

10. State the occasion upon which Jesus had spoken of His resurrection as a "sign" before this. Note whatever similarities may exist between the several situations in which He gave this sign.
11. Explain the Jewish usage involved in the phrases: "three days and three nights." What do the Gospel writers describe as the fulfilment of this expression?
12. Did Jesus fulfil the "sign of Jonah"? How? When?
13. How does the story of the seven demons in a beautiful apartment connect with Jesus' teaching on signs and on repentance?
14. What is repentance, as illustrated in the account of Jonah?
15. How much may be learned about demonology from the story of the demon here narrated? If nothing, why not? If so, what information is to be gained?
16. Explain how that generation of Jews was like the demon-possessed man.

Section 30

JESUS REFUSES TO ALLOW FLESHLY TIES TO BIND HIM

(Parallels: Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21)

TEXT: 12:46-50

46. While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him.
47. And one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee.
48. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?
49. And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren!
50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Discuss Jesus' personal manner of life: Where was His home? What was His trade or craft? What means of support had He during His ministry? What were some of His personal habits or practices? How would you analyze Jesus of Nazareth as a human being? Do not try to dodge the issue by saying He is

incapable of analysis, even though you may have to revise your estimate many times and remain, finally, unsatisfied with your attempts. Take a long look at Jesus to see how you would have reacted to Him, had YOU lived in HIS family, in HIS town, had you been a part of His world.

- b. What does this text reveal about His relation to His family?
- c. What, do you think, was the purpose of Mary and His brothers in trying to talk with Jesus at precisely this time? Do you think their purpose was perfectly normal and neutral, a simple wish to be with this beloved Member of their family? Or, looking at the situation from Jesus' standpoint, do you decide that their purpose was hostile, a desire to save Him from the necessary, inevitable clashes and climax of His ministry? Is it important to know this in order to understand Jesus' refusal?
- d. What is the meaning of Jesus' response? Is He refusing to see Mary and His brothers? Is He refusing to claim kinship with them? What is the point of His obviously symbolical remark?
- e. What does this passage teach, if anything, on the subject of the possibility of Mary's becoming an intercessor between God and/or Jesus on the one hand, and sinners on earth, on the other?
- f. Do you think Jesus means to elevate every brother, sister or mother on earth to the same level with His earthly kinfolks? What is then important about whether He intended to do so or not?
- g. If you take the view that Jesus' kinfolks were intending to "save Him from Himself," hence were essentially hostile to the ministry He was performing, what is so very wrong with the request they made?
- h. Do you think Jesus ever gave Mary and His brothers the interview they sought? On what basis do you say this?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

While Jesus was still talking with the people about the accusation of His being in league with Satan and the theologians' demand for a sign of His authority to teach, His mother, Mary, and His brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas, arrived at the crowded house where He was teaching. However, they could not get near Him, because of the people crowded all around Him. So they remained outside, requesting to speak with Him. They sent a messenger to Him to call Him: "Look, your mother and brothers are here, standing outside, asking to speak to you."

But Jesus sent them this answer, replying to the man who had

brought the message, "Who is really my mother? Who are really my brothers?"

Then looking round at that circle of faces all around Him, Jesus, with a sweeping motion of his arm pointed to His disciples, remarking: "Here are my real mother and brothers! You see, anyone who listens to God's Word and does what my heavenly Father wants, that person is really my brother, sister and mother! That is all the family I really recognize!"

SUMMARY

While Jesus was busy teaching, His physical family called Him to step aside to speak with them, since the crowd was too dense to permit their getting near Him. But Jesus refused to let family ties bind Him, since the only significant bond, as far as Jesus is concerned, is the tie of discipleship and obedience to God.

NOTES

I. REGARDFUL RECALL TO REPRESS RECKLESSNESS (12:46, 47)

12:46 While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. While . . . speaking creates a definite link with the discourse that has just been recorded and provides a clue to explain this move made by Jesus' relatives. The total context of this episode is peculiarly illuminating! (Cf. Mt. 12:22-50 with Mk. 3:19-21, 31-35; Lk. 8:19-21) The events which lead up to this section, and perhaps motivate Mary and her sons to react as they do, are:

1. A busy ministry that permitted Jesus and His men no leisure even to partake of necessary food. (Mk. 3:20)
2. The vicious attacks by ecclesiastical spies from Jerusalem (Mk. 3:22; Mt. 12:24) Did this charge seem to have just enough truth back of it to convince His family that Jesus was becoming so absorbed in His work as to be losing His mental balance? Did this trigger their move to seize Him?
3. His own alarming language, so unique and audacious for Him whom they took to be simply their kinsman, may have prompted this action.

These factors make the solicitous care of His kinsfolk the more understandable: they wanted to save Jesus from Himself and from the dangers to which He seemed oblivious. (Mk. 3:21) And yet even

their misguided solicitousness for His health and safety make the situation, from which they would save Him, even more critical, for they are interfering with the directions and schedule of the Son of God! What may be surmised about the internal family connections of Jesus?

1. The real atmosphere of Jesus' former home life is apparently only good. Even though this interference on the part of Mary shows her failure to comprehend His mission, it does not betray distrust. Even if the assertion "He is beside Himself," is her secret fear and the brothers' open expression, it is not to be construed as a criticism, but as the anxious conviction of those who love Him.
2. This action of His brothers in united agreement does not prove anything one way or the other about their age in reference to the question as to their exact relationship to Jesus. (See "*The Brethren of the Lord*," special study after 13:54-58; also Mk. 6:3; Jn. 7:3-5; Ac. 1:15) *ISBE* (520) notes that:

When it is urged that their attempts to interfere with Jesus indicate a superiority which, according to Jewish custom, is inconsistent with the position of younger brothers, it may be answered that those who pursue an unjustifiable course are not models of consistency.

Lange (*Matthew*, 231) agrees that what is happening here is not the expression of an unbelief that deliberately rejects evidence, but rather the practical, however temporary, failure to be what the word "disciple" really requires of the one who wears that title:

They do not press through the crowd, nor lay violent hands on Him; they send a respectful message, and patiently await His answer. Besides, we find that some time afterward the brothers of Jesus are not of the opinion that He should not work at all, but rather ask Him to transfer the scene of His operations from Galilee to Judea, and openly to come forward before all the world (John 7:1, etc.). In this light the conduct of His family must be viewed. Their unbelief consisted not in doubting Him, but in imagining that it was theirs to preserve and direct Him by their worldly policy. Meyer is therefore mistaken when he maintains that the mother of Jesus was, at the time, not decided in her faith. Such

instances as the later suggestion of His brothers (John 7:1), the history of Peter (Matt. 16:23), that of Thomas (John 20), nay, that of all the disciples, prove that during the period of spiritual development prior to the Feast of Pentecost, there were seasons when even believers might for a time be unbelieving, *i.e.*, self-willed, and deficient in the spirit of full surrender to Christ.

However well-intentioned this interruption of Jesus' career, however highly motivated, it is nonetheless an interference and must not be tolerated. Worse still it is the sort of interruption in which Jesus' mother and brothers make their claims upon Him felt as their Relative. Had Mary forgotten those words that so early had begun to separate Him from her? (Lk. 2:49) Or that His earthly course was not to be dictated by His earthly, fleshly ties? (Jn. 2:4) Had these brethren known what surely their mother must have known, would they have been so quick to suppose they could counsel Him or teach Him wisdom or pretend to know what was best for Him or the movement He had set in motion? **Standing without.** Aside from the accidental circumstances which caused them to be outside, what were they doing there **standing without**, when they should have been inside listening to Him! Again, if even their own special relationship to Jesus gave the advantage of many private conversations with Him, by what right can they interrupt the lessons of others who heard Him gladly?

12:47 **And one said to him.** This almost accidental notice of the man who shouted to Jesus affords us insight into the informal teaching situation and atmosphere maintained by Jesus. The man felt he could interrupt the Lord without incurring censure. But the man, by his good services, is also contributing to that view of governments that promotes the competition and contrasts involved in hierarchy, dynasty, honors, position and authority. Even though he is simply trying to do a service for Jesus and His relatives, he unconsciously elevates these relatives above common disciples, since these latter can wait while questions important to the family are attended to. It is as if the very relationship which they enjoyed guaranteed them His attention prior to that for common followers. And even if none of this was intended by that generous, unknown person, it has since become the doctrine of an apostate Church and deserved to be dealt with immediately and decisively. This, Jesus does next.

II. REFINED REBUFF REJECTING THE REPROOF (12:48)

12:48 **But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?** Were Jesus merely human and a king of earthly governments, He might have been expected to stop His instruction, either make room for them to find special places in His audience until finished, or, in deference to their urgency or desire for privacy, go along with them. (Cf. 1 Kg. 2:19, 20) Instead, "The words of Jesus have the undoubted ring of conscious authority and express the determination of one who wills the control of His own life." (ISBE, 2002)

Though framed in the interrogative form, Jesus' question, uttered in all seriousness without even the faintest accent of scorn or satire, becomes the strongest kind of denial that family ties were more binding upon Him, or more important to Him, than spiritual relationships. In His own personal case He damns that old skeptical proverb: "Blood is thicker than water!" (= Family ties are more binding than those formed through one's baptismal relationship.) And the mentality of the people to whom this saying is directed renders it so much more poignant. The oriental concept of family solidarity had probably no more vigorous exponents than the Hebrews, since the reciprocal responsibilities of parents and children had been ingrained in them for centuries. Notwithstanding the many unfortunate exceptions to this fine rule, where family ties counted for little (cf. Micah 7:2-7; Jer. 9:4), nevertheless the concept of family was very highly developed among the Jews. (Cf. Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, chaps. VIII and IX.) Despite the background of His people and His own deep love for His kin, He must publicly deny what their request implied. Remember A. B. Bruce's sensitive comment (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, Synoptic Gospels, 194):

There are idealists, promoters of pet schemes, and religious devotees whom it would cost no effort to speak thus; not an admirable class of people. It did cost Jesus an effort, for He possessed a warm heart and unblighted affections.

But Jesus' denial, that physical bonds are somehow more important to Him than spiritual, has proved to be not only essential for Mary's understanding at the time, but also for His followers' instruction in all ages. PHC-22 (317) has it:

It certainly is no fault of Mary herself, whose name should ever be held in the highest respect by all who love the Lord, that a corrupt church, reversing all the teaching of the

church's Head, not only elevated the earthly relationship far above the spiritual, but in virtue of this relationship put the mother in the place of the Son, and taught an ignorant people to worship her and trust in her as a mediator. But the fact that this was done, and is persisted in to this day, shows that when our Lord set aside the mere earthly relationship as one that must be merged in the spiritual, He was correcting not only a pardonable error of Mary, but a most unpardonable error that afterwards, without any encouragement whatever from her, should be committed in her name.

That the Roman Catholic denomination persists in this error is demonstrated by the Documents of the Second Vatican Council in the following references: "The Liturgy" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) Chap. V, paragraph 103; "The Church" (*Lumen gentium*), Chap. II, par. 59; Chap. III, parr. 60-62, 66-69; "The Apostate of the Laity," (*Apostolicam actuositatem*), Chap. I, par 4; "Ministry and Sacerdotal Life," (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*), Chap. III, par. 18; "Missionary Activity," (*Ad Gentes*), Chap. III, par. 42. The Closing Speech, Third Session, 21 November 1964, contains the proclamation of Mary as "The Mother of the Church" and worthy of worship, as well as a prayer directed to Mary.

Jesus is the Master of interruptions! With perfect mastery He deals quickly with this badly-timed, wrong-headed interference caused by people who should have known better. Without hedging about His fleshly relation to His kin or without getting embarrassed with them for their presumption, Jesus not only does not scold them for putting this unnecessary pressure upon Him, but rather, He deftly fields their appeal and turns it into a superb opportunity to reveal what we needed to know about His kinship! Jesus was fast on His feet, because He was long on His knees: these answers came out of His communion with the Father. Study how the Master Orator, even in this preplexing situation, tosses this surprising question into the air to excite even greater interest in the answer. And this question, put in exactly this form, automatically drives the hearer to seek a profounder meaning to the terms **mother and brothers**.

III. RECOGNITION OF HIS REAL RELATIVES (12:49, 50)

12:49 And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren!
 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister and mother.

His sweeping gesture heightens the dramatic effect of Jesus' question and draws even more interested attention to His answer. Lenski (*Matthew*, 503) feels this:

And while men's minds are still searching, and before they can center on a wrong answer, Jesus himself gives the terse, striking, perfect answer which, because of the way it is introduced, will the more remain fixed in the memory.

But what is the intent of Jesus' affirmation here?

1. Is it to censure His kinsmen for interrupting His teaching the Word of God? This may be implied, but it is not direct criticism. He knew they were spiritually ignorant as were so many other genuine friends and disciples, especially when, driven by the anxiety of their deep concern for Him, they say, "He is beside Himself!" (Mk. 3:21) But He could recognize a world of moral difference between their mistaken concern, even if it was prompted by misconceptions and partially by their imperfect faith, and that malignant, deliberately insulting judgment that snarls: "He has an unclean spirit!"
2. Is He denying the claim of all family ties under all circumstances? No, but He puts them to the test of discipleship. His dying thought is the responsibility for His mother's care. (Jn. 19:26, 27) His family relationship must have been of the very best sort, if He could use them as illustrations of His relation to God and His disciples. "Jesus would scarcely make use of the family symbolism to designate the sacred relationships of the Kingdom of heaven, while, at the same time, He was depreciating the value and importance of the very relationships which formed the basis of His analogy." (ISBE, 2002) Rather, He would have us see that the only hope of permanence for these ties beyond the horizons of this earth-life is that they be joined with the bonds of common discipleship in the Kingdom of God.
3. Is He merely using their appeal as an opportunity to point out those ties that are far higher and stronger than any fleshly bonds? Without despising His family, or requiring that His disciples do so with their own families, He simply puts God and His spiritual family first.

On spiritual kinship to Christ, consider the following texts: Ps. 22:22; Mt. 28:10; Jn. 20:17, 18; Ro. 8:29; Heb. 2:11-18; Mt. 10:35-57;

19:29; Jn. 1:13; 8:31-39 (cf. John's message, Mt. 3:7-10); Lk. 11:27, 28; 2:49; Jn. 2:4; Jn. 15:14; Jas. 1:22ff.; Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10; Ro. 9:6, etc.

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister and mother. Ironically, God is the way to Jesus Christ. Just as in other connections the Scriptures teach that men cannot make claims upon God unless they come through Jesus (1 Jn. 2:23; Jn. 14:6), so here we learn that no one can make claims upon Jesus unless they come to Him by way of the Father's will! **The will of my Father** is no matter of small importance to Jesus, because He sums up the whole point and direction of the life of a true disciple by picturing him as **he who does the will of my Father.** Some extra-sensitive and perhaps less-informed disciples nervously wonder how they can tell what God's will for their life should be, and unfortunately, they overlook grand passages of Scripture that spell out exactly what the Father wills for them every day! (Cf. Mt. 7:21; 18:14; 9:13; Jn. 6:28, 29, 39, 40; 7:17; Eph. 5:17; 6:6; 1 Th. 4:3; 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:4; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:9) Here again is written your name and mine: **whosoever!** The grand lessons that pour out of this declaration of our Lord are many, not the least of which are these:

1. **WE TOO ARE KIN TO JESUS!** Even though we did not get to walk with Him in Galilee, though we never saw a miracle, never felt His healing touch, still the humblest Christian among us today stands side by side with Nazarene and can call Him "Brother!" The kindest Christian mother today is as dear to Jesus as the "Holy Virgin." The most obedient little boy or girl, who for Jesus' sake, does what their daddy or mommy says, is Jesus' little brother or sister! Would to God we could get that paganism out of our hearts that longs to "walk where Jesus walked," but refuses to do what God says where we DO walk! That kind of longing to have been one of Jesus' immediate family, which cannot seek to please the heavenly Father in the simplest, ordinary acts of common courtesy and helpfulness in our own family, can claim no relationship to Jesus of Nazareth! In these simple words, Jesus throws open the front door of His house to us who live in this land in this century, that we might enjoy all the joyous privileges of His home! Although in one, true sense we are the willing servants of God, yet in another sense we are not servants in God's house, but **SONS**, and that makes Jesus

our Brother! (Study Gal. 3:23—4:7; Heb. 2:10-13) We are His poor relation, but this does not make Him ashamed. (Heb. 2:11) Best of all, He plans to own us as His own before the entire spiritual universe assembled before the Father! (Mt. 10:32)

2. To Jesus, this relationship is supreme and becomes, at the same time, the standard by which all men will be judged. So the test of connection with Jesus is not church membership, family ties, or other accidental or unreal tests that do not really describe our real standing, but whether we do God's will or not! How many will be lost, because they permitted their loving, concerned, well-meaning family to come between them and Christ! (Cf. Mt. 8:21, 22; 10:37; Lk. 9:59-62) What an example in the personal experience of our Lord Himself! When it comes to doing the will of God first above all, whether it be the Messiah Himself or one of His lowliest servants, no human ties or claims may be allowed to interfere or dictate our course. Even the Lord of glory has walked this lonely, difficult path and dealt with these thorny problems. He faced this crisis in His own life and gave us a brilliant example of dealing gently but firmly with a delicate, trying situation where those nearest and dearest would take us farthest from the Father's will.
3. **"Whosoever"** is Jesus' disciple is in the family of God, whether he is a member of our group or not, whether he is of our race, nation or social class, whether we like him or not. How this gospel of the true family of God rebukes every sort of sectarian attitude and breaks down prejudicial barriers!
4. Chrysostom, quoted by Lange (*Matthew*, 232) is remembered as saying:

How many women have blessed that holy virgin and her womb and have desired to be such a mother as she was! What hinders them? Christ has made for us a wide way to this happiness: and not only women, but men may tread it: the way of *obedience*, this is it which makes such a mother—not the throes of parturition.

5. And even as we find spiritual kinship to Jesus founded upon our common interest and our common commitment to do the will of the Father, we will also discover the fundamental

- secret underlying Jesus' promise that those who follow Him will gain in this life many more fathers, mothers and other dear ones than they ever gave up. (Cf. Mt. 19:29; Mk. 10:29, 30; Lk. 18:29, 30) These are the people who really understand us and share our commitment to the Lord, for they too are really Jesus' folk and we really do have so much more in common with them than with our own unbelieving, ungodly kin. Furthermore, this is the reason why the "family of God" is no mere figure of speech or academic question buried under dusty doctrines. God's family is a REAL family.
6. Another lesson in this text is the warning against the subtle danger of allowing ourselves as Christian workers to be distracted from our rightful duty by those dear friends and kinfolk who would cause us to place self-interest or self-preservation or our family ties first. We are easily self-warned and reasonably braced to face the taunts of our enemies, but the perilous persuasiveness of those who love us represents a far greater threat to our best good than any enemy. Jesus led the way by putting family claims upon His time and life into their proper perspective.
 7. When we remember the anxiety of Jesus' relatives for His health and safety when He was burning Himself out campaigning for the Kingdom of God, and given His inflexible adherence to what was clear to Him as the will of God, we see that it is too frequent a temptation to presume, with Jesus' brethren, that the Kingdom of God may be promoted and protected by the practice of prudential policy born of experience in this selfish world and learned from it.

CONCLUSION

Matthew's orderly method of organizing his materials, which places this event at the logical conclusion of a major section, is quite revealing. Even as he concluded his eleventh chapter with Jesus' thanksgiving for humble, honest hearts who trusted Him, in which He pointed out that, while God's revelations are for all, only disciples will understand them, since intellectual gifts are not the determining factor, so also here Matthew concludes this section with Jesus' declaration that, while the Kingdom of God is open to all, only real disciples need apply. The credentials of discipleship are validated, not by one's family ties, but by his obedience. Despite the evidences of a growing negative response to Jesus and despite His growing necessity

12:50

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to deal vigorously with slander and opposition appearing in every form, Matthew triumphantly concludes these sections on opposition to the Master by including this brief piece that fairly shouts the happy news: "No matter how black seem Jesus' hopes of reaching **this evil generation**, nevertheless, He has won a few good hearts in those disciples who do the Father's will!" In addition, Barclay (*Matthew*, II, 22) is probably right to see this section as Jesus' invitation, once again offered to "enter into kinship with Him through obedience to the will of God . . . to abandon our own prejudices and self-will and to accept Jesus Christ as Master and Lord. If we refuse, we drift farther and farther away from God; if we accept, we enter into the very family and heart of God."

THE DEITY AND GREATNESS OF CHRIST IN MATTHEW 12

12:6 Jesus claimed to be greater than the Temple of God.

12:8 He claimed Lordship over the Sabbath!

12:28 He proved that His works, done by the Spirit's power, were clear evidence that God's Kingdom had just arrived.

12:40 Jesus claimed to know not only to what end His ministry would come, i.e. His death on the cross, but also its glorious outcome, i.e. the resurrection after burial.

12:41 Jesus claimed to be greater than Jonah the inspired prophet whose labors produced the most amazing repentance in his hearers.

12:42 Jesus claimed to be wiser than Solomon whose wisdom had never been surpassed by any man.

12:50 To do God's will is to become a kinsman of Jesus. "My Father" is a claim to uniqueness. (cf. Jn. 5:17, 18)

This staggering series of claims contains no apology for their being made nor even an explanation of their meaning. They are offered to be understood by their original hearers at face value. Jesus expected them to take Him literally. But, if we are sure of His sanity, we cannot take Him literally without either crucifying Him as a bold imposter or bowing our knees before Him to confess Him Lord of our life! And this is the very conclusion to which Matthew in his presentation of the Gospel would lead us: to decide!

FACT QUESTIONS

1. During what general period of Jesus' ministry is this particular

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incident to be dated?

2. What was the general character of Jesus' life and work at this time, that provides particular poignancy to this incident?
3. List other incidents in Jesus' life and ministry in which the mother or brothers of Jesus showed particular misunderstanding or lack of true appreciation of His great purpose for having come into the world.
4. Discuss the meaning of Jesus' answer given in reply to His kinsfolks' request that He stop what He was doing to step outside to talk with them.
5. Name Jesus' brothers.
6. Discuss the three fundamental views offered as to their actual relationship to Jesus. Which of these three views do you accept? State the reasons for accepting this one and rejecting the other two.
7. According to Jesus, who are really members of His own true family? On what basis does He establish this kinship?

DO YOU HAVE IT IN YOUR HEART?

Matthew 11, 12

Do you know who said each of the following statements? What or who prompted them to say it? What did they mean by it? What, if any, are the textual problems or translational variations? How would you apply the truth contained in their words to your life practise?

1. "Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding . . ."
2. "Wisdom is justified by her works."
3. "And if ye are willing to receive it, this is the Elijah, that is to come."
4. ". . . he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."
5. "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way before thee."
6. "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me."
7. "Art thou he that cometh, . . ."
8. "A gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"
9. "For the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath."
10. "And in his name shall the Gentiles hope."

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11. "Can this be the son of David?"
12. ". . . neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *Him*."
13. "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."
14. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; . . ."
15. ". . . but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him . . ."
16. ". . . and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."
17. "Behold, my mother and my brethren!"
18. "He that is not with me is against me . . ."
19. "A bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench till he send forth judgment unto victory."

JESUS' WITNESS TO OLD TESTAMENT INSPIRATION

By John Ransom

Is the Old Testament inspired of God? Is it scientifically and historically accurate? Is it consistent with itself, not contradicting itself in various places? These things, and more, will in this paper constitute inspiration. That is, the Old Testament Scripture is "God-breathed" in the original copy and was fully inspired and without error or contradiction.

Many faithful believers have serious doubts about the Old Testament, even some who have a firm faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, in this study we will approach such a group, assuming here the deity of Jesus Christ, that He is God's Son. We will turn to Him who is God in the flesh for an evaluation of Old Testament Scripture. While we value the studies of men in higher and lower criticism and external and internal evidence, we will, as Christians, look at these Jewish Scriptures through the eyes of Him who is our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

As Harry Rimmer reminds us (*Internal Evidence of Inspiration*, 149):

For if the Lord Jesus Christ is in truth and fact the Son of God as He claims to be, He is then the highest authority on any subject of which He speaks. . . . He could and does speak from the standpoint of omniscience . . . He can speak from the source of divine wisdom, knowing that even the future cannot alter His teachings. . . . So when we study the testimony of the Saviour concerning the nature and source