor of fire, Christ now uses the metaphor of water. The one sets forth the result of His coming as it affects the world, the other as it affects Himself. The world is lit up with flames, and Christ is bathed in blood: Mk. 10:38.

So long as His disciples act in their true character, they are the very conscience of society. They are the very character of God walking daily among their sinful fellows, family and friends. The embarrassing contrast between righteousness and iniquity that results from this contact, must, in a thousand different ways, cause that painful condemning of the sinful practices and attitudes of those who are accustomed to that way of life. But this being the world's conscience is not easy business, because one must suffer all the excuses, evasions and harsh abuse that is the daily experience of every individual conscience.

Jesus Himself knows that He is Himself such a conscience. He too must disturb their self-complacency, awaken their deadened fear of the living God. His influence, then, cannot be peaceful in the sense that He leaves men tranquilly undisturbed. As Rix (*PHC*, 259) puts it:

(His influence) was a reforming, dividing, disturbing, dissolving, revolutionary influence. It was a pungent, painful, sacrificial influence. The history of Christianity is not a peaceful history. This fact is brought forward sometimes as a proof that Christianity has been a failure. But before we admit the validity of this objection, let us consider this prior question: is the assumption upon which it is based a valid one? Is peace the first aim of Christianity? Is it the main object of the Christian religion to give you an undisturbed and placid life? It is an ignoble view of life which regards its highest good as a placid and undisturbed existence. To live is to endure and overcome, to aspire and to attain. . . . It is not the best thing in the world for a man to have no doubts, to ask no questions, to be free from all speculation and all wonder. It is not the best thing for a man to receive his opinions ready-made and to reiterate them unthinkingly till he comes to look upon them as infallible.

But the disturbance Christ brings produces immediate war, since men perversely cling to their sins, combat Christ and His messengers and line up against those who accept His discipline. This automatically divides the world into two hostile camps. (Cf. Lk. 12:51) As Jesus will immediately point out, the lines will be drawn even in families, between those who follow Him and those who do not. But Jesus must provoke this kind of war; otherwise, men would go on to their doom perfectly satisfied with themselves, unaware of their fate.

While the figure of the **sword** may mean war, as explained above, it is also possible that the main emphasis of Jesus is on the use of a sword to split asunder what had before been of one piece or a unity. Commenting on this aspect, Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 405) says:

When some great cause emerges, it is bound to divide people; there are bound to be those who answer, and those who refuse, the challenge. To be confronted with Jesus is necessarily to be confronted with the choice whether to accept Him or to reject Him; and the world is always divided into those who have accepted Christ and those who have not.

Though He is the very bond of lasting peace and true union, Jesus Himself is the sharpest line of separation between men and the greatest disturber of easy consciences. He brought no peace to Herod or Jerusalem (Mt. 2:3). His very birth brought anguish and heart-

break to all parents in Bethlehem with boys under two. His birth brought a sword that pierced His mother's soul and signalled the rise and fall of many in Israel (Lk. 2:34, 35). The Babe's protection brought additional fears and frustrations to Joseph (Mt. 1:18, 19; 2:13, 14, 22). But the angels' song is still true for this Babe has brought "peace that passes understanding" to "men with whom (God) is well pleased." (Lk. 2:14; Eph. 2:14; Phil. 4:7) But to enjoy this peace, men have always had to decide about Jesus Christ, and this decision has involved many other choices of which the Lord now begins a short list:

10:35 **For** shows that Jesus intends to illustrate concretely what He means by a **sword**. These examples that follow are only typical and by no means propose to exhaust the divisions possible in human relationships, since other separations are obviously conceivable in families otherwise constituted. **I came to:** what follows this verb expresses the purpose and result of the Lord's earthly mission. What He lists here, then, is not avoidable, since the breakdown of some of these family ties partakes of the essential nature of the life to which the Master calls us. This crisis cannot be evaded without compromise of conscience.

**a man at variance against his father,
and the daughter against her mother,
and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.**

These words are quoted practically verbatim from Micah 7:6. Did Jesus mean for His disciples to understand Him as speaking within the framework set for them by Micah?

1. It might be that Jesus is merely appropriating the well-known expressions of the ancient prophet. Micah had used this language to describe the height of treachery rampant in an era of injustice at all levels of society. However, Jesus' context is not so much general injustice as the particular heartlessness of those who refuse to accept Jesus and the religious convictions of His disciples. It may be, then, that the Master intends only to take Micah's language proverbially, as aptly describing treachery in any age, not merely that of the prophet himself. In this case, the form, not the context, suits Jesus' purpose.
2. Keil (*Minor Prophets*, I, 507) suggests an alternate view: This verse is applied by Christ to the period of the *krisis* which will attend His coming, in His in-

struction to the apostles in Matthew 10:35, 36 (cf. Lk. 12:53) . . . in the sense, that at the outbreak of the judgment and of the visitation the faithlessness will reach the height of treachery to the nearest friends, yea, even of the dissolution of every family tie. (cf. Mt. 24:10, 12)

Apparently, Keil sees the Lord's use of this language as intending to point out a condition crying out for judgment. However, again the context here is not specifically eschatological, as Luke's seeming parallel might tend to suggest.

Since the Lord does not document His words as being those of Micah, and since His purpose differs somewhat from that of the prophet, it is probably better to see only a free use of appropriate language. Jesus' intention is to bring into sharp relief the bitterness of religious intolerance.

I came to set a man at variance against . . . Here is one of the first intimations of the individualistic and personal character of Jesus' religion. (Cf. Mt. 3:7-10) It makes a clear break with the patriarchal concept of religion whereby the whole family, including the children, by virtue of their birth into the family, become participants in all the religious privileges of the paternal head. There is no suggestion in the NT that baptism was intended as a substitute for circumcision, and thus to be applied to infants. Rather, Jesus insists here on the extremely personal character of our adherence to Him, by demanding the unhesitating severing of even the dearest relationships that become a hindrance to absolute fidelity to Him. This is not a concept, therefore, that can be applied in any sense to those without the faculty to make such a decision, i.e. infants. Yet it is a fundamental tenet in Jesus' system.

At variance against. A disciple might wishfully hope that, though he be rejected, misunderstood and reviled for his new-found faith by society, yet surely his own family would understand. But McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 94) correctly feels the psychological impact of Jesus' statement:

When a man abandons the religion of his ancestors his own kindred feel more keenly than others the shame which the world attaches to the act, and are exasperated against the supposed apostate in a degree proportionate to their nearness to him.

Jesus is not, however, promoting here a method of missions, whereby He would be seen as deliberately extracting the individual from his

people and home in order to become a disciple, ignoring, and thereby failing to retain the friendly relations whereby the family and eventually much of his former society could be won to the Lord. Even within the highly individualistic framework of Jesus' warning it may yet be possible to attain the intriguing ideals of a "People's Movement Christward," as urged and described by McGavran (*The Bridges of God*), wherein a chain-reaction of individual decisions to accept Christ makes it possible for larger segments of a given human community to move whole from paganism or Judaism into the new faith in Christ. Thus individuals are able to make decisions within this larger community change of faith. But while Jesus is not discussing a method of missions, yet He is talking about the necessary expectations that any given disciple of His must confront due to his own painfully individualistic allegiance to Him. While McGavran's thesis is ideally suited to making possible the wider and more rapid evangelization of a people, yet the major obstacle to such a movement is "ostracism, a people's defense against any new thing felt seriously to endanger the community life. . . . The most successful answer to ostracism is the conversion of chains of families. The lone convert is particularly susceptible to boycott." (*Bridges*, 20). But this is just Jesus' point. To this, McGavran answers (*Bridges*, 23):

Yet becoming a Christian also meant leaving relatives. Every such decision involved separation from those not yet convinced. . . . What produced this dividing force was not merely individual conviction. It was individual conviction heated hot in a glowing group movement in a human chain reaction. Very few individuals standing alone could renounce father and mother and kinsmen. But reinforced by the burning faith that *our people are following the new way*, such fathers and mothers and kinsmen as refused to follow the Messiah could be renounced. There were heartbreaks and tears, the parting was tremendously difficult, but to men borne forward on the way of group action it was possible.

This may be true where the wave of group action is already rolling high, but where it is not, where the evangelization has just begun, or where an apostate Church is the majority religion or the State Church, the disciple of Jesus is to expect social intercourse to be cut off so drastically that no one will give the new convert warmth, shelter or support. If he falls sick, he can expect his former associates to have nothing to do with him, since, for all

they care, he can die. It is very easy to overstate our evidence for the rapid, people-wide growth of the Church during the early days of its history. (Ac. 2:41-47; 4:4, 32ff.; 6:1, 7; 8:6, 12; 9:35, 42; 11:19-26; 21:20) Though it be true that the Christian Church was a movement of great numbers, so that a large enough segment of the Jewish people became Christian with the consequence that whole families and sometimes whole villages turned to the Lord (cf. Ac. 9:35), nevertheless the validity of Christ's words here in this text was demonstrated time and again as the ostracism rose right within the ranks of the Jewish people itself. The horrible persecution of the Church by the Jewish religious establishment was not the only frightening prospect confronted by early converts from Jewry. (Cf. Ac. 4; 5:17-42; 6:8—8:4) They lost family, possessions, connections, honors and opportunities. (Cf. Heb. 10:32-34; Mt. 19:29) The rapid people-movement was not at all trouble-free, so as to make Christ's warning here unnecessary. In fairness to McGavran, it must be said that he is not saying that had the Apostles used the techniques he outlines, the transfer from Judaism to Christianity would have been much smoother. Nor does he minimize the inevitable banishment of the Christian from intimate society of the unconverted relatives or associates, since his real antithesis is a method of missions too often used, which mistakes Jesus' warning in our text for the norm, hence ignores important relationships within a people that could be used advantageously to produce much more rapid evangelization of that people. Let it never be said that Jesus is urging *variance against* one's family for variance' sake, but rather *variance* for Jesus' sake. Jesus is not willing that any perish, but that all come to repentance. (Lk. 13:1-9; 2 Pe. 3:9) Any disciple who has learned this cannot deliberately seek to alienate his family merely by some indiscretion thought to be "showing faithfulness to Jesus."

On the other hand, there is the keen temptation, described by Barclay, (*Matthew*, I, 406):

The bitterest thing about this warfare was that a man's foes would be those of his own household. It can happen that a man loves his wife and his family so much that he may refuse some great adventure, some avenue of service, some call to sacrifice, either because he does not wish to leave them, or because to accept it would involve them in danger and in risk. . . . It has happened that a man has refused God's call to some adventurous bit of service, because he allowed personal attachments to immobilize him. . . . The

fact remains that it is possible for man's loved ones to become in effect his enemies, if the thought of them keeps him from doing what he knows God wishes and wants him to do.

10:36 A man's foes shall be they of his own household.

McGarvey (*Fourfold*, 367) observes:

If the Jew and the pagan thus held *their* religions at a higher value than the ties of kindred (so as to persecute their Christian kin, HEF), much more should the Christian value his religion above these ties.

Even so, we must never forget that our real enemy is always and only Satan, even though he may make good use of an unknowing and unwilling tool in the person of one's own kin to do his work. (Sometimes he adopts an unsuspecting Christian to his purpose to destroy the Church from within. Is it not possible that Jesus has sometimes reflected: "What do I need enemies for, when I have disciples like that one?") But the disciple must ever recall that **they of one's own household** are never the ultimate enemy, but PEOPLE, even though they are blinded by bitter religious hate. These are people for whom Jesus came to die, just as much as are those who do accept Him. This is the reason why the disciples are never to respond with vitriolic invectives against the opposition. Perhaps the very meekness and consideration and constancy of Jesus' disciples will be the very means of opening the mind of the opponents to the truth. (Cf. 1 Pet. 3:1, 2) Paradoxically, they are **foes** in one sense, but beloved in another. (Cf. Ro. 11:28)

**D. THE SECRET OF SUCCESS THROUGH SACRIFICE
AND SURRENDER TO THE SAVIOR (10:37-39)**

Fully knowing that many are willing to endure almost anything "in death or life, in the realm of spirits or earthly monarchs, in the world of what happens today or in the world tomorrow, in the forces of the universe, of heaven or hell," the Lord now pictures that one influence that would be able to seduce them away from Him. He knows the danger to be found in the tender tension in families where natural affection would prove stronger than our chosen affection for Christ.

10:37 He that loveth (*ho philôn*, not *ho agapôn*) Before beginning the exegesis of Jesus' meaning, it is imperative that we note which words He uses, lest we miss His emphasis, not having

listened to His choice of terms. He is talking about *philia*, not *agapē*. (See notes on 5:43-48, Vol. I, 308-322 for a study of this latter word.) The master has in mind, not that invincible good will that always does what is in the best interest of the object of one's love, even if the person thus loved remains disagreeable or becomes the enemy. Rather, He puts the emphasis on *philia* (= "friendship"; in this connection examine Jas. 4:4 where this noun appears the only time in the N.T.) *Philōō*, while having some of the same area of meaning as *agapāō*, is better understood to touch more deeply the sentiments or emotional attachment of the individual and should be translated "love, have affection for, like, . . . kiss." (Arndt-Gingrich, 866f.) The Lord, then, is talking about cherishing what is dear to us at the expense of our loyalty to Him

He that loveth father, mother, son or daughter more than me: this is no question of our relative affection for that individual, as if we must somehow diminish our affection for each individual, in order to have sufficient affection left over for Jesus. Rather, He means the *whole* of our affection for any individual, which conflicts with the *whole* of our affection for Jesus. This is psychologically sound, for every one of us is capable of indefinite affection for each person we know, should we feel inclined so to express ourselves. Jesus does not ask that we diminish any affection we have for any person, least of all for those of our own family. He is, rather, proscribing that conflict of loyalty that prefers our selfish, unbelieving family, to His claims on the life of His disciple caught at that crisis of choice between the two.

What makes this a hard saying of Jesus is its antithesis, stated on a later occasion (Lk. 14:26, 33):

If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

This is not only difficult for most to accept, but seems to make "hate" the antithesis of "affection," as we have it in Matthew's text. But the incisive writing of C. S. Lewis (*Four Loves*, 17ff., 166ff.) puts these seemingly contradictory maxims of the Lord into their proper relationship. Loving anything or anyone above God Himself, is to make an idol of the object of our love. So when our loves claim or will or would hold us back from following Him, then

we must take them from the throne of our heart, even though our decision will seem to them sufficiently like hatred. Lewis is right, of course, but this is where the difficulty arises, since most people who become disciples of Jesus, do so full-grown with a rather completely developed circle of friends, relatives and loved ones, a relationship already very strong and of long duration. Jesus' seemingly harsh (and only apparently contradictory) demands require that we put our loves into their proper order, long in advance of crises, so that when the test comes, it will be no brutal surprise to anyone. Lewis goes on to point out that it is absolutely essential that all who know us should also know, from a thousand talks, exactly what we are and how we feel about God. This helps all our loved ones to set their lives in order psychologically in relation to us, to come to understand us on this matter of our commitment to Christ, long before the crucial test of loyalty. When the crisis arises it is too late to begin telling a loved one that our love had a secret reservation all along, i.e., our commitment to the Master. It is precisely at this point that Jesus' demands for the widest and most public confession of our adherence to Him, begin to make sense in a personal way. (See on 10:26, 27, 32, 33)

There is very keen refinement in this temptation to deny Christ because of some loved one! When we see that our attachment to Him will cause danger or death to some loved one, we hesitate to jeopardize their life or safety by taking that conscious step that would throw them into exactly that position. What should we do at that moment? We must have already learned that, with us or without us, they remain in God's care, just as much as they ever were before we came along. In that moment then, let us commit them to Him. Even if our confession or our taking a special stand for Christ brings them pain or death (because of what others do to them as a direct result of our own faithfulness), it must not deter us from taking that stand or making that confession. Every loyalty must give place to loyalty to God. Peter calls persecution a "refining fire" (1 Pet. 1:6-8), because it burns out of our attachment to Jesus all the impure motives. These trials make us examine every phase of our faith for which we are called upon to suffer. We will not willingly suffer for what we do not deem absolutely essential. Thus we examine even these closest, dearest relationships in the light of their eternal consequences. Sentiment and affection had, in better times, covered up these implications, not permitting us to evaluate them objectively. This is why Jesus unsparingly strips

off that protective covering of sentiment and rigorously bares the extreme danger that these loved ones can be to us.

He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter more than me . . . The Lord knows the extraordinary seduction that material possessions can be, and in no uncertain terms requires that a disciple be ready to relinquish his hold on ANY possession. (Cf. Mt. 19:16-30; Lk. 14:25-33; cf. Phil. 3:7) But here the Master decrees that those human relationships which we deem most truly real and valuable and would hold as most intrinsically our own, must be sacrificed, if they prove to be **more than me!** Any Christian who acknowledges a higher lordship than Jesus Christ, is not fit for the Kingdom of God. (Cf. Jn. 8:31-34; Ro. 6:16; Lk. 9:62) There can be no prior or unbreakable commitments to any other, if Jesus be Lord.

Worthy of me. But who could pretend to be actually **worthy of Jesus?** (Cf. 2 Co. 2:16) No one can stack up merits or earn credits with God, merely by accumulating any number of good deeds to be remembered in a ledger of merit. (Cf. Col. 1:12, 13; 2 Co. 3:5, 6; Jn. 15:5) Arndt-Gingrich (77) translate it: "He does not deserve to belong to me," or perhaps, "he is not suited to me." **Worthy of me**, however, is the disciple's goal, because it describes a manner of life that would be a credit to Jesus. Living **worthy of Him** means having that same intransigence before temptations, that same love of righteousness, that same mercifulness with sinners, that same patience under trial, that reflects so well what He would have done under similar circumstances. Bystanders could see in their mind's eye and remember Jesus, precisely because they would be able to see His attitudes and actions duplicated in His people.

10:38 **And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me.** Whereas before, Jesus had presented influences that perhaps could have allured us away from Him, here He unmasks the one that would repel us from Him: the suffering of shame and death. Rather than speak of crowns and glory to these disciples who were expecting any day to participate in a glorious messianic procession that would signal the beginning of the messianic kingdom, Jesus flashes before the startled Apostles a vision of the real procession in which they will march, a vision as shocking as it is terrible. To appreciate the spectacle Jesus' words convey, imagine the Lord, with His own cross on His shoulders, waving His men on up Golgotha's height, shouting, "Come on, it's over the top we go—do you expect to live forever?"

How many times had these very men witnessed a straggling line of condemned Galileans shuffling along to their tortured death, bearing their crosses, hurried along by Roman guards? How often had these men watched the death agony of human beings nailed to those wooden trees while their pain, thirst and anger mingled with blood, sweat and flies in the hot Palestine sun? The Roman general, Quintilius Varus, quelled the uprisings Simon and Judas, and crucified 2000 Jews that had supported these insurrections in Galilee. He lined the roads of Galilee with these gruesome markers. To the Apostles, then, Jesus' challenge put in these words is no less than the demand that they pronounce and execute the death sentence upon themselves. Any astute political observer or sociologist who had listened to Jesus very long could have observed that anyone who took Jesus seriously enough to enlist in His movement would be committing political, religious and commercial suicide. And Jesus would agree. This is why the Master, at this point in their discipleship, requires that His men finish the funeral, so they can get on with more important things.

The genius of such a requirement is immediately obvious: no enemy can, through threats of death, stop a revolutionary movement made up of men and women who have already accepted their own death as an accomplished fact, a justified judgment and a willing surrender! (Cf. Ro. 6:1-11; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14, 17). The disciple is to see that there are two ways of obeying the will of Christ:

1. Actively, by doing what He has bound us to say and do, whereinsofar we are free to do it, i.e. so long as others permit us to express our commitment to Christ.
2. Passively, by suffering the opposition, the persecution and martyrdom at the hands of those who do not permit us to do His bidding in any other way. (Phil. 1:29)

But already the literal cross has passed from a means of physical execution, into that figurative, spiritual reality that all Christian theology has come to recognize. Anyone who has signed his own death warrant by accepting the risk of losing all for Jesus, even his own life on a wooden stake along a public highway, has already begun to arrange his life spiritually in the very direction Jesus intends. (See on Mt. 16:24-28) The cross is painfully personal and must be willingly assumed, since no other can either shoulder it for us or even lay it on our shoulders. Each must **take his cross**, i.e. do what he must for Christ's sake, even at the price of the most heartbreaking

sacrifices or the most excruciating death. This is precisely what doing the will of God cost Jesus.

This willing self-crucifixion of our own will, emotions, ambitions and desires means, as Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 408) says:

The Christian many have to sacrifice his personal ambitions, the ease and comfort that he might have enjoyed, the career he might have achieved; he may have to lay aside his dreams, to realize that the shining things of which he caught a glimpse are not for him. He will certainly have to sacrifice his will, for no Christian can ever again do what he likes: he must do what Christ likes.

The impressive list Jesus had already given explained the various ramifications of the cross, as suffering:

1. being dragged before hostile religious and civil authorities (17)
2. receiving an inhospitable reception when trying to bring the Gospel of peace to others (v. 14)
3. being betrayed to death by relatives (v. 21)
4. being tempted to fear men more than God (v. 28)
5. facing the constant allurements of denying everything just to have a moment's peace (v. 33)
6. slander that tears at the heart (v. 25)

There is another reason for this drastic demand as part of this commission of the Twelve as Jesus sends them out on their first trial run. How badly they needed this special teaching regarding the cross in their own future, is seen in the fact that they have studied under Jesus many months now. They have just enough training to make them cocksure but not great rabbis. They have every temptation now to "out-pharisee the Pharisees," i.e. to be proud, sectarian, more argumentative than convincing, more self-seeking than useful to others. They will be tempted to defend themselves instead of preach the Gospel. To them these words may well mean:

- He who loves his own opinions, his own group more than me, is not worthy of me.
- No man is worthy of me who prides himself in his debating ability, forgetting that his opponents are people for whom I came to die, forgetting his great responsibility to make the truth known in love, forgetting that people can be changed if they are not battered into the ground.
- He who confuses opposition raised by honest doubters for bitter persecution is not worthy of me.

- He that confuses his own interests for mine, thinking that those who oppose him, for whatever reason, are thereby opposing me, is not worthy of me.
- He who knows he is right and remains uncompromising, but is unkind to those yet in the wrong, is unworthy of me.
- He who deceives himself into thinking he is standing for me, when actually he has never taken the trouble to study both sides of an issue so he will have responsible reasons for what he believes to be my meaning, or when he has made his conclusion out of selfish or deceptive motives, is not worthy of me.

**10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it;
and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.**

The key to this paradox is the definition and importance one puts upon **his life**. **Life** (*psychē*) is a many-sided word, a fact which may create problems for all who would understand and decide aright in which way they wish to preserve their life. Arndt-Gingrich (901, 902) define *psychē*:

1. literally—*a.* of life on earth in its external, physical aspects . . . (*breath of*) *life, life-principle, soul . . . earthly life* itself . . . *b.* *the soul* as seat and center of the inner life of man in its many and varied aspects . . . *c.* *the soul* as seat and center of life that transcends the earthly . . . *d.* Since the soul is the center of both the earthly (1a) and the supernatural (1c) life, a man can find himself facing the question in which character he wishes to preserve it for himself . . . Mk. 8:35. Cf. Mt. 10:39; 16:25; Lk. 9:24; 17:33; Jn. 12:25 . . .
2. by metonymy *that which possesses life or a soul . . . a living creature . . . Pl. persons, lit. souls . . .*

What is the real meaning, purpose and value of life? This question, the most practical search of the philosopher and the inevitable object of every thinking person, is here categorically answered by the Lord: "Life is losing oneself in the unselfish service of someone else." This simple declaration becomes, then, the acid test of our appreciation of, and submission to, Jesus' Lordship and wisdom. The disciple who disagrees with this fundamental principle of Jesus, either by what he thinks or by the way he runs his life, is in reality

no disciple, regardless of all his pretensions to the contrary! Feel the contrast:

What men call "Life:"

- The selfish struggle to satisfy self; self-glorification;
- The praise of other men is the most satisfying goal;
- A constantly growing supply of wealth and possessions;
- That eager grasping after more pleasures, adventures, excitement, comfort, ease, security;
- Fulfillment of ambitions;
- Hoarding life by denying one's commitment to Jesus.

What God calls "Life:"

- Doing what needs to be done, regardless of personal comfort or costs.
- Praise of God one's highest joy.
- Losing oneself in humble, self-effacing service to God and men.
- Surrendering one's selfish, self-seeking life.
- Spending, not hoarding, one's powers, interest, possessions.
- Honorable, unflinching confession of Jesus, though it brings certain suffering and death.

Note the judgment Jesus pronounces upon each way of *life*:

- He shall lose all that real life involves.
- He quit too early, satisfying himself too easily with that which is a mere substitute for life as it is meant to be lived.
- The man who makes this life the end-all of his existence, really fails the more he seems to succeed.
- He loses all that makes this life valuable to others and worth living for himself.
- He must face the second death!
- He gains all the real life that Christ's leading promises and produces.
- He gains a place in human history and human hearts accorded the truly great who humbly served others.
- The man who looks with unwavering confidence to the faithfulness of God, really succeeds the more he seems to fail (by worldly standards).
- He finds all that makes life valuable to others and makes it worth living for himself.
- He has passed out of death into *life!*

The tragedy of the self-seeking, self-saving life is already pronounced by Jesus who knows its certain outcome: such a person **shall lose his life**. There is no doubt or discussion: such a course is already doomed. He who tries to save his life, his marriage, his property,

his position or anything else that is important to him at the expense of his commitment to Christ, loses it all. (Cf. Jn. 12:42, 43) This principle is so far-reaching that even Jesus Himself could not escape it! (Jn. 12:24, 25) This is why He lays down the challenge of high adventure: He knows that the only way to true happiness and real life, here and hereafter, is to SPEND life, not sparing it, but serving others and so fulfilling God's purpose for us here. (See notes on 5:43-48; 7:12, Vol. I)

He that loseth his life for my sake is not necessarily, although he certainly could be, a Christian martyr. (Cf. Rev. 21:11) Obviously a person could not **take up his cross daily**, if this meant martyrdom the first time around! A violent death is not to be preferred to a humble, self-denying life of daily service so intent on ministering to others that one's own selfish ambitions dwindle and die from neglect. This is the real loss of one's life for Jesus' sake. Imagine the puzzlement of the solicitous and selfish: "But you don't have time for yourself any more!" To this the saint responds: "Really, I had not noticed, but, frankly, if you knew what a scoundrel I am, you would not have time for me either!"

Shall find it. There is no faith where there is no risk. In this exalted promise of a proven gentleman, Jesus turns up to their maximum the test fires that try men's faith. From this point on, every one of Jesus' listeners must decide personally whether He knows what He is talking about, whether HIS world is real. Jesus' promises test a man's faith just as really as do His most exacting commands.

For my sake: this is the secret of Christ's power over men, the key to His ability to transform men from the self-seeking, self-complacent, self-willed, ambitious rebels they are, into saints of God. Once a man comprehends clearly who Jesus is and what He has done for that one man, once that man desires to respond in gratitude for Jesus' self-humiliation on the cross, there is no end to what that man will do *for Jesus' sake*. (See notes on 5:11, Vol. I, 226) But the secret is our commitment, not to a system nor a doctrine nor even a way of looking at religion, but our sense of belonging to Him. (1 Pet. 2:20-25) Plummer (*Matthew*, 157) calls our attention to the audacity of Jesus' demands and claims:

Again we have a claim which is monstrous if He who makes it is not conscious of being Divine. Who is it that is going to own us or renounce us before God's judgment-seat (32, 33)? Who is it that promises with such confidence that the man who loses his life for His sake shall find it?

And these momentous utterances are spoken as if the Speaker had no shadow of doubt as to their truth, and as if He expected that His hearers would at once accept them. What is more, thousands of Christians, generation after generation, have shaped their lives by them and have proved their truth by repeated experience .

FACT QUESTIONS

1. List several instances in which disciples of Jesus actually denied Him before men.
2. List several instances in which disciples of Jesus actually confessed Him before men .
3. List several instances in which disciples actually felt the sword of Jesus in their own lives, as their loyalty to the Master cost them their family, friends, position, comfort, wealth or the like.
4. Illustrate from instances in Jesus' life how He personally underwent all the difficulties that He here pictures for His disciples. Leave out the trials of the last week of His life and the crucifixion. Search out other poignant illustrations of His personal suffering many, many times before that last week.
5. Explain the meaning of the terms: "peace on the earth" and "sword" as Jesus intended them in this text. Show how this use differs from some usual connotations of these words.
6. When and where will Jesus confess or deny men before His Father?
7. Show the deeper harmony between the ancient prophecy that describes a part of Jesus' mission to be the Prince of Peace, and the overt declaration of Jesus Himself that He did not intend to bring peace on earth.
8. Explain the remark Jesus made about "finding and losing one's life." What is this "life" to which He refers?
9. Explain the meaning of the expression "to take up one's cross." Show what this expression would have impressed on the minds of the Apostles who first heard it, and then state as well as you can the same meaning in modern English without any loss in significance or flavor that Jesus intended.
10. Explain how Jesus' disciples are to be "worthy of" Him.
11. What is the content of the confession that Jesus requires of His disciples to make before men? In other words, what are we to

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say about Jesus that makes all the difference between confessing Him and denying Him?

12. State the declarations in this section that emphasize Jesus' authority.

SERMON

ON SELF-DENIAL AND
CROSS-BEARING:

"THE INFLUENCE OF THE CROSS IN THE
LIFE OF THE BELIEVER"

TEXT: MT. 10:38

Introduction: The very word "cross" immediately evokes the image of the instrument of torture on which Jesus died. However in the NT at least one fourth of the references to the cross (6 in 27) do not refer to His cross at all, but rather to the cross of every believer. (Mt. 10:38; 16:24; Mk. 8:34; Lk. 9:23; 14:27; Gal. 6:14) But how does the cross involve the life of every Christian? To answer this question, we need to see:

I. The MEANING of the Cross in the Life of the Believer.

A. This is not simply, or only, martyrdom, a literal death on the cross.

1. This is obvious from the fact that Jesus Himself at the moment He uttered this challenge apparently did not expect any disciple to comply literally with the command.

a. Therefore, the "cross" is figurative.

b. But, though figurative, this cannot mean it is somehow less real.

c. In fact, it is something so very real that our whole discipleship and consequent salvation depends upon it! (Lk. 14:27)

2. Nor can it mean merely martyrdom, because Jesus expected all true disciples to comply immediately as if it were a matter of life and death.

a. This is true, even though some disciples, who were acceptable to the Lord, never tasted martyrdom and

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yet they may be presumed to have borne their "cross" worthily.

- b. Some disciples who were standing there immediately present did not suffer martyrdom for several years and yet may be presumed to have begun bearing their cross shortly after the Lord said this, and for some time until their death.
 - c. If the *cross* must be taken literally or legalistically, what do we do with those poor souls who died by decapitation, by being boiled alive or burned at the stake? Though these did not die on the cross, should it be deduced from this that they did not somehow "bear their cross" worthily?
- B. Nor is bearing one's cross simply the sum total of the pains and difficulties that assault the disciple throughout life.
1. The Lord does not take notice of the size of the callouses on our hands. He looks rather at how we earned them.
 2. There are large numbers of people who suffer greatly without intending for one minute to bear any kind of cross: as far as they are concerned, their suffering has nothing to do with Jesus, since they have no connection with Him.
 3. So the cross is not simply the normal suffering in life.
- C. The true meaning of the cross is our imitation of, and identification with, Jesus, i.e. our assuming the same attitudes He manifested throughout His life.
1. The cross probably has the same meaning in the life of the disciple as it had for the life of his Master. (Mt. 10:24, 25; Heb. 13:24, 25)
 2. Jesus had already felt the effects of the cross for the entire 33 years that preceded that mortal crisis that took place on Golgotha. (Heb. 2:18; 4:15)
 3. All of the temptations Jesus faced and defeated are evidences of His conquest of His ego, the victory over His selfish passions.
 4. So the meaning of cross-bearing and the nature of self-denial is putting to death in our lives all that:
 - a. hinders fellowship with our God;
 - b. harms relations with our fellowman;
 - c. holds self apart for self alone.
- D. Having understood the meaning of the cross, we are driven to look into . . .

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II. The NECESSITY of the Cross in the Life of the Believer:

A. In order to solve society's deepest problem, man's own beastly selfishness, the cross is necessary.

1. Self-denial is absolutely essential to the well-being of society in all its relationships, since it is the key to the removal of selfishness, the root of all of society's problems.
2. It is the voluntary placing ourselves at the service of others AS IF we were their inferiors, even though in many cases we are their superiors (and too often we think we are when we are not!). Examples: parent/child; student/professor; employer/employee; government/citizens; merchant/customer; elders/younger.

B. To be able to fulfil the very spirit of Jesus' ideals, the cross is necessary.

1. The faith Jesus taught requires not only a belief in His doctrine or an intellectual adherence to His ideals.
2. Rather, He demands that conquest of the ego, that total defeat of self.
 - a. This is something much more difficult, much more profound than a superficial assent to a new creed, however well-stated, convenient but innocuous.
 - b. This is, rather, the willing execution of that rebel who would kick God off His throne, and seat himself in His place, ruling his own little universe.
 - c. This self-renunciation is more basic than that external conformity to a new, however superficial, set of ideals.
 - d. This is literally starting over, because Jesus wants to change the man from within by making him a new creature!
3. Jesus knows how impossible it is to require that the old man, in his present condition, reach those ideals which are absolutely necessary and obligatory to please God, and live lives worthy of sons of God.
 - a. Law, any law, could require a certain external conformity to certain norms, but it could not touch the heart, could not require that a man think or feel rightly.
 - b. For this result, it is necessary to begin again by creating the new man from within.
 - c. The result? In this way alone can we reach the spirit, not only the form, of the ideals of Jesus.

CHAPTER TEN

C. To be ABLE to put Jesus' ideals into practice, the cross is necessary:

1. So long as that rebel remains alive, so long will Jesus' ideals be impracticable, unreachable.
2. It is when man throws down his last line of defense that barricades him against his God, when he lays himself bare to the righteous sentence of death against him, without justifications or excuses, when he DIES, only then can that new man rise in him, created in the image of Jesus. Only then is he able to be the man that, in his dreams, he might have been.

D. The cross is necessary in order to be able to ENJOY Christianity:

1. The cross rudely puts an end to that desperate clinging to two worlds, trying to grasp the best of both, but fails to win either, since he who tries it is unable, because unwilling, to pay the price and accept the discipline required to gain them. Consequently, the man who tries it remains in the middle, half-way between both worlds, deluded, frustrated, unable to reach either. So he loses the best of both.
2. But the cross, having put to death, put to silence the selfish cries of the old mad fool, leaves the man with his heart whole, his mind sane, his life and desires united. With one heart, undivided by contradictory claims on his attention, the man can by the grace of God confidently reach for all the fullest joys to be had in Christ's service here on earth and all the best of heaven!

E. The cross is necessary in order to be able to hold out to the end.

1. The man who has already accepted his own death as
 - a. a past fact;
 - b. a victory for true justice;
 - c. a justified execution of a notorious criminal;
 - d. and a voluntary surrender of himself to God,cannot have much sympathy with those temptations that would turn him back into the wretch he used to be.
2. Such a man cannot count his earthly life as dear to him, whether his persecutors would make it miserable for him or his tormenters would take it from him.

F. This helps us to appreciate . . .

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

III. The REASONABLENESS of the Cross in the Life of the Believer:

A. In relationship to God's character:

1. The death of the rebel is in perfect harmony with the solemn holiness of a just God whose righteousness has been offended.
2. He who has known something of the holiness of God could not seriously object to the capital punishment of anyone who would dare shake his puny, grimy fist at the Almighty.
3. Above all, His permission to cancel that old rebel in us and start all over is an act of pure grace and generous love!

B. In relation to our social relations with one another.

1. When selfishness is dead, where love is alive, we have nothing short of heaven on earth! (Ro. 13:8-10)
2. This freely chosen renunciation of our own selfish desires in favor of the needs of another, automatically brings about that gentle courtesy, that thoughtfulness, that helpfulness that smooths out all our associations with others. (Ro. 15:1-7)

C. In relation to our own final destiny:

1. The Lord is training us, disciplining us, for a position, an eternity of infinite value and dignity. (Heb. 12:1-11)
 - a. Every time, therefore, that we succeed in doing the unselfish deed, we create in this way our own character.
 - b. Every time we fall again into selfish ways of thinking or acting, the Lord can help us to rise again and try it once more.
2. Our character, acquired in this way, accompanies us in death and right on through the resurrection. Nothing is ever lost of this discipline of the cross.

CONCLUSION: Let us affirm with the Apostle Paul Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14.

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

V. JESUS REWARDS THOSE WHO WELCOME HIS SERVANTS

TEXT: 10:40-42

A. THE AUTHORITY OF HIS MESSENGERS

40. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

B. THE REWARD TO THOSE WHO HELP
JESUS' MESSENGERS

41. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.
42. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. According to Jesus, of what importance to the Galileans were the apostles and the apostles' word? Is their word of the same degree of importance to us today as then?
- b. What principle do you see behind the expression: "He that receives you, receives me, etc."?
- c. Can you provide a reason why Jesus should put so much value upon even the smallest service rendered to the lowliest disciple of His?
- d. Do you see a descending order of importance in the persons mentioned by Jesus: Apostles ("you"), "prophet," "righteous man," "one of these little ones"? If so, what do you think is Jesus' intention for putting these persons in this descending scale? If you do not see these four persons as a whole group, but as individuals, then what is Jesus' intentions regarding the importance of each?
- e. I thought we were saved by grace without meriting or earning what is coming to us. How can Jesus here speak of "rewards" or "wages"?
- f. Are there messengers of God today, who although not Apostles themselves, yet bring the Apostles' doctrine and so deserve for their work's sake to be helped? Who are they? How should they be helped?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

"But what about those people, those cities and villages, that welcome you and joyfully listen to your message? Those who receive you Apostles, in reality, are accepting me. Consequently, when they accept my message, mission and ministry, in reality they are accepting God's design and purpose. If you receive a prophet of God just because you see him as a man of God, you will receive the same reward a prophet gets. If you welcome and help a good man, because of your love for righteousness, you will receive a reward that goes to a good man. The most insignificant of my men is still my disciple, and whoever gives him just a drink of cool water on a hot day, just because they recognize that he is in my service, I Jesus, appreciate it! And I can tell you, that whoever does even a little thing like that for one of my disciples however lowly, he shall never—and I mean NEVER—lose the wage coming to him!"

SUMMARY

Jesus promised God's unfailing rewards for all who honor God by accepting and helping His servants, whether that servant be an Apostle, a Prophet, a good man or even the most insignificant of Jesus' followers.

NOTES

If it be true that Jesus has addressed Himself first to the immediate needs of the Apostles during their early Galilean ministry (10:5-15), then to their ministry before the unbelieving Jewish nation and some before the Gentiles (10:16-23), then to the disciples' program and problems of all times, as suggested in the introduction to the chapter, then we should ask the following questions about this section, before proceeding to interpret it:

1. Is this concluding section intended as a summary conclusion to the last section only, i.e. to that section which immediately precedes it?
2. Or is this conclusion intended to summarize this whole ordination sermon, hence applicable only to those Apostles thus ordained?
3. Or is this conclusion a fitting end to the entire discourse, encompassing in its scope both the special, authoritative ministry of the Apostles, as well as the general, day-to-day

service for Jesus performed by the most insignificant of His disciples?

This latter view seems most in harmony with the passage itself (10:40-42) which pictures three different expressions of Jesus in the world: His Apostles ("you," v. 40), His "prophets and righteous men," (v. 41), and His "little ones, disciples" (v. 42). Even if we eliminate the second group for reasons mentioned below, we still retain the two fundamentally separate groups, the divinely-inspired spokesmen and the rest of the Church.

A. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE (10:40)

10:40 **He that receiveth you.** This is a ray of sunshine after the many stormy warnings of persecution, death and judgment. Jesus ends His discourse on a positive note, not only because it is psychologically sound to do so, but because He knew, and expected the Apostles to know, that there WOULD be people everywhere who DO respond to God's love and accept His messengers. (Cf. 1 Th. 1:5-10; 2:15) What assurance this brings to Apostles and other Christian workers embarking upon world revolution, barely aware of the giant forces that they must meet and defeat! Who would NOT go forth into Galilee, nay, into the whole world, to serve such a far-seeing, thoughtful Master on terms like these?

Receive has a special, triple impact here:

1. Normal hospitality. (Ro. 16:23; Heb. 13:1-3; Tit. 3:12-14; Philemon 22) But this meaning rapidly fades into the next for reasons obviously related to our text:
2. Reception, aid and hospitality because the guest, the person helped, is in the special service of Christ. (Ac. 16:15; Ro. 16:2; 1 Co. 16:10, 11, 15-18; 3 Jn. 5-8. Note the antithesis of this reception: Ro. 16:17, 18; 2 Jn. 7:11.)
3. Giving heed to the messenger, welcoming him and his message, as it were, God Himself. (Gal. 4:14; 1 Th. 2:13)

Considering the progressive degree of openness required by each of the above expressions of hospitality, it would seem that something is here revealed about the wisdom of requiring that the Twelve seek out the most hospitable people in a city as they start to evangelize that area. (See on 10:11-14) But though the superior psychological preparation in the hearts of generous men is obvious, still how many ungenerous men can also be won, can also be convinced that the Twelve carry God's message and are to be received as God Himself? How long otherwise does it take before such ungenerousness is converted,

so that it too opens its heart to anyone who comes truly representing Jesus Christ?

But Jesus' emphasis here is not so much on the fact that there would be people who accepted the message, as on the high authority invested in His workers:

He that receiveth you, receiveth me.

and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

There is no escaping the exact antithesis of these words: "He who rejects you, rejects me; he who rejects me, rejects God! (vv. 14, 15) He who persecutes you, persecutes me!" (Ac. 22:8) In order better to appreciate this close identification of the workers with their God and King, compare Mk. 9:37; Lk. 10:16; Jn. 12:44; 13:20; 17:18; 20:21. The principle is this: a man may be a Judas or a Pharisee, but if he speaks the Word of God, we must listen. (Cf. Mt. 23:2, 3) We do not refuse the telegram just because the messenger who delivers it has some disgusting habit. God holds men responsible for their attitude toward Him and His Word. He does not ask us what we think of the preachers who bring it. This means that anyone who heard Judas the traitor preach—or Peter the denier or Thomas the empiricist or Simon the Nationalist guerilla or Matthew the collaborator with the enemy or John the fisherman—any who heard them preach, heard God! (Cf. 1 Th. 2:13; Gal. 1:12) Either the Apostles have the authority claimed here for them, or they are imposters and Jesus is a liar! There is no middle ground, not even an allowance for "innocent error." It is, of course, assumed here as proved, that the documents bearing us this information are by the hand of the Apostles themselves and that it is with their affirmations that we have to do.

The very general nature of this declaration, as well as the statements of a similar nature spoken of others than the Apostles (Cf. Mt. 18:5; Lk. 9:48), and the previously-noticed general character of the third portion of this discourse, lead us to ask whether this verse even intends to speak of the unique authority of the Twelve. It seems rather to refer to the identification of Jesus' disciples in general with their Lord. If so, the most common disciple who represents Jesus by preaching the Word reported to us by the Apostles, represents God Almighty! Whereas these latter disciples would not, of course, have the direct inspiration of the Spirit to protect their words or presentation from error, as did the Twelve when they originally revealed the Message, yet the man, who stands up in human society and addresses his fellows in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, insofar as he presents God's message, is to be heeded as if he were

God Himself in human dress! (See on 10:42) This view harmonizes perfectly with the realization that Jesus is not satisfied until He has turned every one of us into another Jesus Christ ministering in His absence in the very place where we live and work and are best known and can bring the claims of God to bear most personally on the lives of OUR contemporaries. He must not accept a kind of conversion that makes a man somehow as morally perfect as Jesus Himself, but good for nothing! This means that our identification with the Lord must produce in us the same sense of mission that urges us to confess Him openly, declare His rule and demand submission to His wise government.

But, someone will object, does not this latter consideration controvert the supposed apostolic authority defended in the paragraph just preceding it? Not at all, since no early disciple or modern Christian would dare claim that authority belonging only to the Apostles, except insofar as the former's life and message perfectly harmonized with that required by the latter, in which case the real norm is the apostolic doctrine and practice that forms the basis of judgment, not any modern application or interpretation of it. Of importance, by contrast, certainly, are the false claims to apostolic authority made by the so-called "successors of St. Peter" in the Roman papacy or semi-popes in protestant circles or the "apostles" among the sects, such as the Mormons. Their claims may best be tested against the standard established by the Lord's Apostles in their recorded works collected in the NT. At this point the declaration of the Lord is at its strongest: **He that receives you, receives me!** This is not merely comforting encouragement to wavering followers, but an iron-fisted challenge of the orthodoxy of anyone who does not recognize the Apostles and all who bring their message!

We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1 Jn. 4:6)

Thus, if we have read this chapter correctly in its larger context of Matthew's book from chapter 4:23 forward, we see that Matthew is endeavoring to say that Jesus of Nazareth is but the extension of God into human affairs (cf. *God with us*, 1:23), the Apostles are but the multiplication of the effectiveness of Jesus as He reaches out into the wider world of men (see on 9:36; 10:1), and the humblest Christian is but the resultant outreach of the ministry of the Apostles themselves. (Cf. Eph. 3:7-10) Thus it is that the Church, even down to her smallest member, is the likeness of God Himself re-

flected among men! Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 410) organizes these relationships as four distinct links in the chain of salvation reaching from God down to needy mankind:

1. God out of whose love the whole process of salvation began.
2. There is Jesus who brought that message to men.
3. There is the human messenger, the prophet who speaks, the good man who is an example, the disciple who learns, who in turn all pass on to others the good news which they themselves have received.
4. There is the believer who welcomes God's men and God's message and who thus finds life to his soul.

B. TWO GENERALLY ADMITTED ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLE (10:41)

10:41 **He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.** These are two generally recognized axioms from Jewish life. (See Edersheim, *Life*, I, 651. Could the reason for this be good examples in Jewish history? cf. 1 Kgs. 17:9-24; 18:4; 2 Kgs. 4:8-10) The Master used them to reinforce His foregoing declaration that any man who opens his life to the Apostles, by that very act is opening his life to God. As before, so here, the emphasis is not so much on the Apostles or the prophets or the righteous men as on *those who receive* them in that character.

Receive, as Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 410) see it, involves providing any kind of help, from even the simplest glass of cold water to a thirsty disciple, to respecting the messenger of his mission from God, as well as everything in between. Jesus is just as much concerned about His "support group" as He is about His "front-line troops." His interest is not only concerned with those non-Christians who sympathize with His people by lending them aid and assistance. He is much more concerned with those unknown disciples of His, who, though not themselves Apostles, prophets or famous righteous men, yet stand solidly behind these great figures in the forefront of the Kingdom. These are people behind the scenes who do everything in their power to make the prophet or righteous man what they are. In the case of each, it may be someone who is never in the public eye at all, but upon whom the prophet is entirely dependent for everyday love, care, sympathy, and

help. The righteous man may be what he is, because there is an otherwise unknown person who is daily encouraging him to be good, building up his life. Jesus affirms that these little-known people are figures well-known to God and will share His heavenly acclaim, that approval usually thought reserved only for those better-known public figures, the "great saints." Again, Barclay observes so practically:

There is many and many a man who has been a great public figure . . . whose voice has kindled the hearts of thousands of people, . . . who has carried an almost intolerable burden of public service and public responsibility, all of whom would have gladly borne witness that they could never have survived the effort and the demands of the task, were it not for the love, care, sympathy and service of someone at home, who was never in the public eye at all. When true greatness is measured up in the sight of God, it will be seen again and again that the man who greatly moved the world was entirely dependent on someone who, as far as the world is concerned, remained unknown. Even the prophet must get his breakfast, and have his clothes attended to; even the prophet must have his home. Let those who have the often thankless task of making a home, cooking meals, washing clothes, shopping for household necessities, caring for children, never think of it as a dreary . . . weary round; it is God's greatest task; and they will be far more likely to receive the prophet's reward than those whose days were filled with committees and whose homes were comfortless. . . . The great beauty of this passage is its stress on simple things. The Church and Christ will always need its great orators, its great shining examples of sainthood, its great teachers, whose names are household words; but the Church and Christ will also always need those in whose homes there is hospitality, on whose hands there is all the service which makes a home and in whose hearts there is the caring which is Christian love; and as Mrs. Browning said, "All service ranks the same with God."

But in what sense are we to understand **prophet** or **righteous man**?

1. *Literally?* According to this view, Jesus would be listing, in more or less descending order, the categories of service in the Kingdom: the Apostles themselves ("you," v. 40),

prophets, then **righteous men** (v. 41), and, least of all, the humblest beginner among the **disciples** of Jesus (v. 42). If this is Jesus' intention, then His argument proceeds from the less to the greater: "If God rewards those who assist the service of the (apparently) least disciples, how much more can He be trusted to reward those who help you to whom I entrust this vastly more important ministry and apostleship?" (See on 10:15) Though this interpretation is good, it does not depend for its effectiveness upon a four-step descending scale, as the following view, which also includes this application, will show.

2. *Proverbially?* It might well be that the **prophet** and **righteous man** are merely two designations for two classes of God-fearing people in the OT period which was coming to an end in the days of Jesus. It could be argued that these two classes are totally inclusive and representative of the Hebrew people inasmuch as they speak of (1) those to whom and (2) for whom the Word of God came. (Cf. Mt 13:17; 23:29-34 — Lk. 11:47-51) Accordingly, Jesus would be saying, "Even as it is commonly believed among us that anyone who opens his house to those whom we regard as great and good men, receives from God a suitable blessing, so I too am putting my humblest disciple on that same level. God will never forget the simplest act of kindness done for MY people in my name!" Thus would He put His own people in the same high plane at which they esteemed the great men of the OT. In this sense, then, Jesus would not be talking about **prophets** or **righteous men** who would live during the Christian dispensation, since He has used them only as a standard of comparison by which the humble Galilean Apostles could value the importance of their own ministry as well as estimate the high preciousness of their care in the eyes of the Father.

This latter view of the matter is probably to be preferred, since it removes at once the question of what consisted a prophet's or a righteous man's **reward**, by leaving both in the realm of an illustration that formed the basis of a comparison. Further, if these two illustrations are exactly that, i.e. proverbial, then we need not go into great detail, searching for the explicit applications to NT prophets and righteous men, since whatever it is that was usually presumed that the benefactor of an OT **prophet** or **righteous man**

would have received, will now fall to those who provide even minimal aid to Jesus' disciple, so great is His estimate of their importance. But WHY are these humble followers so significant? Because to receive any one of them in their character as disciples of JESUS is to welcome Jesus Himself and, ultimately, God.

McGarvey is right in quoting Alford (*Matthew-Mark*, 95) to say that *in the name of a prophet* or *in the name of a righteous man* is a Hebraism meaning "because he is a prophet, righteous man." (See also Edersheim, *Life*, I, 651) To receive such a person in this character or for this reason is a distinct recognition of his relation to God; "and to that extent God is honored by the act." McGarvey sees the antithesis of this phrase as "in the name of humanity, or because the recipient is a human being." Many high-minded souls would render service to a Christian, not because of his attachment to Christ, but merely because they would do it to any human in need as a magnanimous humanitarian gesture. In this case the giver has not been moved to give by the intention to honor God, hence are promised no reward. Jesus is not discussing mere humanitarian gestures, but acts of kindness to disciples BECAUSE THEY ARE DISCIPLES OF JESUS. Motive is all-important.

Plumptre (*PHC*, 243) takes this one step further: "*In the name of . . . for the sake of that which the name connotes—the prophet's work as a messenger of God, the righteousness of which the living righteous man is the concrete example.*" In a very real sense these two qualities were going to be fused into one person as each of the Apostles would soon literally become God's "prophets and righteous men." And those who helped them for what they were, would receive suitable rewards.

He shall receive a prophet's reward . . . a righteous man's reward. Regardless of whether we understand this verse literally or proverbially, it is essential that we understand the teaching on **rewards** (*misthòs*) propounded here and in the following verse. (See the Special Study Introductory to the Sermon on the Mount, Vol. I, 198-201: "The Reasonableness of the Redeemer's Rewards for Righteousness," since Jesus' meaning in this section is to be harmonized with His views expressed elsewhere.) The problem concerns the degree of strictness with which we interpret **reward**, since our eternal salvation is not a question of **reward** or salary, but of grace. This dilemma is so acute that Lenski (*Matthew*, 421) decides:

This *misthòs* was always one of pure grace, beyond any merit

of their own, as generous as the great Lord God whom they served.

McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 95) agrees: that the reward, whatever it . . . (is) not synonymous with final salvation; for while it is true that in heaven we will have full reward for all the good we do on earth, we will have infinitely more than this, and our admission into heaven is a matter of *grace*, not of reward. So then the promise of the text does not imply the salvation of all that receive a prophet, etc., but simply that he shall be rewarded. If he be a pardoned man, he may receive his reward in heaven; if not, he will receive it only on earth.

There are several facts to notice about this **reward**:

1. Jesus does NOT say precisely what the **reward** will be. In general, it would be "the reward of (worthy of, or coming to) a prophet, a righteous man."
2. Nor does He explain where it will be given, so it could be received many times and long before the judgment, as well as at that time.
3. Its very character must be harmonized with other clear revelation about the nature of God's blessings.

With these facts in mind, it is well to realize that many people would not recognize God's **reward** on earth if He handed it to them, just because it would be something they would not even consider to be a **reward**. Ewen's discussion (*PHC*, 262, 263) is worthy of repetition here:

Two questions suggest themselves to the thoughtful reader of these words: 1. What is a prophet's, a righteous man's reward? 2. No matter what the reward is, is it quite fair and equitable that a man who merely receives a prophet or a righteous man; who, that is, gives shelter and hospitality to them because they are what they are, should get the same reward which those men themselves get? If a man may get a prophet's reward by merely being hospitable to either of them, what is the good of being a prophet or a righteous man?

* * * * *

- I. The Master does not here tell us what is the . . . reward. Yet here must lie the key that will open for us the mystery, . . .
 - A. Did they know already?

- B. Or did the Master tell them before this what it was?
- C. Or were they left to learn the nature and extent of it gradually by the teaching of experience, which, through the help of the Holy Spirit . . . was to develop in them the power of spiritual apprehension and understanding—was to bring all things again to their remembrance, and help them to interpret His teaching aright?

1. I think we must accept this latter as the correct assumption.
2. Our Lord had taught the nature of the . . . reward before this, as after it, but I fear we cannot credit the disciples at this period with having fully grasped it.
3. They partook too largely of the spirit of their race and of their times to rise so early as this to the loftier conception of Christ's kingdom and of the rewards it conferred on those who were of it . . .

- II. The whole tenor of our Lord's teaching was to bring out in regard to this matter that a man's wealth lay in himself, not in his belongings, not in his surroundings . . . the prophet's gifts and the righteous man's character.

- A. The true reward of the prophet, the only one that really enriches him, is the growing power of seeing more deeply into the things of God, and the growing power of revealing these more and more clearly to men.

- B. The true reward of the righteous man is his becoming more righteous still, his finding virtuous principles within him growing stronger, the vicious in their presence becoming weaker, his finding the path of duty before him growing clearer and clearer, and himself more able to walk in it without stumbling.

- C. The reward of the one is the growing strength of his character, that of the other the increasing fitness for his office.

- III. It is not hard to see why the man who receives the prophet in the name of a prophet, and the righteous man in the name of a righteous man should receive their reward—the same reward as they do.

- A. Observe that in the one case the man receives the prophet in the name of a prophet.

1. He receives him because he knows him to be a prophet.
2. This indicates that the man esteems the prophet for the sake of his office, that his sympathy is with him, and that he is interested in his work.

3. He rejoices to hail this stranger, and gladly offers him hospitality, because he is of a kindred spirit to himself.
 4. And what follows? Their intercourse brings to the host the prophet's reward. The host is enriched in his prophetic gifts by his guest's conversation, and truly receives the prophet's reward, shares with him and through him that enlargement of mind and that penetrating spiritual vision which are the richest fruits of his prophetic labors, as well as the power of clothing his thoughts in more accurate and impressive speech.
- B. The other case is similar to this. The righteous man is received in the name of a righteous man; that is, because he is a righteous man. The man who thus receives him has himself the cause of righteousness at heart, and his ready hospitality brings to his table, to his heart, one whose words and example stimulate all his own virtuous aspirations; evoke and strengthen everything that is noble and good in him; bring him, in fact, the reward of the righteous man.

While it is not necessary so drastically to limit the blessings the man of God brings to the home and life of his host, yet Ewen does point out a psychological receptivity that leaves a man open to all that God has to offer, from the best of this earth to the finest eternity God can imagine. Jesus is talking in general terms as He pronounces this blessing upon those whose hearts make them willing to receive the Christians. Hence He does not spell out in detail whether the individual, whose heart was once sufficiently open to God's representatives, would remain so long enough to lay claim to the reward. It is a matter of sad history that many whose lives were once open to the Lord, change their minds, cut the Creator out of their career and ultimately despise the reward He has been trying to offer them, because it was not suited to their perverted tastes or desires.

Plummer (*Matthew*, 158) is right in observing that "the reward is not offered as a motive for action; the motive in each case is love and reverence for the prophet, or righteous man, or disciple, and therefore for Him whose servant he is." This is obvious from the consideration that this promise would not have been heard at all by those who would have helped the Apostles originally, hence could not have moved them to act from selfish or calculating motives. This being true, the promise is to be interpreted as furnishing assurance to the Apostles that God would reward those who received and

helped them. In this sense, it furnishes motivation for the Apostles to trust God to supply their needs on this journey.

C. A SPECIAL APPLICATION (10:42)

10:42 Jesus makes particular use of the foregoing illustrative standard in a startling way: "If you think the prophets and righteous men were important, I tell you that even the most seemingly inconsequential help provided one of these little ones, will be immediately noticed and remembered by God!" Who is **one of these little ones**?

1. Edersheim (*Life*, I, 652) sees in the term a Jewish technical term for those who were "still learning the elements of knowledge, and would by and by grow into 'disciples.'"

2. Plummer (*Matthew*, 158), on the other hand, thinks:

That "little one" was a Rabbinical expression for a disciple, is doubtful. Here it seems to mean that the disciples were people of whom the world would not take much account. In comparison with the Prophets and saints of the OT, they would seem to be very insignificant. And their mission was to be short, probably only a few weeks; so they would have no great opportunity of making a name for themselves. It is possible that everywhere (18:6, 10, 14; Mk. 9:42; Lk. 17:2) "one of these little ones" means "one of my disciples."

3. Lenski (*Matthew*, 423) sees the term as relative to other disciples:

Some of the disciples will not be prominent, even as far as faith and works of faith are concerned. Yet they are disciples, and whoever renders them the least service in connection with their discipleship, recognizing that they are believers in Jesus although among the very least, shall have his reward.

Whether taken in comparison with the Teacher, the great of the world or with other disciples, **one of these little ones** is still among Jesus' brethren (cf. Mt. 25:37, 40), and whatever is done for them is done to Him!

A cup of cold water, while it may seem like so small a service to render a tired man on a hot day, yet was most significant because those who gave it to help a Christian were thereby honoring

his Lord. Some, knowing that the man was a disciple of Jesus, rather than offering even this small service would rather spit on the ground in disgust, refusing to give the time of day to "one of those renegades."

Why did the Lord choose this simple example of useful service? He is using an argument proceeding from the least to the greatest, i.e. almost any help is more than this, yet this too is noticed and rewarded by God. How much more, then, anything greater! Lenski (*Matthew*; 423) has it: "It is not the magnitude of the service that determines the size of the reward, but the motive and its appreciation by the Lord." Consider, by contrast, the sad case of the Pharisees (Mt. 6:2) who sought to gain great reward with God and the praise of men by giving public alms. Whereas Jesus declared them already paid in full ("they have their reward"), hence can expect no more, the Savior here affirms that even a cup of cold water given to an otherwise unknown and quite insignificant disciple of Jesus holds great and imperishable reward!

Verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward. Besides introducing this sentence in His solemn style of emphatic affirmation, the Lord uses most emphatic Greek ("in no wise," *ou mē*) to indicate that it is not possible to fail to be rewarded for even this simple act motivated by love and appreciation for Jesus. Anything done for the Master is never insignificant or forgotten by God (Heb. 6:10; 1 Co. 15:58), however remote the benefactor may seem to be from the "right" group, the "right" religious connections or background. (Cf. Mk. 9:38-41!) The Father has no fear, such as we do, that His rewards might go to the wrong people, since He knows that the wrong people would not think of His gifts, His salary, His rewards as being worth much to them. More than one wise man has pointed out that even Heaven itself, to an unregenerate, would be worse than Hell. God's richest rewards can be lavished on the unwilling in this life and still be turned down with the whine: "But I expected something else—I don't want that!" So what is wrong with letting this magnanimous promise of Jesus have its widest application possible, including even many non-Christians? Like King Midas of old, the wicked can turn one of God's finest rewards into a curse upon themselves within five minutes when they get their hands on it, if they even cared that much about it. God's gifts are for people who appreciate *spiritual* rewards. From this realization comes three impressive conclusions:

1. Here is motive for profound confidence in the providence of God, for who could seriously wonder about the care of a

God who takes special note of simple gifts like a cup of cold water only? If He is so concerned with elementary service or help such as this when rendered to His people, could He somehow miss their need for food, clothing, shelter and other needs?

2. Here is motive for deep reverence for God: He knows the hearts not only of those who give because the recipient is a disciple, but He reads the heart of the disciple as well!
3. Here is motive for deep gratitude to God for His magnanimous mercy: He leaves His rewards lying around for anyone to claim, saint and sinner alike. His goodness, even to those who do not appreciate it, surpasses our understanding, even if not our gratitude. (Cf. Ro. 2:4)

FACT QUESTIONS

1. Explain how anyone who accepted the message and ministry of the Apostles, was at the same time accepting the will and mercy of God.
2. Explain the meaning of the expression: "in the name of" as used in this text.
3. What, exactly, is the reward coming to anyone who helps a prophet, righteous man or little one among Jesus' disciples?
4. State the declarations in this section that emphasize Jesus' authority.
5. What two special lessons about God arise out of the declaration that "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward"?
6. What is the use Jesus makes of the observation that anyone who receives a prophet or righteous man because they are such, will receive a reward commensurate to that of those whom they help? What literary form does this observation take? What is Jesus' purpose for bringing these two figures into His discourse?
7. How is it possible for Jesus to promise rewards from God to just anyone who helps one of His disciples, and, at the same time, have no fear that unworthy people will be blessed wrongly? What is there about the rewards of God that cause them to go unclaimed by people who have earned them?
8. Who is "one of these little ones"?

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Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE
APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

VI. THE TWELVE APOSTLES DEPART TO
EVANGELIZE (Mark 6:12, 13; Luke 9:6)

Mark 6:12, 13

Luke 9:6

And they went out and preached that *men* should repent.

And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

And they departed, and went throughout the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Discuss miracles: What various kinds of miracles did Jesus work?
- b. Why were miracles wrought? There were several purposes.
- c. Under what circumstances was Jesus willing or unwilling to perform them?
- d. Discuss Jesus' ability or inability to work them at any time or place. Discuss the disciples' limitation in working miracles.
- e. What conditions did Jesus require before He worked a miracle? Did He always require such conditions?
- f. How did the apostles acquire miracle-working power? When did they receive the Holy Spirit?
- g. What miracles did the apostles work (before the cross) and what means did they use?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

So the disciples scattered all over Galilee, going from village to village, telling the good news and urging men to turn from their sins back to God. They cast out many demons and healed sick people everywhere anointing them with olive oil.

SUMMARY

Village after village felt the increasing influence of Jesus' ministry now as six evangelistic teams plus Jesus Himself evangelized. In effect, the Apostles became just that many more "Jesus Christs" calling Galilee to repentance, proving the authority of their message

by giving that supernatural evidence that only God's messengers could give.

NOTES

THE TRIAL FLIGHT A GREAT SUCCESS

Whatever negative effect may have been made upon the Apostles by the ominous warnings and shocking statements in their ordination sermon, Mark paints their courage in bold letters: **"They went out and preached . . . !"** The Lord's frank message, though not promising very much from a human viewpoint, did not deter any of the Apostles from fulfilling the challenge they had taken up. (It was greed, or perhaps a mistaken nationalism, but not fear, that caused Judas Iscariot to turn traitor.) Positively, these words girded the Apostles for vigorous action, stirred them to attack, and equipped them to reach all the objectives Jesus had outlined. This they did during their first mission in Galilee. And they kept going. And the Church of Jesus Christ today is irrefutable evidence that they were so prepared. Is not the Church, despite all her faults, living proof, not only of God's blessing upon her, but also the concrete demonstration that these Twelve believed, worked, sorrowed, courageously endured and magnificently produced? Even still more amazing is the observation that after the post-ascension prayer meeting (Ac. 1:13, 14), we never hear of more than half of them by name again. But that these men labored, the entire Church's existence is eloquent testimony. The immediateness of their victory stands out in sharp relief against their apparent total lack of qualifications. Barker (*As Matthew Saw the Master*, 34, 35) sensed this:

What hopeless nobodies the twelve disciples were! They were the least promising material Jesus could have picked. Everything was stacked against their ever accomplishing anything. A roll call of nonentities, this aggregation was hardly the type anyone would depend upon, especially for such serious responsibilities as God demands. Among them there was little prestige, wealth, power or education.

So it was Jesus that made the difference. They KNEW no message, no lordship, no power, no direction but His. Bruce (*Training*, 99) explains:

The disciples could do no more than proclaim the fact that the kingdom was at hand, and bid men everywhere repent, by way of preparation for its advent. This was really all

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they knew themselves. They did not as yet understand, in the least degree, the doctrine of the cross; they did not even know the nature of the Kingdom. They had, indeed, heard their Master discourse profoundly thereon, but they had not comprehended His words. Their ideas respecting the coming kingdom were nearly as crude and carnal as were those of other Jews, who looked for the restoration of Israel's political independence and temporal prosperity as in the glorious days of old. In one point only were they in advance of current notions: they had learned from John and from Jesus that repentance was necessary in order to citizenship in this kingdom. . . . Far from wondering, therefore, that the preaching program of the disciples was so limited, we are rather tempted to wonder how Christ could trust them to open their mouths at all, even on the one topic of the kingdom.

At this point it is a proper question whether the Apostles understood even this message of Jesus just preached (Mt. 10:1—11:1). If their prejudices were very deep-rooted, regarding the nature of the Kingdom and of the Messiahship of Jesus, how could they have grasped the full import of their own ordination sermon? It may well be that they did not comprehend it perfectly before the facts or the experiences alluded to in the message were fulfilled, even as a prophecy is somewhat unclear prior to its undoubted fulfilment. Bruce (*Training*, 115) shows his usual, sensitive comprehension when he notes:

It was a rare, unexampled discourse, strange to the ears of us moderns, who can hardly imagine such stern requirements being seriously made, not to say exactly complied with. . . . It is a mountain at which we gaze in wonder from a position far below, hardly dreaming of climbing to its summit. Some noble ones, however, have made the arduous ascent; and among these the first place of honor must be assigned to the chosen companions of Jesus.

And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. (Mk. 6:13) . . . healing everywhere. (Lk. 9:6) Does miracle-working power always depend upon the obvious presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to the extent that people may conclude that miracles are a necessary demonstration of the Holy Spirit's presence? No, because the Apostles

obviously worked miracles before the official giving of the Holy Spirit. This mission occurred six months at least before Jesus' declaration regarding the Spirit's influence and power in the life of the believer. (Cf. Jn. 7:38, 39) Jesus' authority and power was, of course, that of the Holy Spirit in Him, but in the total absence of any reference to the influence or presence of the Holy Spirit at this point, and in agreement with a specific declaration that Jesus conferred power upon His men (10:1), we must conclude that the power exercised by the Apostles is Jesus' personal working in them. Bruce (*Training*, 99) agrees:

All the miracles wrought by the twelve were really wrought by Jesus Himself, their sole function consisting in making a believing use of His name. This seems to be perfectly understood by all; for the works done by the apostles did not lead the people of Galilee to wonder who they were, but only who and what He was in whose name all these things were done.

Mk. 6:14: "King Herod heard of it; for Jesus' name had become known." See also Mt. 14:1 and Lk. 9:7.

Did the Apostles work miracles after this mission and before Pentecost? Apparently not when they were with Jesus. Peter walked on water, but Jesus was present. Peter fished up a fish with a coin in its mouth, but though Jesus was absent, this was His miracle, not Peter's. Later, the Seventy worked signs and wonders upon commission from Jesus, while away from Him. So also the unknown miracle worker (Mk. 9:38-40). The fact that they did no more than this seems to indicate that they

1. lacked occasion to work miracles,
 - a. either because Jesus was physically present with them,
 - b. or because they were not sent on other missions than those mentioned:
2. or else, when Jesus was absent, they themselves lacked the necessary faith. (Cf. Mt. 17:19, 20)

They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. What does oil have to do with the Apostles' miracles of healing?

1. Some suggest that the oil was curative, used as medicine. (Cf. Lk. 10:34) But this is not a likely interpretation here, since the purpose of the act of healing was to identify the Apostles as messengers of God, supernaturally accredited by the miracles. The supernaturalness of the healing would

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- certainly be discounted if the oil used were thought, by those upon whom it were used, to be common medicine.
2. Oil was also in personal body comfort, much as hair oils, bath oils, hand and face creams are used today. (Cf. 2 Sam. 12:20; Mt. 6:16, 17; Lk. 7:46) Why would this be significant here? If we assume that the sick person had let these comforts go during the course of his illness, then for him to permit himself to be **anointed with oil** preparatory to going back to normal life, as if the miracle were already worked, this would be a challenge to his faith in the power of the Apostles to heal him. Seeing the sick person's faith thus demonstrated in his willingness to be anointed, the Apostles then healed them supernaturally with no recourse or connection with the oil. Note that Mark seems to separate the two actions: (1) they **anointed with oil . . .** and then they (2) **healed them**, a fact which agrees with this latter conclusion.

Even if the anointing with oil should be seen as a mechanical method more directly connected with the healing than is suggested in this second interpretation, nevertheless the justification for their use of such a method is found in the fact that Jesus Himself used several different "methods," probably to show clearly that the power is not in the method, but in the Lord Himself. (Cf. Jn. 9:6, 7; Mk. 8:22-25; Lk. 17:14, etc.)

On the general subject of anointing with oil done by Christians later (Jas. 5:14-16), there remains the problem of application: whether James' exhortation speaks to all ages of the Church, or only to first-century churches that had miracle-working elders, or whether ANY faithful person should anoint the sick with oil, praying with faith and so expect God's miraculous healing. (On the general problem of miracles, of which anointing the sick with oil is but one illustration, see the Special Study on the Miracles, included at the conclusion of chapter nine.)

What was the effect of this mission? For final notes on this evangelistic tour, see on Mt. 14:1, 13. Bruce (*Training*, 101) astutely observes that "in quality the results of the mission appear to have been much less satisfactory than in their extent." He goes on to point out that shortly after this mission in Galilee, Galileans themselves left Christ almost in a body,

scandalized by His mysterious doctrine. Those who did this were for the most part, just the men who had listened to the

twelve while they preached repentance. Such an issue to a benevolent undertaking must have been deeply disappointing to the heart of Jesus. Yet it is remarkable that the comparative abortiveness of the first evangelistic movement did not prevent Him from repeating the experiment some time after on a still more extensive scale. (Lk. 10:1)

What is the effect of this message and this mission on us? Lewis and Booth (*PHC*, 258, 259) would have us note:

1. The points of resemblance between us and them. In their measure all true disciples are in a similar position with these. They have the same Master above them, the same deposit entrusted to them, the same duty in regard to it, the same choice and the same difficulties before them, the same assurances to support them. . . .

(To this, Barclay [*Matthew*, I, 367] would add: "They were very ordinary men. . . . Jesus is looking, not so much for extraordinary men, as for ordinary men who can do ordinary things extraordinarily well. . . . [As a group] they were the most extraordinary mixture.)

2. The points of difference. When the Apostles thus went forth to their work with their lives in their hands, they went forth to a forlorn hope in the eyes of the world. We in our day and in this respect, are not called to the same. We have the benefit of both their example and experience, and that of the generations like them till now. All the greater, therefore, would be our disgrace if we were to hang back. Every disciple is not expected to lead like these first; but no disciple can expect to be called a disciple if he does not follow when led.

FACT QUESTIONS

1. Is there any evidence in this section or any hint in Matthew 10 regarding the length of this ministry performed by the Apostles in Galilee?
2. What is the significance of the mention of the Apostles' "authority over unclean spirits"? (According to Mt. 10:1, 8; Mk. 6:7, 13; Lk. 9:1)
3. What is the special evidence of Jesus' divine nature and authority revealed in this little section?
4. What is the purpose for the anointing with oil in relation to

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healing of the sick? What other NT passages speak of anointing with oil?

5. What was the obvious source of the Apostles' miracle-working power? Who gave them this power?
6. Did Judas Iscariot work miracles? Did Peter? What does your answer to these questions reveal about the nature of miracle workers in general, who do real miracles but whose life is all but perfect? Does the fact that a man works miracles indicate that God approves of his message and his life? How do you distinguish between those miracle workers sent by God and those miracle workers who will one day be rejected by Jesus at the great judgment? (See Mt. 7:21-23)
7. Did the Apostles work any miracles after this mission in Galilee during the ministry of Jesus before He ascended to heaven? If so, when?
8. Does miracle-working power depend upon the special baptism of the Holy Spirit in the life of the miracle worker? That is, are miracles necessarily a special demonstration of the presence and working of God's Holy Spirit?
9. Summarize what the Apostles actually accomplished during this evangelistic tour.
10. What does the fact, that Jesus empowered such men as Judas and Peter, to work miracles and preach the Gospel, tell us about His confidence (1) in the message He would have them preach; (2) in the men themselves? That is, what do we learn about Jesus from the fact that He was willing to entrust such men with such a message?

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

VII. JESUS ALSO GOES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

TEXT: 11:1

1. And it came to pass when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why did Jesus Himself go alone, whereas He had sent the Twelve out in pairs?
- b. What do you think Matthew intends to say about the material that immediately precedes this verse, by affirming, "When Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples"? What does this say about the unity of the discourse that precedes this statement?
- c. What is the fundamental difference between the methods of "teaching" and "preaching" in which Jesus engaged?
- d. What psychological effect on the Twelve would the knowledge make, that Jesus, too, is engaged in the same effort as they?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

At the conclusion of His instructions, Jesus sent the Twelve Apostles two by two to evangelize Galilee. Then He too set out, on a mission of instruction and gospel proclamation throughout the cities.

NOTES

11:1 **And it came to pass when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples . . .** Thus Matthew draws to a definite close the ordination discourse of the Twelve. Though some feel that Matthew took bits and pieces of other sermons and wove them into the fabric of this message, thus taking great liberties and badly mixing time elements, nevertheless, let it be remembered that Matthew heard the sermon. The modern arm-chair critics did not. (See Introduction to Chapter 10 for fuller notes.) **His twelve disciples**, though now fledgling Apostles with all the power and authority that this grand title implies, they are still and must always be **disciples**, even to be true to their high mission as apostles. Ironically, it was when Judas stopped being a **disciple** that he forfeited all that his apostleship should have meant. What a lesson to us: we never get beyond being **disciples** of the Lord, however great our gifts, however long our service, however vast our knowledge. When we do think we have grown past that point, all of God's gifts in us, intended "for disciples only," will be warped as we try to press them into our own service. It is only in character as **disciples** whose minds are ever open to whatever the Lord reveals, whose will is submitted to His discipleship, that any of us, Apostles or not, are able to be of any use to the Master.

He departed thence to teach and preach in their cities. Having commissioned and empowered His Twelve disciples and divided them into six teams of two workers each, Jesus Himself goes to work on another front, thus making seven evangelistic thrusts in Galilee. Because the Apostles preached His message, shared His ministry, worked His miracles, and copied His manners, in a sense it may be said that they became twelve more Jesus Christs to confront the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" with the tender appeals of the Good Shepherd Himself. Good leadership, as Jesus here demonstrates, does not consist in doing the work of twelve men Himself, but in getting the twelve men to work. Recall his procedure:

1. He shared with all His closer disciples His vision of the task that lay before them. (9:36, 37)
2. He involved them personally in praying about the need for more workers. (9:38)
3. He then chose the most ready among His many travel companions who had known Him, followed Him and already had some experience observing His *modus operandi*. (10:2-4)
4. He empowered them adequately to accomplish all He required of them. (10:1)
5. He explained carefully how they were to proceed and what they might expect. (10:5-15)
6. He gave them a general survey of the long-range direction and purpose of their work, so they might see the specific importance of their immediate tasks. (10:16-39)
7. He gave them hope of succeeding brilliantly despite temporary and seemingly impossible setbacks. (10:40-42)
8. Last, but not at all least, He worked alongside them, not content to be ministered to even in this way. There is no little comfort and encouragement in the knowledge that "Jesus is just over in the next town working at the same task, facing the same hardships, preaching the same message, as we are here!"

It is evident that Jesus did not work in the same villages at the same time as any of the apostolic teams, because both Mark (6:30) and Luke (9:10) signal a definite coming back together as if by appointment. Even without this proof, we could still arrive at the same point, since it would be psychologically crippling to the Apostles' learning process if Jesus had been physically present during any of the presentations of His message, since it would have made

so much more sense to them to let Him do the preaching and, reasonably, receive all the attention. Tactically, too, it would be a mistake, since He would be needlessly duplicating effort in every village where His physical presence overshadowed the evangelistic efforts of the two Apostles trying to labor there. It is more likely to conclude that, once the Twelve had been sent forth, Jesus did not intend to meet any of them again until they convened at a prearranged point sometime near Passover time. Further, He had given the instructions in this discourse what to do if persecuted, so He did not need to rescue them from difficulty. (See notes on 10:23 on "till the Son of man be come.") Also, if there was a prearranged appointment, there was no need to recall them in from their labors for rest.

FACT QUESTIONS

1. What did Jesus do while the Apostles were busy evangelizing Galilee?
2. What was the practical effect of Jesus' sending out the Twelve in teams of two each and then going out Himself to labor in other towns?
3. What emotional effect would be produced on the Apostles themselves by the knowledge that Jesus, too, is working alongside them in other towns?
4. On what basis do we decide here that Jesus did not work in the same towns at the same time as the Apostles themselves visited them?

DO YOU HAVE THE WORD IN YOUR HEART?

Matthew 10

Who said the following statements? On what occasion? To whom? Why did they say it? What did they mean? Are there parallel passages? variant manuscript readings? important variant translations? Are there any problems of interpretation? How or to what extent should we apply it to our lives?

1. "Get you no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor *shoes*, nor *staff*."
2. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

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3. "If the house be worthy let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you."
4. "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
5. "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."
6. "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."
7. "... rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
8. "I came not to send peace, but a sword."
9. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher. . . ."
10. "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."
11. "He that receiveth you receiveth me. . . ."

SPECIAL STUDY

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

Cryptic statements keep cropping up in the Gospels, which speak of a coming of Jesus in His glory during the lifetime of that generation in which the Apostles lived. At first reading, one would think, however, that such notices would be interpreted with primary reference to the second coming of Christ at the end of this age of the world. In fact, some commentators have accused the early Christians, notably Paul, of "mistakenly expecting the imminent return of Christ in his own era, whereas that event has not yet taken place."

On the other hand, there are intriguing coincidences and factors that present quite another picture of Christian eschatology in the first century. Some of the points to be noticed are the following:

1. It is generally presumed that Paul died around 67 or 68 A.D., thus prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the virtual end of the Jewish state. Thus, his references to the coming glorification of Christ during his own lifetime might be affected in part by this fact. This same observation would be generally true of most of the other writing Apostles or Evangelists, except John, if our present state of information (or ignorance) be any indication. In the cases where we have no definite dates for the death of the NT writers, it becomes necessary to depend upon their last message which expresses their views. For this reason we must found our under-

CHAPTER TEN

standing of their doctrine on the best information available to us regarding the date of their writings that have come down to us. While there is by no means unanimity of opinion among scholars about the dating of each NT book, there is reasonably general agreement that all but the Johannine books were written prior to 70 A.D. (See critical introductions to individual books in encyclopedic articles, e.g. *ISBE*, as well as the formal critical introductions to the NT and its books, for delineation of the traditional datings as well as the problems and arguments for dates after 70 A.D.)

2. While the coming of Christ back to earth in the person of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-28) was to be an event with world-shaking consequences, yet the actual narrations of the activity of the Holy Spirit, that was witnessed from the day of pentecost onward until the conclusion of the history included in the NT, do not exhaust all the meaning of those passages which speak of a glorious appearing of the Lord in the lifetime of the Twelve. Nor yet do the strictly Pentecostal manifestations of the coming of the Spirit exhaust the prophecy of Joel (2:28-32) cited by Peter (Ac. 2:16-21; see below on this text.) Those texts which seem to describe a first-century "coming of the Son of man" seem to be picturing an event which is to occur following, but not immediately connected with, the glorious establishment of Christ's Kingdom in its visible manifestation as the Church. Nor yet are these passages especially connected with the final appearance of the Lord at the end of this age. (See below on Mt. 16:28.)
3. A third suggestion is here offered, but not adequately defined, with respect to the Apocalypse of John. It cannot be dealt with adequately here, and must be offered only as a suggestive comment to stimulate further research, since it is not the purpose of this article to deal with all the problems that arise in the interpretation of that book. However, the thorough treatment of this important subject would demand that this exegesis of John's Revelation be made, before any certain conclusions can be drawn regarding the coming of the Son of man. This is true especially if the apocalyptic methodology of Revelation in any way touches that period covering the lifetime of the Apostles. (See below on VI, VII.)

The visions of the Revelation are specifically called "apocalyptic," (from *apokalypsis*, Rev. 1:1). It would there-

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fore be expected that THIS Apocalypse share something of the nature of apocalyptic literature, with the single exception that this Apocalypse, as opposed to all others, is inspired by Jesus' direct revelation of the visions John saw. J.E.H. Thompson (*ISBE*, 161-178) describes the character of apocalypses as a literary method, contrasting this with the method of prophetic books.

Both in matter and form apocalyptic literature and the writings associated with it differ from the prophetic writings of the preceding periods . . . while the predictive element is present in Apocalypses, as in Prophecy, it is more prominent and relates to longer periods and involves a wider grasp of the state of the world at large. Apocalypse could only have been possible under the domination of the great empires. Alike in Prophecy and in Apocalypse there is reference to the coming of the Messiah, but in the latter not only is the Messianic hope more defined, it has a wider reference. In the Prophets and Psalmists the Messiah had mainly to do with Israel. . . . In the Apocalypses the imperial outlook is prominent, beginning with Daniel in which we find the Messianic kingdom represented by a "son of man" over against the bestial empires that had preceded (Dnl. 7:13) and reaching the acme of Apocalypse, if not its conclusion in the Revelation of St. John: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15). While the prophet was primarily a preacher of righteousness and used prediction either as a guarantee, by its fulfilment of his Divine mission, or as an exhibition of the natural result of rebellion against God's righteous laws, to the Apocalypticist prediction was the thing of most importance, and in the more typical Apocalypse there is no moral exhortation whatever. . . . In the literary form employed there are marked differences between Apocalyptic and Prophecy. Both make use of vision, but in Prophecy, in the more restricted sense of the word, these visions are as a rule implied, rather than being described. . . . In the case of the Apocalypses the vision is the vehicle

by which the prediction is conveyed. . . . In (Prophecy) the symbols used are natural, not, as always in Apocalypses, arbitrary . . . (In Apocalypses) there is no natural reason for the changes that take place, only a symbolical one. . . . The apocalyptists always used pure prose, without the elaborate parallelism or cadenced diction of Hebrew poetry. The weird, the gorgeous, or the terrible features of the vision described are thrown into all the higher relief by the baldness of the narrative. . . . (Of the works entitled Apocalyptic) they all claim to be revelations of the future—a future which begins, however, from the days of some ancient saint—and then, passing over the time of its actual composition, ends with the coming of the Messiah, the setting up of the Messianic kingdom and the end of the world. There are others . . . in which the revelation avowedly looks back, and which thus contain an amount of legendary matter.

While the Revelation is both epistolary with regard to its readers and prophecy in its essential spirit and message, it is an apocalypse with respect to its contents. "The Revelation honors apocalyptic methodology but makes it subserve genuine prophecy." (Harrison, *Introductions*, 431)

Thus, while this use of John's Revelation to discuss events prior to its actual composition during the reign of Domitian during John's exile to Patmos (c. 96 A.D.) would perhaps raise objections, since the book is also confessedly a prophecy (cf. Rev. 1:3; 22:6, 7, 18, 19) regarding things that "must soon take place," i.e. after the writing of the book itself (cf. Rev. 1:1, 19; 4:1; 22:6, 7), yet if it be assumed that John's Revelation partook of the literary form of other apocalyptic books, a form which enclosed within its cosmic sweep the writing of history to show some purpose of God seen in the sequence of events, as well as to predict the future, then this objection would have less force. The Revelation could conceivably describe some events prior to, during, and after, the beginning of the Church, the early evangelization, the persecutions, the Jewish War, the destruction of Jerusalem and proceed right on to picture those elements signalling the beginning of the fall of the Roman empire and look out into the distant future to the end of

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time. It remains then, a matter of careful exegesis both of the relative Bible texts involved, as well as a careful reading of history, to determine whether or not this is, in fact, the case.

Besides the foregoing, there are a number of Matthean texts, which seem to picture the coming of the Son of man in judgment upon the Jewish nation during the lifetime of the Apostles.

- I. **"When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes."** (Mt. 10:23)

At first glance, it would seem that Jesus is speaking here of His following up the advance preparation for His coming made by the disciples. In this case, they would merely have gone ahead of Him as an advance advertising committee, in order to assure Him a large interest and popularity in the cities of Israel. Then the point of this exhortation would be haste, since it would be impossible to cover all the Jewish cities before Jesus Himself arrived. But the very context of this solemn admonition demands a graver explanation, more harmonious with the immediate context itself and with the subsequent events. The assumption here is that Jesus' discourse in Matthew 10 is one entire message delivered on the same occasion. (See arguments in the Introduction to chapter 10.)

1. The context, as well as the verse itself, describes fearful persecutions and harrassment by both religious and political rulers, incomprehension within the families of His disciples, universal hatred of Jesus' followers, leadership of the Holy Spirit, betrayals to death and, finally, the necessity to flee, faithful endurance and open confession of allegiance to Jesus in face of certain death.
2. Further, the paragraph in which this admonition is found (Mt. 10:16-23) is itself repeated in the great discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish state (Mt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21). Interestingly, though Mark and Luke both record without significant variations these words contained in Matthew 10:16-23, Matthew himself, while recording the prophetic discourse in his 24th chapter, does not repeat this paragraph. Instead, he limits himself to a couple of summary sentences that are necessary for the connection of thought. Though some would give another explanation to this phenomenon, we believe that Matthew deliberately omitted to

repeat this particular material (even though he does repeat some other obviously repeated events and sayings of Jesus elsewhere), not only because he had recorded this sermon in chapter 10. He probably omitted the repetition of this material (10:16-23) because he intended to develop the theme of moral preparation required for the great cataclysmic events. This is a hypothesis developed, of course, from what he actually did. (Cf. Mt. 24:37—25:46) By contrast, Mark and Luke, who neither one had recorded this complete discourse in one place (however, see Luke 12:2-12), give their testimony regarding Jesus' great prophetic discourse and omit, or greatly abbreviate, the material Matthew includes on watchful preparation. The point is, of course, that Jesus intended for this material (i.e. Mt. 10:16-23) to be understood primarily in the framework of that period following His ascension into heaven and not in connection with the early efforts at evangelization by the Apostles or the Seventy.

3. Subsequent events in the ministry of the Apostles themselves as they labored under the limited commission (Mt. 10:5-15) until they were reassembled (Mt. 6:30; Lk. 9:10), indicate no such difficulties as are here pictured. This indication is based solely on the information about the Apostles transmitted to us in the four Gospels. If they did in fact encounter persecutions prior to Jesus' crucifixion, we cannot know about it.

But lest Jesus be accused of exaggerating the trials to which the Apostles would be subjected, let it be remembered that Jesus is fully justified in preparing His men in exactly this fashion, since they must face, from the very first of their own ministry, the stubborn reality of opposition to the truth they must preach. Whether this opposition began soon or later should make no difference to them: they must steel themselves for its eventual arrival. The appropriateness of Jesus' warnings during His first commission is seen in the fact that He sends them out fully prepared for whatever may come, even if the worst does not appear until much later when intransigent opposition to Jesus Himself will have hardened and expressed itself in His crucifixion. Psychologically, His men will have already been inured to trouble by His many previous warnings and by their own personal

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experiences in the field when not under His direct supervision.

While the Apostles did not have to face the pictured trials during their early missions, they certainly did have to meet them later. And to deflate any tendency to overconfidence based upon the seemingly overwhelming successes of their first missions, Jesus repeated these warnings in His great prophetic discourse (Mt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21) just two months before He sent them out to evangelize the entire world. At THAT time they would begin to grasp the significance behind those cryptic words uttered earlier (Mt.10:23).

It is obvious, therefore, that the "coming of the Son of man" must have a direct relationship to the ministry of the Apostles AT SUCH TIME AS THEY ACTUALLY FACED THE PERSECUTIONS AND CONSEQUENT NECESSITY TO FLEE pictured in this text. Since they apparently faced the trials and difficulties, that Jesus describes, only after Pentecost and before their own deaths, which, in the case of most of them, occurred before 70 A.D., if tradition may be relied upon to furnish the dates, "the coming of the Son of man" must have some reference to that period. This "coming of the Son of man" must have relationship also to the "cities of Israel," and not to the world in general. The beginning of the end of those "cities of Israel" as a corporate, national entity, can be dated about the same time as the disastrous Jewish War (66-70 A.D.), even though the final, bitter end did not come until the devastations by the Romans after the uprising of Bar-Cochba (132-135 A.D.) Morgan (*Matthew*, 106) poses the intriguing query:

Who shall say that in His Personal Form He did not guide the Roman legions as they took Jerusalem? It is quite certain that there can be no explanation of the coming of the Son of Man in this case except in the sense of judgment. His coming at the fall of Jerusalem, ended the cities of Israel, and this accounted for His urgency and haste in driving His apostles out to tell the story of the King and the Kingdom.

While it is somewhat inexact to say that the "cities of Israel," meaning the existing villages and towns, came to an end with the fall of Jerusalem, yet "the national identity of Judaism was completely and forever lost. The last two institutions of their distinctly national life, the Sanhedrin and the sacrifice, were abolished, never to reappear." (Dana, *NT World*, 105) "Judaism persisted as a religion, but dis-

associated from any political organization or state." (Tenney, *NT Times*, 307)

The above considerations strongly suggest that Jesus intended to intimate to His Apostles that His coming would take place during that period of their ministry in which (1) they faced terrible persecutions; (2) while there were yet in existence the "cities of Israel;" and (3), in some connection with the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the state of Israel.

II. **"Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom."** (Mt. 16:28)

Needless to say, this verse and its parallels must be considered apart from the verses preceding (i.e. Mt. 16:27; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26), which describe the second coming of Jesus in judgment of the whole world, an event which none of the Apostles lived to see, since this has not yet occurred. Therefore, what Jesus intends by the declaration in question has nothing to do with His return to earth at the end of this age: there are two specific events clearly before His mind.

A quick comparison of the parallel texts of this same saying reveals all Jesus said at that moment:

Mt. 16:28

Mk. 9:1

Lk. 9:27

<p>And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some stand- ing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."</p>	<p>And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some stand- ing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."</p>	<p>"But I tell you truly, there are some stand- ing here who will not taste of death before they see the kingdom of God."</p>
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This glorious coming of the Son of man, within the lifetime of the Apostles, which is seen as a manifestation of the Kingdom of Christ and God, is susceptible of application to those events later described as the coming of Christ's Kingdom with power. It is important to remember the larger context of this declaration is the promise that Jesus would establish His Church, an event for which He promised Peter the keys of "the Kingdom." This event obviously began to occur on Pentecost 30 A.D. But this latter fact by no means signifies that the complete fulfilment of Jesus' promise, that the Apostles would live to see His coming in His kingdom, occurred only on that

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day and did not also find fulfilment in events even after that date which continued to establish the obvious rule of Christ.

The coming of the Kingdom of God with power from God certainly took place and visibly on the first Pentecost after Jesus' ascension into heaven. (Lk. 24:49; Ac. 1:3, 8; 2:1-47) But despite the marvellous manifestation of God's power by means of the visible and audible demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's presence, obvious to all then present in Jerusalem, this did not signal the public, definitive and final repudiation of the Jewish nation by God nor the end of the theocracy. The Jewish nation and religion continued on a "business-as-usual" basis at least for another forty years, during which time even the Jewish Christians maintained relatively close relations with the Temple and its rites. (Cf. Ac. 21:20b-26) While the Church actually came into existence and preached its message, yet the full vindication of Christ's claims and the tangible evidence of God's rule (Kingdom) were not so clearly seen until the permanent destruction of Jerusalem as the effective center of Judaism and the total collapse of the Temple and its ministry took place.

But if Jesus' promise (Mt. 16:28) be thought to refer to Pentecost, the spread of Christianity or the internal development of the Gospel in the life of the Church, it is necessary to point out that Jesus does not comfort all of His Apostles by affirming that they would *all* live to see these glorious expressions of God's Kingdom. Rather, "there are some standing here." (*eisin times*: all Synoptics) This limitation, as Plummer (*Luke*, 250) notes, "implies the exceptional privilege of some, as distinct from the common experience of all," and provides a test regarding the time meant, a test that excludes Pentecost, the spread of Christianity, at least, as the first or primary reference of this prophecy. This, because all the Apostles and most of Jesus' disciples lived to see those great events, while that to which Jesus now makes reference was to be the exceptional privilege of only John and perhaps a few others of those present who lived to witness the destruction of Jerusalem, an event which signalled the end of the old dispensation and left the Church of Christ fully vindicated and identified as the only bearer of the divine oracles.

It is revealing in this connection to recall that Jesus promised that the very generation of which He was a part would live to see the fulfilment of His prophecy would be desecrated after a disastrous war. The things which took place at that time Jesus describes as the nearing of "the kingdom of God." (Lk. 21:31, 32; cf. Mt. 24:33, 34; Mk. 13:29, 30) But this latter prophecy cannot in any sense refer

to the beginnings of the Church but has reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.

In order, therefore, to concede as much as possible to those who view Jesus' prophecies that His death would not hinder the establishment of the Church and that, rather, some of those then present would live to see Him come in His Kingdom with power, as having some reference to the establishment of the Church, let us admit that the fulfilment of Jesus' words may have included that. But it is urgent that we recall that the Kingdom of God and Christ is always greater than the Church and includes it. It is never exact to say that the Kingdom equals the Church and vice versa. It is better to define the Kingdom as "the Government of God, the dominion of His laws." The Church is that group of people who willingly submit themselves to God's Kingdom. But there are millions of people who still fall under the rule of God who neither accept that dominion nor are members of the Church. Therefore God's Kingdom includes within its sphere of influence all the wicked, and any time God wants to make His powerful rule felt, by bringing swift punishment upon them, He can and He does. This He did in the lifetime of the Apostles and in that generation of Jews by giving sudden, shocking but deserved punishment to those who had rejected Jesus. While this was not specifically a revelation of His Church (although the Church was revealed as the authentic bearer of the divine oracles of God and finally freed from the vestigial shackles of Judaism), it was a definitive revelation of God's Government, or, the Kingdom of God.

If we have correctly understood Jesus' meaning in this text, then, according to the exact wording of Mt. 16:28, this entire revelation of the Kingdom of God is to be spoken of as "the coming of the Son of man."

III. "Therefore I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it." (Mt. 21:43)

While this passage does not speak directly of a coming of the Son of man during the generation of His earthly sojourn, its reference to the transfer of the Kingdom of God is most appropriate and interesting. Coming as it does at the conclusion of the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, and specifically stated as its outcome, it clarifies the entire point of the parable and sheds light on some of its terms. The historical moment suggested within the parable itself, when the Kingdom of God would be conspicuously taken from the Jews who had rejected Jesus and the messages of all the prophets,

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and turned over to another group that would produce the results God intended, is precisely when the Lord of the vineyard comes to His vineyard to put those wretches to a miserable death. At that historical juncture, the Kingdom of God will manifestly become the sole responsibility of a separate group of people. At exactly this point in the narrative (Mt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18) the Lord summarizes two prophecies that describe the menace to the wicked represented by the Messiah Himself. (Cf. Psa. 118:22, 23; Isa. 8:14, 15; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44) He Himself is such a menace, for He is the Stone upon which those, who do not see Him for what He is, break themselves; He it is who will fall upon Israel to crush that wicked nation.

Should it be objected that the coming of the Lord of the Vineyard, to be true to the figure of the parable, refers to God, not to the Son who was cast out of the vineyard dead, it must be recalled that (1) the parable could go only so far in describing the reality without inserting the specific information that "the Son then arose from the dead and reentered the vineyard, destroyed those wicked husbandmen, etc. . ." It was Jesus' purpose, obvious from what He actually did say, to evoke a moral judgment from His hearers' sense of right. It was not His purpose to shock their minds with the resurrection, a point actually unnecessary to carry His meaning. (2) The identification of the Lord of the vineyard with His Son is certainly possible, once we understand the unique character of Jesus' relationship to the Father.

IV. "The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city."

(Mt. 22:7)

The parable of the Marriage of the King's Son (Mt. 22:1-14) covers exactly the same ground as the preceding one (Mt. 21:33-46), with but one major advance in thought. The two parables have two common sections:

<i>The Wicked Husbandmen</i>	<i>The Marriage of the King's Son</i>
1. God's dealing with Israel (Mt. 21:33-41a)	1. God's dealings with Israel (Mt. 22:2-7)
2. God's dealings with the Gentiles (21:41b-43)	2. God's dealings with the Gentiles (22:8-10)
	3. God's dealings with individual Christians (22:11-14)

Notice that the turning point between the first and second sections of both parables is the same and significant for our purpose here: after

God had sent many messengers to those who had a covenant with Him, i.e. those who were His subjects, and after these had rejected His longsuffering mercy, He visited judgment upon them, taking away their rights, their privileged position as His subjects. What He had intended for their blessing, He immediately turned over to others who would appreciate His bounty. A closer look at the key verse, which marks the transfer, shows that in this latter parable Jesus bares the method by which God would put those ungrateful wretches to a miserable death: He would use troops to destroy those murderers and burn their city. While it may be fairly objected that this detail is but part of the scenery of the parable, necessary to its comprehension but not to be taken literally, it is worthy of note that the literal interpretation of this detail does find an exact fulfilment of Jesus' words when in 70 A.D. the Roman Tenth Legion under Titus battered and burned Jerusalem to the ground.

Further, after the removal of those murderers who spurned God's grace, God throws open the invitation to enjoy His blessings to "just any and everybody," in contrast to those who thought they had most right to them, since they had been invited and should have been prepared. At a particular point in Jewish history this great transfer took place: God's army shattered Jewish nationalism for centuries to come, releasing the Church from any further relationship to Judaism, permitting the world to see the universal character of the Church made up of believing Jews and Gentiles.

In light of these two parables, it is not surprising to hear the Master finish describing the true signs, which precede the destruction of Jerusalem, by mentioning the disastrous war in which "this people will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Lk. 21:23, 24) In literal language He predicts the character of the age to follow that of Jewish opportunity: it shall be a Gentile age. Not only would God use Gentiles to initiate the period by punishing the Jews, but the period would be one of gracious opportunity for the conversion of the Gentiles.

V. **"Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord.'"**
(Mt. 23:38, 39)

These heart-broken words of the rejected Messiah were spoken at a point in Jesus' last week in Jerusalem that is important to note

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and probably surprising to some: they were pronounced AFTER the Triumphal Entry (Mt. 21:1-11). Notwithstanding the certainty that He had already pronounced the same lament regarding Jerusalem the killer of prophets (see Lk. 13:31-35), since it is uttered here at the conclusion of Jesus' exposure of the true character of the corrupt leaders of Judaism whose sins defied Divine Justice, this dark warning becomes the sad farewell of Israel's truest Patriot as well as the solemn sentence pronounced by Israel's true Judge. The obvious import of His words announces the desolation and abandonment of "your house." Whether this "house" is to be understood with reference to the Temple, to the city of Jerusalem (see Plummer, *Matthew*, 325), or to the people of Israel ("the house of Israel"), makes no fundamental difference, since they were to be desolated together. Should it be asked when this national disaster would occur, the context of this lament provides the general time-period: "Upon you (will) come all the righteous blood shed on earth . . . all this will come upon this generation." (Mt. 23:35, 36) That the expression "Generation" is to be taken in its literal, usual sense, and not broadly defined to mean "this race or nation," will be noted later on Mt. 24:34, where the meaning is the same.

The point to notice in this warning is Jesus' cryptic prediction that that generation of wicked, unbelieving Jews would certainly live to see the day when He would appear to them under quite other circumstances than those under which they had brutally rejected Him Who was God's last offer of mercy. But such an appearance does not necessitate a personal visible coming, such as He will make visible to all at the end of the world (cf. Mt. 24:27; Rev. 1:7), but rather a coming in judgment upon Palestine. Should it be objected that "You will not see me until . . ." signifies "You will see me after . . ." i.e. that this coming to Israel must be visible to the naked eye, we would respond that it was not a visible personal coming to which Jesus referred when He promised His disciples that they too would live to "see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom." (Mt. 16:28)

Further, Jesus would be hidden, from the then living generation, in a certain sense and for a certain period of time which He describes as "not . . . until you say, 'Blessed be He . . .'" Some feel that this pictures a future conversion of the Jews. If so, this suggestion, in effect, becomes equivalent to saying: "You will truly see me for what I am: your Messiah, when you can join your voices to those who recently acclaimed me their Christ during the Triumphal Entry three days ago." That is, when the Jews were individually converted to

Him, they would be able to take up this welcome. However, rather than promising any future wholesale conversion of Israel, according to some millennial theories, this is a threat! "I hereby leave your house desolate. You must preserve as best you can this city and Temple which have been under Divine protection until now. You will never see me again as your Messiah, until you yourselves can take up the joyous welcome to me. My mission to you as your Savior is finished. What I have said and done for you should have been enough to convert you. From now on I personally will not disturb you. If you wish to be taught and saved by me, the initiative must come from you." This interpretation is possible, but there is another emphasis that can also be harmonized with the judgment Jesus pronounced upon the Hebrew nation: "You will not see me again until that moment when I bring devastating punishment upon the house and nation of Israel. In that horrible moment from you will be wrung that cry, that confession, now willingly owned by others, for which you would even this week crucify me! I will come again in judgment and this generation will see it and acknowledge that I was truly the Messiah, but then it will be too late." Jesus has nothing to say about the willingness of those who thus make the cry He predicts. (Cf. similar cases; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:13; 6:12-27; Ro. 14:11)

Since the day of grace was not yet completely over for Jerusalem and since Pentecost was yet future, some Jews actually did repent and see Jesus as Messiah, as witnessed in the book of Acts, but by no means all of them did so. This simple decision separated the obdurate from the obedient.

If we have understood this text correctly, Jesus is predicting a moment when He Himself would return during that generation, a time when Judaism would behold and acknowledge as vindicated Him Whom they had rejected. It would be a moment of Divine Justice, resulting in the permanent desertion and desolation of Israel's famous "house."

VI. "So also when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place." (Mt. 24:33, 34)

Before dealing with this text it must be observed that there is no masculine pronoun ("he") in the Greek text, as represented here by the RSV text; the "he" may well be substituted with "it" or any indefinite subject, since there is no subject expressed in Greek either in this verse or in the text of Mk. 13:29. Something is very near,

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even at the very gates, about to take place or become visible, of which the signs Jesus had just mentioned are indications (Mt. 24:14-22 and perhaps also vv. 23-31). It is Luke (21:29-32) who, in recording the same material, fills in the blank and identifies the "it" left unspecified by Matthew and Mark: "So also when you see these things taking place, you know that THE KINGDOM OF GOD is near." The very things the disciples will have seen taking place are easily identified. They are the many false alarms preceding the universal proclamation of the Gospel for a testimony to the nations, the specific sign of Jerusalem being surrounded by armies and Jerusalem's fall which included the crushing end of classic Judaism. This, says Luke's narrative, is but a herald of the exceeding nearness of the Kingdom of God. The important Lucan text to remember in this connection is Luke 9:27 (see under point II above) which recorded Jesus' exciting promise: "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste of death before they see the KINGDOM OF GOD." Out of this similarity we detect two tempting conclusions:

1. That the expression "this generation" (Mt. 24:34; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32) is to be taken in its natural sense, referring to the people living in Jesus' time. This phrase is not to be applied to the entire race of the Jews living down through the centuries to the present time, however tempting it might be to see their continued existence, despite the terrible judgments just mentioned, as a real wonder, or sign. This definition is sound since Jesus is talking about the same manifestation of the Kingdom of God during the lifetime of the Apostles. So "this generation" means "the people living right now, in these times," i.e. the generation in which Jesus was on earth.
2. That a significant manifestation of God's Kingdom would take place in Jesus' own generation, long after the beginning of the Church and somehow connected with the destruction of Jerusalem is also deduced from this information.

If the identification of this manifestation of the Kingdom of God with "the Son of man coming in His Kingdom with power," be valid (Mt. 16:28; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 9:27), then that generation of Jewish people would live to see Jesus coming in punitive judgment upon those very people who would have murdered Him. Even if they did not see Him personally coming from heaven in triumphant glory in that era, they would certainly be forced to recognize that their own divine punish-

ment was just, that the Rule of God has passed out of their hands, that the Kingdom of God is now of another people. We who have accepted Jesus recognize that His prophetic words were true and that there is a new people of God, a new holy and royal priesthood, elect out of every nation.

Should it be objected either that "all these things" must include Jesus' prophecies concerning what may be taken to be the events surrounding His own Second Coming (i.e. Mt. 24:23-31; Mk. 13:21-27; Lk. 21:25-28) and therefore Jesus erroneously thought that His own return must occur within that generation, or that "all these things" must include the Second Coming and therefore "this generation" must include all the generations of Jews down to Christ's Second Coming, we respond that all the facts may be otherwise harmonized, rendering both these conclusions incorrect.

J. Marcellus Kik (*Matthew XXIV*) has shown in his excellent exposition of that critical chapter in Christian eschatology that ALL the information in the first section (Mt. 24:4-35) can be interpreted in connection either with the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish nation or with the theological significance of those events. He considers Mt. 24:34 to be the key to the understanding of the times and seasons involved in Jesus' discourse, since he places all that follows that verse within the unknown time limits within which Jesus will return the second time. In the section that most assume has reference to Christ's second coming (Mt. 24:23-31; Mk. 13:21-27; Lk. 21:25-28), Kik believes Jesus is using standardized apocalyptic language for completely earthly events. He feels that this "apocalyptic dialect," created by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel and others, was used by Jesus to convey the fundamentally theological notion that universal dominion, glory and a kingdom has been given to Him as "the Son of man" *par excellence*. (Cf. Dan. 7:13, 14) Kik's contention is that Jesus' "coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mt. 24:30), as well as all the other concomitant phenomena in this section (Mt. 24:27-31), may be so interpreted in light of the apocalyptic language of the OT that even this coming of Jesus, seen by the Jews of that generation, found its fulfilment in the judgment of the Jews and the vindication of Christ's rule in the Church.

While Kik's thesis regarding this section (Mt. 24:23-

31) demands further study, it is certainly undeniable that anyone who deals with prophecies given in a Jewish context must also deal with the problem of apocalyptic language which cannot, repeat, must not, be taken literally without doing violence to the meaning intended by the author. This is true whether one is interpreting Matthew 24, the prophecies of Ezekiel or Daniel or the book of Revelation which calls itself "the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ." (See above on apocalypses.) Kik has shown us a consistent interpretation of the sentences (Mt. 24:33, 34) which includes all the information that precedes them (Mt. 24:4-32). Before we can refute his thesis we must see whether it is reasonable to suppose that Jesus would have inserted a full paragraph of "apocalyptic dialect" into a discourse made up of normal prophetic language (to be taken more or less literally). But before passing on, it is worthy of notice that this thesis posits a "coming of the Son of man" at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the nation.

VII. Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Mt. 26:64)

Under oath before the whole council of the Jews, Jesus not only confessed to being the Christ, the Son of God. He added, without its being required, that a time would come when those seated there before Him, those who were almost entirely and immediately responsible for His judicial murder, would, in a certain sense, behold Him fully vindicated for the magnificent claims He had just made. These tremendous and magnificent claims are stated before the highest court in the Jewish nation. They are stated, therefore, in the most public way, not only as Jesus' self-incrimination in the eyes of that court, but most especially are these words Jesus' highest revelation of Himself, given in the most formal, public way. But what did He mean?

It is no little temptation to regard these claims literally, i.e. with reference to Jesus' Second Coming, especially since John repeats the latter figure in the Revelation (1:7), a book believed to have been written long after the destruction of Jerusalem. But even John's use of these figures in that place cannot be considered definitive, since he may be citing the OT expressions in regard to Jesus, even as Jesus Himself is apparently doing here. The point of both passages

(i.e. Mt. 26:64 and Rev. 1:7) will have to be sought in the use each makes of those expressions.

In the claim itself we have two separate Messianic references:

1. "Seated at the right hand," as an application of Ps. 110:1 becomes a high claim to messiahship, since this passage was held to be messianic. (Cf. Mt. 22:43-45; Edersheim, *Life*, II, 720, 721) Taken also in connection with the formulation of the oath by which the high priest held Jesus obligated to commit Himself ("Tell us of you are the Christ, the Son of God." Mt. 26:63), this phrase might also call to mind the great Anointed Son of God who as King would rule the nations (Psa. 2; Cf. Jn. 1:49; Edersheim, *Life*, II, 716, 717).
2. "Son of man . . . coming on the clouds of heaven," is a phrase which the high priest would have recognized as a reference to Dan. 7:13, 14. (Cf. Edersheim, *Life*, II, 733, 734)

While it may be possible to view these two references as two separate eschatological events or phases of Christ's ultimate divine majesty and coming to judgment in divine glory at the conclusion of the world, yet it would harmonize better with Jesus' immediate situation to interpret His admittedly apocalyptic language in literal language thus: "I admit to being the Christ, the Son of God. Though you consider this blasphemy, nevertheless I can tell you that you will live to see my most daring claims vindicated! You will see my messianic majesty and greatness and dominion as spoken of by the Psalmist and Daniel." Rather than quote the entire passages in each case, Jesus chose key phrases that rapidly summarized the messianic impact of His sovereignty. Lenski (*Matthew*, 1066) is probably right in deciding that

Jesus adds this statement in order to bring his judges to a realization of just whom they are about to condemn to death. He is defining for them who "the Messiah, the Son of God" is: he whom they themselves will see in his divine power, rule and majesty.

No, those Sanhedrists were not to be through with Jesus when they had crucified Him, for just four days later God would designate Him "Son of God in power . . . by His resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:5). Not long thereafter this same Sanhedrin had to deal with the rapidly spreading Gospel of the risen Christ preached by a handful of disciples. The chief point of the Apostles' preaching was "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God had

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designated both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified!" (Ac. 2:33, 36; 4:10-12; 5:29-32) God's mercy with these Jewish leaders lasted yet 36 years longer (30-66 A.D.), until the Jewish War began. It was then that the storm broke over Palestine that lashed the nation economically, politically and religiously reducing it to a smoking shambles of its former glory. It was then that Jesus came in judgment upon that people, and the Sanhedrists lived to see it.

There are several problems involved in this interpretation of this text:

1. Jesus does not here in the trial scene predict the fall of Jerusalem and His coming in judgment, as He had done earlier on many other public and private occasions. (Cf. Lk. 13:35; 19:41-44; Mt. 23:29-39) It would have been so much more convenient for the theory of His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem and Judaism, had He done so. But He did not clearly speak of this, so, so much the worse for the theory if it fails to explain the language He used.
2. If we believe that Jesus were using "apocalyptic language" derived from the Psalms and Daniel to express His meaning, then, when this same "apocalyptic jargon" is reduced to literal language by expressing the literal meaning of the figures used—by Daniel especially—then there is left no literal "Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven," (itself part of the vision). What is left is Jesus' claim to be vindicated as the reigning, glorious Messiah in the near future in a manner observable by His jurors. One cannot "translate" figurative language into literal, and still hope to make direct use of some part of that figure in his literal interpretation. This is "having one's cake and eating it too!" This observation is not fatal to the theory sustained here, because it is not argued that Jesus appeared over Jerusalem in a manner visible to the Jews, when He punished that city and nation. So the "coming (of the Son of man) on the clouds of heaven" harmonizes perfectly as a concept, with the "coming of the Son of man" described elsewhere.

Answers to these problems may be the following: Jesus meant more than His vindication upon the Jews in the destruction of their Temple and nation, so He did not limit this appearance to the Sanhedrists to merely that single event. He meant His resurrection, the establishment of His Church, the victory of His Gospel, the validation of His claims in the Apostles' ministry and finally, in the generation, the total

collapse of all that those Sanhedrists stood for: the Temple, its ministry, their nation and the place that these Sanhedrists held dear. (Cf. Jn. 11:48) There is no doubting the obvious reference to Dan. 7:13, 14, because of the special rage, scorn and incredulity of the high priest that Jesus would commit Himself so far, incriminate Himself so completely. What is sure is that these Jewish rulers were not to see a personal and visible coming in their generation. Rather, as Kik (*Matthew XXIV*, 84) puts it:

This high priest was to see Christ sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven. Can this possibly refer to Christ's second coming when the description "sitting on the right hand of power" precludes such interpretation? It means rather that after the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus would ascend into heaven and take his place on the right hand of God, the Father, as described in Daniel 7:13, 14. . . . When Christ ascended into heaven he was seated upon his Messianic throne. This is in full accord with the declaration of Christ as he was about to ascend into heaven: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." One of the first manifestations of the power and the glory of the Messiah was the destruction of the city that refused to accept him as King and Savior. This act of judgment gave evidence that all power had indeed been given unto him. He did come in the clouds of heaven and rained destruction upon those who had rejected and crucified him. This caused the tribes of the earth to mourn. The sign of the reigning Christ was seen in the destruction of Jerusalem. And the contemporary generation, indicated in verse 34 (i.e., Mt. 24:34), witnessed fulfilment of these things as Christ had prophesied.

Outside of Matthew, let us notice some other texts that suggest the same sort of a coming of Christ in judgment.

VIII. "The coming of the Lord is at hand." (Jas. 5:8)

This verse has particular force, inasmuch as James, if he be identified with James the Just, is remembered by tradition as spending most of his labors in Palestine and particularly in Jerusalem. Accordingly, his death in that city prior to its destruction would lend particular force to the admonitions to patient, uncomplaining endurance, since within a few short years, historically speaking, the Lord would actually come in judgment upon Judaism, snatching away from the

unbelievers among the Jews the power to persecute Christians. Objections to this view come from the text itself where the actual wording used by James may be much more technically intended than this interpretation permits. In verses 7 and 8 he adopts the expression *parousia tou kurion*, a phrase almost if not always used with reference to Christ's Second Coming.

IX. "Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." (Heb. 10:25)

While this verse has no direct reference to a coming of the Son of man in the lifetime of the Apostles, it does make use of another technical term usually thought of as having reference to the great day of the Lord's wrath and judgment, especially that to be witnessed at the end of the world. But in the same context the writer cites Habakkuk 2:3, 4 with specific reference to the Messiah (Heb. 10:37, *ho erchomenos hēxei*) On this unusual rendering of the Hebrew text, Keil (*Minor Prophets*, II, 71) comments:

The LXX have rendered *chi boh jaboh: hōti erchōmenos hēxei*, which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. x. 37) has still further defined by adding the article, and, connecting it with *mikrōn hōson hōson* of Isa. xxvi. 20 (LXX), has taken it as Messianic, and applied to the speedy coming of the Messiah to judgment; not, however, according to the exact meaning of the words, but according to the fundamental idea of the prophetic announcement. For the vision, the certain fulfilment of which is proclaimed by Habakkuk, predicts the judgment upon the power of the world, which the Messiah will bring to completion.

The notes of Milligan (*Hebrews*, 284, 292ff) may be of help here:

To what day does our author here refer? To the day of judgment, say Delitzsch, Alford, Moll and others; when Christ will come in person to raise the dead and reward every man according to his works. But this interpretation is manifestly erroneous. To me at least it seems perfectly obvious that the Apostle refers here to a day which both he and his brethren were looking for as a day that was very near at hand: a day that was about to come on that generation, and try the faith of many. And hence I am constrained to think that Macknight, Scott, Stuart, and others, that the reference is

most likely to the day of Jerusalem's overthrow. Christ himself had foretold the near approach of that event (Matt. 24:34); he had also spoken of the signs of its coming and of the great calamities that would accompany it (Matt. 24:4-41 sic: 29-31?). No doubt, therefore, the Christians in Palestine were all looking forward with much anxiety to the time when this prophecy would be fulfilled. They would naturally speak of it as "the day," the day of trial; the day when seeing Jerusalem encompassed with armies, they would themselves have to flee to the mountains (Luke 21:20-22). . . . But to refer to it exclusively to the day when Christ will come in person to judge the world is clearly inadmissible. See notes on vers. 37. . . .

37. *For yet a little while*, etc. More literally: for yet a little little while (that is, a very little while), He who is coming (*ho erchōmenos*) will come, and will not tarry. The coming One here spoken of is manifestly Christ himself. But what is meant by his coming? To what coming does our author here refer? Many say, "To His second personal coming." But this is plainly inconsistent with the scope of the Apostle's exhortation, as well as with the truth itself. His obvious design in the passage is to encourage the Hebrew brethren in their begun Christian course, on the ground that the coming of Christ was then very near at hand, when they would all be delivered from the snares, reproaches and violence of their persecutors. But how could he consistently and truthfully encourage them to do this, on the ground that the second personal advent of Christ was then very near at hand? It will not do to say with some that the Apostles themselves so believed and so taught. They did neither, but just the reverse. For when some of the Thessalonian brethren so understood Paul's teaching (I Thess. 4:15-17), he promptly addressed to them a second letter, in which he very emphatically corrected their mistake. . . . (2 Thess. 2:1-3). This, then is a clear and satisfactory refutation of the charge that the Apostles believed and taught that the second personal coming of Christ was near at hand in their own day. And so also is the book of Revelation a refutation of it. . . . The coming of Christ, as referred to in our text, must therefore mean, not his second personal coming but, his coming in providence most likely, to destroy Jerusalem, and so to

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deliver his elect from the violent persecutions to which they had long been subjected by the unbelieving Jews (Matt. 24:29-41 sic: 29-31?) To this Christ himself refers encouragingly in Luke 21:28, where, speaking of the signs of Jerusalem's approaching ruin, he says, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." . . .

This view of the matter is also further corroborated by the fact that our author finds in the prophecy of Habakkuk, concerning the overthrow of the Chaldean monarchy, language so appropriate to his purpose that he here takes and applies it to his own; thereby showing that the two cases are very analogous . . . it will be seen that our author does not quote the exact words of God's reply to the Prophet; but as is usual in such cases of accommodation (see Rom. 10:6-8), he so modifies the language as to adapt it to the case in hand. The main lesson is, however, the same in both Hebrews and Habakkuk; viz.: that God would certainly come and execute his purposes at the appointed time: and that while the proud and self-reliant would of necessity perish under the righteous judgments of God, the just man's faith, if it wavered not, would certainly support him under the severest trials.

This was all impressively illustrated in the fall of Jerusalem. The unbelieving Jews were all slain or taken captive; but not a Christian perished in the siege. . . .

X. "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day." (Ac. 2:20)

Did the events prophetically described by Joel (2:28-32) and cited by Peter (Ac. 2:17-21) find exhaustive fulfilment on the day Pentecost, or were they not rather but the beginning of a series of events that began that day, but did not receive complete expression until the final fall of the judgment of God upon the Jewish nation, the destruction of Jerusalem and the conclusive end of the Jewish economy based upon its priesthood, sacrifices and Temple? One feature of Joel's prophecy, yet cited by Peter, that has no apparent fulfilment at all on Pentecost is the figure of the great astronomical portents: "And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned

to darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." (Joel 2:30; Ac. 2:19, 20)

"The day of the Lord," as shown by Butler (*Minor Prophets*, 84ff), is a technical term used in the OT with four major significations, hence, having as many different kinds of realization in the history of God's dealings with men: (1) judgments upon the covenant people; (2) redemptions of the covenant people; (3) judgments upon the nations; (4) redemptions of the nations. Joel himself in this case describes the particular "day of the Lord" that must occur in his own time, using the same apocalyptic language of judgment. Several times in his description he speaks of astronomical cataclysms (Joel 2:1, 2, 10, 11; 3:15) This gives a specific flavor of "punitive judgment" to these symbols, so that when they are used by Peter, his audience could not but shiver at the awesome threat and divine warning implied in those figures.

If we have understood Mt. 24:4-32 correctly (see above under Mt. 24:34, point VI), it may be that the celestial phenomena, described in the section most often interpreted with reference to the Second Coming (i.e. Mt. 24:29-31), have nothing at all to do with those heavenly bodies. Instead, there, as here, we may see the standard apocalyptic vision of divine judgment. As has been repeated many times before, divine judgment did actually fall on Palestine many years after Pentecost. But is it possible to apply this prophecy just to the fall of the Jewish nation? What has been said earlier about the use of apocalyptic stereotyped language might be true here, inasmuch as we have a clear example of an OT prophet cited whose own contextual information leads us to view his language as highly figurative, hence NOT intending LITERAL celestial phenomena. (Cf. Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2, 10, 11; 3:14, 15 with Isa. 13:1-22 esp. 9, 10; 5:30; 24:21-23; 50:3) While it is true that the Christian writers can speak of the final judgment as "the great and notable day of the Lord," yet the use of this phrase in the OT makes it doubtful whether every appearance of this phrase in the NT must necessarily be applied exclusively and always to the great final judgment at the end of the world. Even the salvation of the believers here predicted (Ac. 2:21) proved to be two-fold salvation, not only of their souls, but also of their lives. They believed Jesus and so were saved from their sins; they believed Jesus' prophecies and so were not destroyed on the great day of the Lord when Jesus judged Jerusalem and the unbelieving Jews.

XI. "The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane and sober for your prayers." (I Pet. 4:7)

These words were addressed by Peter "to the exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," (1 Pet. 1:1) probably prior to 70 A.D., since traditional dating of Peter's own martyrdom is placed prior to that date. But would this sentence have much point for the exiles of the Diaspora living in lands distant from Palestine, whose lives and security would not be materially affected by the vicissitudes in Judea? If these are primarily Jewish Christians, as the words of the inscription imply, Peter's admonition would take on particular strength and receive special fulfilment as the nerve center of world-wide Judaism would be torn to the ground, never to rise again for centuries, if ever. The value of this exhortation to these distant Christians would be obvious, since the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, God's chosen house, would probably be looked upon as almost, if not entirely incredible. It would probably be less incredible to these Christians than it was to the disciples who heard Jesus predict these events originally (Mt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21), since the Apostles themselves could have repeated much of the Lord's prophetic discourse to their converts. Hence, just a word of reminder, such as this exhortation of Peter's, would suffice.

But should it be objected that Peter says "The end of ALL things is at hand," it must be remembered that Jesus used similar language to describe the destruction of Jerusalem. (Cf. "all these things" Mt. 24:33, 34 and parallels) Or if it be objected that Peter's words, being indefinitely stated, are also capable of *double entendre*, this is true, but not fatal to the theory suggested here. If it be thought that Peter's words here should be interpreted in light of his later message (2 Pet. 3:8-13), then we respond that here the words are indefinitely aimed at some "end near at hand," whereas Peter in the other passage addressed himself to the scornful demand made by mockers: "Where is the promise of His coming (*parousia*)?" an obvious reference to the Second Coming.

PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THIS THEORY OR ITS PRESENTATION

1. One of the most painfully obvious weaknesses of this study is the fact that it does not take into adequate account the various differing views of each single passage. There are certainly other

passages that should be presented here, just as there are more objections to some used here. As a necessary consequence, the presentation of the evidence is quite one-sided. The justification for this presentation lies therefore in the hope that the reader is already familiar with the other views to which this presentation is but an alternative. This collection of coincidences and single texts must be examined in their contexts in their entirety to appreciate the impact they represent.

2. Another weakness, more serious to the suggestion that the special "coming of the Son of man" refers to Jesus' coming in judgment upon the Jewish nation, is the fact that none of the inspired writers ever declares this interpretation to be the theological meaning of the demise of the Jewish city and nation. This is true, unless the figures of Revelation be so interpreted. (Cf. Rev. 11) Our present state of knowledge regarding the date of NT books gives no mathematical certainty regarding the relationship between the writing of the bulk of the NT books and the date of the Jewish War (66-70 A.D.) While the conservative scholars tend to place the dates of most of them before that tragedy, yet the enigma remains when the Johannine Scriptures are considered. If John wrote considerably after the fall of Jerusalem, why did he not once mention that fact, even though he talked all around the subject of Jerusalem itself in his Gospel and in his Apocalypse could have made reference to it?

There may be other weaknesses too, but let us ask ourselves:

WHAT IS TO BE GAINED IF THIS THEORY BE ACCEPTED AS TRUE?

1. This suggestion provides a possible harmonization for other passages of the NT that contained problems that had seemed insoluble under other schemes, rendering it more difficult to accept the Gospel at face value, for those who did not see this solution. It is not necessary, on the basis of Gospel studies, to conclude that "Jesus was mistaken, since He thought that His own second coming must take place shortly after the fall of the Jewish economy." Nor is it necessary to conclude that "the Apostles themselves and the early Christians erroneously presumed that they would live until the Second Coming." Worse yet, is the opinion that "the discourses in which the eschatological events are predicted are not factual recordings of anything Jesus ever actually said, but are the theological opinions of later ages put into the mouth of Jesus to give them greater credi-

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bility." Instead, if this solution here offered be valid, then the exegesis upon which these unbelieving conclusions were based, may need correction.

2. If this suggestion be true, that Jesus actually came in judgment upon the Jews, then, of course, many texts that were formerly considered as dealing exclusively with the Second Coming will now be subtracted from discussions of that subject. As a result, the texts that actually deal with the Second Coming will be seen much more clearly, since the confusion, created by trying to weigh texts on the destruction of Jerusalem into the conclusions about the Second Coming, would, presumably, no longer exist, since the texts about Jesus' judgment on Judaism would not have to be considered. Needless to say, such clarity made available for eschatological studies surrounding the Second Coming would be of great value. (Rev. 1:3) This clarity would help to place eschatological studies on a surer basis and give them respectability in the eyes of the average Christian who must throw up his hands in despair in face of the present state of confusion in the field.

3. Out of this last expression comes another conclusion. This suggestion that Jesus actually came in judgment upon the Jewish world in the first century would provide us one more reasonably clear evidence that Jesus intends to keep His Word about that future "great day of the Lord" when He will come personally and visibly to judge the nations. His promise would be enough for the average believer. But the certainty of His promise is driven home with redoubled force, when men realize that He has already clearly shown the greatness of His power and the dependability of His promises in the historically verifiable act of judgment upon Judaism in the events beginning with the unsuccessful Jewish Revolt and the disastrous fall of Jerusalem with all its religious consequences for all future ages of both Jerusalem and the Church. Jesus is a Gentleman who keeps His appointments! This, of course, poses an unveiled threat to every complacent person who frankly enjoys his sinful way of life. The eschatological hope of the Christians is not unfounded, wishful thinking, but rather a splendidly concrete reality already in motion, of which the smashing judgment of unbelieving Judaism and the glorious vindication of the Church's claims was but an earnest and evidence.

4. The historical importance of the destruction of Jerusalem and the blotting out of the Jewish theocracy is inestimable to Christianity in the following ways, listed by Newman (*Manual of Church History*,

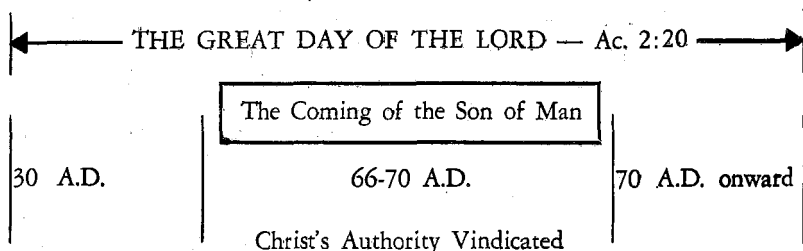
I, 118, 119; see also Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, I, 402, 403):

- a. It marked in the most unmistakable way the end of the old dispensation and the complete emancipation of Christianity from the thralldom of Judaism. It was henceforth impossible for any one to observe the ceremonial law in its fullness. No doubt the Pauline type of Christianity would ultimately have become dominant apart from this fearful interposition of Divine Providence. Judaistic Christianity was to persist in the form of sects, but catholic Christianity could no longer be Judaizing.
- b. The destruction of the city was very commonly looked upon by Christians as a divine judgment on the Jewish people for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. It may safely be said that if the Jews as a body, or a large portion of them, had accepted Christ as their Saviour and had become partakers of the Spirit of Christ, the Jewish Zealots, who brought ruin upon their people, would not have arisen or would not have secured popular support.
- c. The great catastrophe may be regarded as a direct fulfilment of our Lord's predictions as recorded in Matt. 21:43 and 23:37-39 and in Luke 21:20-28.
- d. This great event is regarded by many as a fulfilment of our Lord's prophecies regarding his speedy coming in his kingdom (Matt. 10:23; 16:28; 24:34), and of such passages in the apostolic Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles as represent the Lord's advent as imminent. It seems harsh to associate so glorious an event as the Lord's coming with a catastrophe so terrible; yet there can be no question but that the destruction of the city and the theocracy gave a freedom and a universality to the gospel which mark an epoch in the history of Christianity and placed the gradually advancing kingdom of Christ on a firm basis.
- e. There is no reason to think that the Roman authorities at this time discriminated carefully between Christianity and Judaism in favor of the former; but the time had past when the accusations of Jews against Christians would be heeded by the civil courts. Henceforth the Jews were without political influence and were treated with contempt by the Roman officials.

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In view of the foregoing, consider the following

SKETCH OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL
CONCLUSIONS REPRESENTED



Descent of the Holy Spirit	Preaching of the Gospel to all nations for a testimony to them	Final rupture between the Church and Judaism	Church of Christ alone vindicated as the only authorized bearer of the divine oracles
Pentecost	Persecutions False Christs National disorders Wars, natural upheavals	Destruction of Temple Fall of Jerusalem End of Classic Judaism Dispersion of Jews	Unsuccessful Uprisings and final dispersion of Jews (general: 115-117; Bar-Kochbah, 132-135)

Jewish Theocracy finally repudiated by God

SOME FURTHER COMMENTS ON
ARGUMENTS FOR JESUS' DEITY
AND AUTHORITY

I. HIS PRECISION AS A PROPHET

G. C. Morgan (*Matthew*, 104): "One of the most profound reasons for trusting Christ today in the matter of all Christian service

is that here and elsewhere He revealed His perfect knowledge of conditions which no man could forecast, and which yet have transpired exactly as He foretold them." What is more significant, as Morgan declares, is that the keenest of human foresight could not foresee the distinct changes of direction that history, in direct relationship to His disciples, would have taken. "Let us notice that the change of conditions created by the crucifixion of Jesus, and again by the fall of Jerusalem, are self-evident. The position of these men was greatly changed after the crucifixion of Jesus; and it was greatly changed again when the principal force in persecuting them was broken. It is perfectly clear that the King foresaw these things, and that He understood perfectly the whole movement of the years that stretched before Him."

II. HIS CANDOR, HONESTY AND COMPASSION

Barclay (*Matthew I*, 385): "Here is my task for you—at its grimmest and at its worst—do you accept it?"

McGarvey, (*Matthew-Mark*, 95): "There is a contrast between Jesus and the originators of earthly enterprises, whether secular or religious. It is the custom of the latter to paint in glowing colors the brighter prospects of the causes they plead, and to conceal from both themselves and others the darker side of the picture. But Jesus presents faithfully before His disciples all of the hardships and sufferings which await them, not omitting death itself—and death, it may be, on the cross. The foreknowledge displayed is proof of His divinity, while the compassion and the candor which accompany it are such as we would expect in the Son of God."

Notice that His revelations of the brutal realities in the fearful future are not given in a brutal manner. The Lord compassionately shows the help available in time of need.

Though it is not the usual way to win followers, nevertheless Jesus appeals to that adventurer hidden in the heart of every man. In the long run, one does not attract MEN to the easy way by inducements of comfort, advancement, ease, and fulfillment of worldly ambitions. It is the honest challenge of the heroic that ultimately appeals to men. The Church softens this approach and waters her message to her peril!

III. HIS ROYAL DEMANDS

Plummer (*Matthew*, 157): "For My sake.' Again we have a claim which is monstrous if He who makes it is not conscious of

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being Divine. Who is it that is going to own us or renounce us before God's judgment-seat (32, 33)? Who is it that promises with such confidence that the man who loses his life for His sake shall find it? And these momentous utterances are spoken as if the Speaker had no shadow of doubt as to their truth, and as if He expected that His hearers would at once accept them. What is more, thousands of Christians, generation after generation, have shaped their lives by them and have proved their truth by repeated experience."

IV. HIS ASSUMED AUTHORITY

Bengel, (cited in *PHC*, 242): "Great is the authority of conferring authority." Notice how simply Jesus is reported to have done it. (Mt. 10:1) There is no great apologetic which lists reasons why Jesus should have the right to confer authority upon His disciples. Matthew says, "He simply did it, and that was that!"

Note His claim, everywhere implicit in the chapter, that our faith in Jesus determines our standing before God.

Other points suggested by Lewis and Booth, *PHC*, XXII, 245:

V. THE CONSISTENCY OF THE SAVIOR—The prayers He enjoins, the provisions He makes, the instructions He gives, are all of a piece.

VI. THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SAVIOR.—He does not set His workmen to begin at the top of the ladder. He does not ask them at first what, to many among them, will not be too easy at last. Not first apart from Him, but first by His side.

VII. THE FORETHOUGHT OF THE SAVIOR.—He sets them at first to that which will help to qualify them for what has to be done at the last.

CHAPTER ELEVEN OUTLINES

Section 24

JESUS RECEIVES QUESTIONS FROM JOHN AND PREACHES SERMON ON JOHN (11:2-19)