The Man of Galilee

Twelve Scenes from the Life of Christ

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CONTENTS

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THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

CURIOUS, what little things change the course of history.

Here is a swift and narrow river, a petty affair as rivers go. A river which starts with high ideals in the mountain peaks, but drops down below sea-level after it leaves the Lake of Galilee, and stays below until it throws its fresh waters hopelessly into the depths of the Dead Sea. Just a deep ditch in the desert, with a tropical tangle of vegetation along the banks, and hills above that are so badly washed as to be almost sterile. Certainly not a stream that could hope for any large place in the memory of nations.

And yet—one day a fiery preacher, roughly dressed, wades out in it to baptize his converts. A fair young man stands for a moment on the bank and then steps in after the preacher. And thereupon the swift and crooked little stream becomes the most famous river in the world.

Locally, of course, the Jordan had always played an important rôle. It is Palestine's only real river. The others are dry so much of the year, or if not dry are so insignificant except in time of flood, that they hardly count. Let a hard rain fall, and they leap impetuously over their banks, but their pride is short-lived. A few hot hours, and they have ceased to be. Only the Jordan flows on endlessly, fed by the snows of Lebanon. Being rapid as well as permanent, it became a boundary, a living line of defense to the Jews, who found its few fords easily guarded; and thus it was sure of some place in history. But a momentary event, so slight that not one in ten thousand of the inhabitants of the neighboring city ever heard of it—this gave it immortal fame. Through the pages of the Gospels it winds in and out, a part of the mental life of every Christian child, a symbol in popular imagery of the line between life and death.

> Could we but climb where Moses stood,
> And view the landscape o'er,
> Not Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood
> Should fright us from the shore.

Who were the two actors in the brief drama that conferred this unending importance?

John, son of Zacharias, was born to the priesthood, but he gave up the temple for the wilderness and discarded priestly robes for the rude garb of the hill-dweller. It was a time of restlessness in Palestine. The hard hand of the Romans was on the land; the hierarchy at the temple was corrupt and oppressive; there was a lively hope that deliverance would appear, perhaps from some wholly unexpected quarter. Thus, when the earnest voice of John was raised, he immediately drew the crowd.

His personality commanded respect, and his message was human and practical. If one would be saved, he said, let him be sober and generous and exercise good faith. These were the great essentials. "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none." "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any wrongfully." Sane and simple precepts, following the pattern of the older prophets. Not arbitrary. Not otherworldly; just human, reasonable, workable.

But there was another element in his message which was not so obvious.

He spoke of the kingdom of Heaven as being at hand. He said that, while he himself baptized with water, one would shortly appear whose

baptism would be not with water but with fire. Just what that baptism would involve, whether of punishment or purification, was not wholly clear. There would be a sifting, John said, a winnowing of wheat from chaff, a laying of the ax to the root of the tree, and a purging of the life of the people from selfishness and false pretense.

You can imagine the scene of those meetings. The glowing eyes and moving tones of the preacher; the half-curious, half-believing crowd. A mixed crowd. The lazy and aimless who always come, but with them a sprinkling of fashionable folk who carried reports back to the city. John became the latest sensation; his words were repeated, and his reputation spread.

Meanwhile in Nazareth a carpenter was plying his trade. One night he swept the shavings out of his shop, put away the tools, hung up his apron, and took a last look around the familiar walls. The next morning the shop did not open as usual. Word spread around the village that the carpenter had gone. That day he appeared on the banks of the Jordan and listened to the words of his zealous young cousin, John.

There are those who like to think of him as having known all things from the beginning.

There are others, of whom I am one, to whom his life seems more wonderful in proportion as it partook of the experiences of every normal life. For thirty years he had worked and meditated, increasing in wisdom as well as in stature. Now there had come to him in its noblest form the call which comes to every young man who turns his back on smaller tasks to step up higher. As he stood there on the bank, many things which he had meditated while he worked at the bench began to clarify in his thinking. He waited and watched other converts follow the preacher into the water.

It is a striking bit of symbolism, this baptizing. It was convenient and picturesque, and needed little explanation. The fact that people since have quarreled about the form of it may indicate how far they have missed the simple directness of the thing itself. Not the form but the symbolism was significant. Men and women cleansed themselves with water as a public avowal that something cleansing had happened to them inside.

So he watched, and presently he moved forward to the very edge of the bank, and he and John stood face to face.

To the crowd it was just another convert, and not a very conspicuous one, a peasant man from Galilee. There was no straining to look and identify, no curious inquiry as when some Jerusalem aristocrat laid aside his embroidered robes and went down to the water. But John, looking up, remembered this young man from his boyhood, and on the inspiration of the moment uttered an amazing tribute, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

With a quiet word Jesus brushed the question of fitness aside. Not many, perhaps, had heard the interchange of words between them, and those who did hear would not have understood. If they kept a record of the number of conversions, they merely added to that day's list one more name, a carpenter from Nazareth. But John realized that the hope which he had cherished had come to pass. It was his great hour.

The day's sun moved westward and descended beyond the wilderness of Judea, beyond the towers and wall of Jerusalem, and dropped into the waters of the Mediterranean and out of sight. The Moabite hills took on deepening shades of purple. The people, starting back to town, gossiped about the day's sermon, compar-

ing it with the messages of other days. They discussed the converts, counting how many had come down from Jerusalem in chariots or riding on beasts of their own. But the great event of the afternoon had passed them by. One had stood among them whom they did not recognize; the Deliverer for whom they hoped had come, and because it was all so simple and so close they could not suspect the truth.

But John had seen the vision, and Jesus had felt the inrush of new power. That he saw at that moment the whole course of the next three years is not to be supposed. But the purpose was thenceforth definite. He was to undertake to "fulfil all righteousness," whatever that covenant might involve. For success or failure, for triumph or death, the decision had been made.

There could be no going back. Whatever the future might hold in store, it was not to be along the paths of the past. Those paths he had trod in simple obedience and loyalty to commonplace duty, and their discipline had wrought its full effect upon his character. But something entirely new was now ahead. For forty days and nights he went away alone, thinking out his plans, fighting down the temptations to pop-

ular acceptance and quick success. When he emerged from that loneliness his eyes were clear.

Not much more could he and John do for each other. Their temperaments, their methods, and their messages all were different. They worked apart, and their disciples soon noticed the differences. But in their great single moment together each had rendered the other the highest possible service. John *knew* the attainment of his mission; Jesus received the confirmation of his call.

The waters of the Jordan flowed on, unconscious that they had separated the Carpenter of Nazareth forever from his past.

The Woman at the Well

WHAT could this stranger mean by living water? Had he some secret which would relieve her of the hot daily journey? He spoke that way.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

CLIMB the Mount of Olives and you say: "It must have been not far from here that he wept over Jerusalem."

Walk the beach of Gennesaret and you say: "In this general vicinity, he spoke to fishermen, who left their nets immediately and were fishermen no more."

But at the well of Jacob you feel a deeper and more moving thrill. Wells are fixed and permanent. This one was dug more than a thousand years before his time, and for two thousand years since it has remained. It is the one spot in all Palestine where you can be absolutely sure.

The afternoon was dusty, and he had come a long, hot way. He would stay there by the well, he said to them, while they went on to a village to buy food and return with it. So they left him resting.

Presently came a woman with her water jar. She was a Samaritan, and he was a Jew. There

was no fellowship between their peoples. He must not speak to her, according to the code, nor even let her shadow rest upon him, lest he be defiled. How little he cared for convention or code!

"Give me a drink," he said.

Startled she was, and indignant. How was it that he dared to speak to her? He treated the question as inconsequential. If she had known who he was, he answered, she would have asked of him, and he would have given her living water.

In spite of herself, the phrase gripped her interest. What could this stranger mean by living water? Did he presume to think that he was greater than the Hebrew patriarch, who dug the well, drank there himself, and his family and cattle? Had he some secret which would relieve her of the hot daily journey? He spoke that way. One who drank the living water should never thirst again. Curious, eager, she cast away reserve.

"Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

"Go call thy husband," he commanded.

A flush of embarrassment covered her cheeks.

She stammered that she had no husband. He knew it even before she told him.

"For thou hast had five husbands," he said, "and he whom thou hast is not thy husband."

She knew then that he must be a prophet, and immediately her mind recoiled to the ancient argument between her people and the Jews. Here on Mount Gerizim was the place where God should be worshiped, yet these heretics had built their temple in Jerusalem and insisted that it was the center of worship. What had this man to say, with his uncanny knowledge?

He had something to say which she did not understand, something which has come down through the ages as the very heart and soul of his message.

"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

They sipped the cool waters and talked; and after a time the disciples returned, and made no attempt to conceal their amazement that he should be visiting with her. Yet they had learned that there were times when it was wiser to be

still. She, full of the afternoon's adventure, ran home to tell her neighbors, and presently they came to listen. Such was the power of his voice and his eyes that they forgot their ancient prejudice. They persuaded him to enter their village, and he remained with them two days.

So it happened in Shechem two thousand years ago. And if today you visit Shechem, you find that it has not changed. Still the little remnant of the Samaritans—a doomed and disappearing fragment of less than two hundred—is there; and still they are eager to explain that they are the only keepers of the one true faith.

What is this city of Jerusalem, they ask you, but a modern thing? Where, in the really ancient literature of the Hebrews, has it any place? It is not once named in the five books of Moses. David, that man of blood, captured it from the Jebusites and took the Ark of the Lord to it as a military trophy, an act so scandalous that the men who carried the Ark fell dead. How different the record of their holy mountain! On it the hungry eyes of the Israelites were fastened through all their wanderings of forty years. Near it the bones of Joseph lie buried. On it the Law was ratified. Surely at Shechem, in the

Holy Mountain, is the one place to worship God!

A three-thousand-year-old argument! How long these religious controversies linger! How much is to be said on both sides, if one allows himself to be enmeshed in them! And how foolish and futile they all are, dealing, as they do, with places and rituals and forms and creeds, when the spirit, and the spirit alone, is all that really counts.

As you sit by the well and try in imagination to reconstruct the scene, it startles you to remember that on that hot and dusty afternoon Jesus of Nazareth really *needed* help. There was no pretense about it. He did not say: "This poor woman deserves my message. For the sake of assisting her I will create in my divine self a human thirst." He was honestly thirsty and honestly tired. All that followed was made possible by that fact. If he had begun the conversation by offering her a heavenly blessing she might well have scorned the offer, coming from a Jew. But he asked for help, and she gave it; and so she could with self-respect consider the acceptance of his blessing in return.

We believe him to have been the true inter-

preter of the nature of God; then God also must be a Being who needs help. All-strong, all-knowing as He is, He can not fulfil His great task of a perfected humanity without human aid. He has tied up the administration of the world to the services of men and women. And they who offer so much as a cup of cold water to one of His are offering it to Him. Mr. Cornwell, in his painting, has made the woman attractive, and so she undoubtedly must have been. Six men had loved her. Was her social record open to question? The pious commentators have taken full advantage of that fact. But he, himself, did not criticize her. With his marvelous instinct for calling forth the good points in every human being, he discovered at once that she was friendly, and hospitable, and generous. She was also intelligent and receptive to new ideas.

Moreover, she was talkative, and when she had knowledge of something good her immediate impulse was to tell it. The disciples had gone to the village to buy food and returned without having given their message to anyone. She was different. Leaving her water pot, she raced back to town, returning to Jesus with the whole population.

Was her matrimonial record open to criticism? Did the "best people" turn their righteous eyes away when she passed them on the street? Perhaps. But Jesus of Nazareth, who looked not at public opinion but at human hearts, found her the most effective evangelist he had ever met.

The day drew to its close. We leave them there in the village with a sense of wonder and humility. What an amazing faith and interest he had in the individual! The reformers of the world have not had that. The burden of humanity is on them; they must do so much in such a little while that they cannot be bothered. And we are likewise. Rush and worry and big things concern us. The little child, the single seeker, the still small voice—these pass us by.

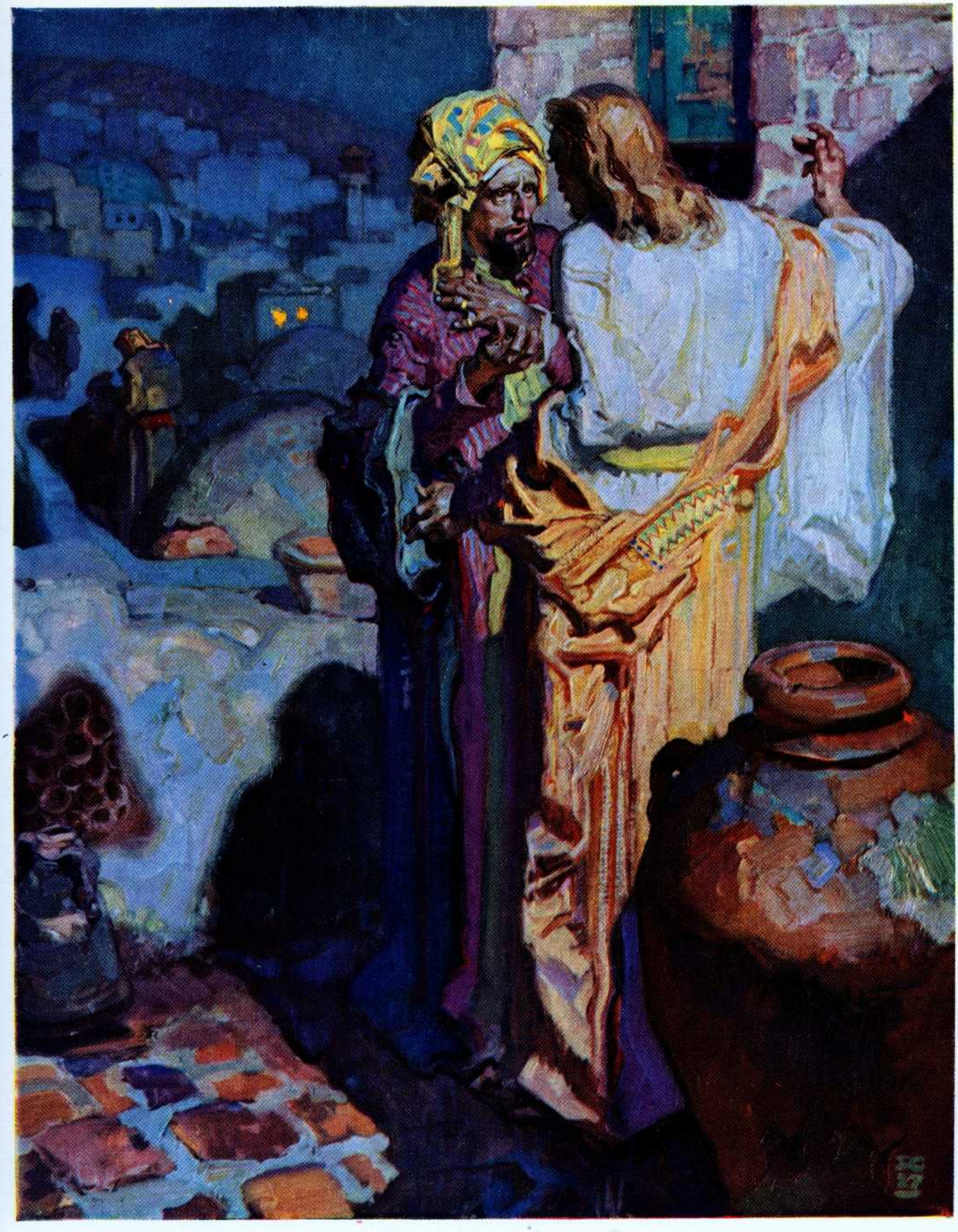
Not he. To anyone who was willing to listen he had time to talk. And the greatest thought he had to give the world he did not announce in a synagogue. He did not dictate it to disciples in order that they might be sure to preserve it in their books.

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit," he said.

He said it to a Samaritan woman, an audience of one.

Nicodemus Calls at Night

ONE of the proudest Pharisees sought the young Carpenter at night. Modestly the celebrated visitor began. "We know that thou art a teacher sent from God."



NICODEMUS CALLS AT NIGHT

 ENERALIZATIONS are tempting. It is so easy to say, "Politicians are insincere," or, "Women have less humor than men," or, "Young people are more irresponsible than they used to be." One may achieve quite a reputation as a philosopher by boldly sweeping humanity into labeled baskets. But, growing older, we grow more wary. Life is not so simple, and experience has the annoying habit of turning up an exception just when we are surest of the rule.

Still a generalization about Pharisees ought to be safe enough. A proud and intolerant sect, they were in large measure responsible for the defeat and death of Jesus. Their name has come down through the ages as a synonym for hypocrisy. Jesus' own opinion of some of them was that prostitutes and publicans were more acceptable to God.

With such a knowledge of the group, we are prepared to be prejudiced in advance against Nicodemus, the more so as we are told in the very first sentence that he came to see Jesus *by night*. Surely a Pharisee who does in darkness what he dare not do by daylight merits no consideration at our hands. But we live in a scientific age. Let us withhold judgment until we know a little more.

First of all, were there any good points about the Pharisees? There had been.

In the bitter days which followed the return of the Jews from exile, they were the spiritual saviors of the nation. Their genuine zeal for the law made them subordinate every other interest. Israel must be a thing apart, they insisted, a holy people for a mighty mission; and from this insistence came their name, which meant "that which draws itself apart." In that time of lawlessness and discouragement they played a splendid rôle. But prosperity followed the period of trial, and deterioration set in. Rules became ritual. Learning degenerated into pedantry. Zeal for the law produced an unlovely brood of petty technicalities.

Thus, while they kept strictly the letter of re-

ligion, the spirit of religion was smothered. The "drawing apart" which had saved the nation from contamination from the outside world hardened into self-righteousness. "No brutish man is sin-fearing, nor is one of the people of the land pious," said their rabbis. And, "How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plow? So every carpenter and work master that laboreth day and night . . . they shall not sit high in the congregation, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken." They were sure that they were right, these Pharisees, and that no wisdom or righteousness ever could originate outside their ranks. Curious that one of their proudest should seek a young Carpenter!

Why was it that he climbed that outside staircase to find the young Teacher there on the roof? We are not told, but at least he *did* it, and that is a point in his favor. He did not send for Jesus to come to him. It was a gracious act, considering that he was a man of large reputation and Jesus was only a carpenter who had suddenly turned to preaching.

As for his coming by night, we cannot say offhand that he was lacking in courage. Perhaps he only wanted freedom from intrusion. The

time of Jesus was full, and any daylight visit would surely have been interrupted.

Modestly the celebrated visitor began. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

Another point in his favor, for not all people by any means drew this inference. "By the prince of the devils casteth he out devils," said some. Nicodemus was too intelligent for such an attitude. His opening statement was a confession of faith, but it was distinctly qualified. A man might be a prophet sent from God and not be a prophet with any high degree of inspiration. And he might be a prophet and not the Messiah. Obviously he was puzzled. He asked no direct question, but the question was clearly implied.

We know that thou art a teacher sent from God, but how much more ought we to believe, and how can we be sure about it?

That was the implication. Jesus, instead of responding, gave the conversation an unexpected turn. He put forth no reason to prove his Messiahship; he did not even assert the claim. To the amazed and uncomprehending visitor he said, "Ye must be born again."

By that cryptic statement it seemed as if he were throwing away a big opportunity. He was a newcomer, poor and unsponsored, and this was his first visit from an important man. How natural that he should have expressed some gratitude, shown some willingness to please! He was young, and this man could help him. He sought a position from which he might do the greatest good to the greatest number, and this visitor had influence and power. Why not a little compromise? Just a few soft words that would provide a basis for cooperation.

But there was nothing of the sort. The great man went away more mystified than he had come. Later his mystification must have grown when he learned the names of the twelve whom Jesus had chosen as his principal assistants. Fishermen, small-town nobodies, and even a tax collector—how could anyone hope for success from such associates! And he, the new Prophet, might have had the adherence of one of Jerusalem's great.

We are not told how the conversation terminated, and there could be no better proof that the story is true. If the disciples had invented it, they would never have let Nicodemus escape

from the narrative until he had confessed his faith in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. But Nicodemus expressed no opinion, nor did he withdraw the opinion that he had already ventured. He listened and pondered and went away.

Shall we say that he ought to have believed? Have you ever asked yourself the question whether *you* would have been one of the believers if you had lived in Jerusalem when the young Carpenter and his oddly assorted group of followers arrived? Would you have abandoned your social position and reputation to follow a fanatical newcomer? Would you, if you had been Nicodemus? Were the Pharisees all contemptible because the new light came into the world, in their day, and they did not see?

As you read the four Gospels and the Acts, you are surprised to discover that those Pharisees whom we know *by name* seem to have been extraordinarily high-minded. There was Gamaliel. When public sentiment was almost unanimous for the persecution of the Christians, he stood forth and counseled tolerance and patience.

"There stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had

in reputation by all the people"—that was the kind of man he was. And he advised that the disciples should be neither stoned nor molested.

"Refrain from these men and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it be of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them, lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God."

How the pages of Christian history would be changed if the suggestion of persecution had always been met in that liberal spirit!

There was also Joseph, member of the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court. To the end he held out against the vote to condemn Jesus.

And there was Saul of Tarsus, a zealot both before and after his conversion, but a zealot without whose aid Christianity might never have spread beyond the borders of Palestine.

Finally Nicodemus. We know two other incidents in his career. In the autumn before Jesus was crucified there was a plot to arrest him, and when it failed there was a confused notion of accomplishing the end by some other means.

"Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" Nicodemus cried.

The Pharisees were staggered.

"Art thou also of Galilee?" they sneered.

He was not. But the memory of that first talk with Jesus was still strong upon him. He would be no guilty participant in the murder of the Galilean prophet. It is very possible that on that day he saved the life of Jesus.

The other incident came after the crucifixion. Joseph and Nicodemus, and perhaps others, had cast their unavailing votes against the crime, and they had lost. Jesus was dead, and darkness had fallen. We do not know what these two thought, but we do know what they did. Neither scorn nor ridicule held them back. Down from the cross they lowered the blood-stained body and wrapped it in clean linen, and with the burial of a prince—a hundred pounds of spices —they laid it in the tomb.

Generalizations are tempting but unsafe, even concerning Pharisees.

A second time, when the need and risk were great, and he had nothing at all to gain, Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.

Feeding the Five Thousand

JESUS took the little basket and lifted up his eyes and gave thanks. And somehow the five thousand "did all eat, and were filled."

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

IN SOME mysterious fashion beyond our understanding all our lives are interwoven. What happens in the palace reaches out to bless or blight the cottage; and the most commonplace act of the most ordinary man or woman may join itself, unwittingly, to a far-off divine event.

Thus it was that two women lived and died two thousand years ago without any suspicion that their lives had touched the greatest Life. Yet each in her own fashion had part in a miracle. One danced in a palace before a king, and when he called out that she might have any reward for her dancing, she demanded the head of John the Baptist. The other rose early in the morning and fixed a lunch for her little boy so that he would not be hungry on an April day's journey. We know the name of the woman who danced. We do not know the name of the woman who put up the simple lunch.

But each in her fashion, as has been said, had a part in the miracle. Let us sketch the background.

There were three journeys in the life of Jesus prompted by his fiery young cousin John. There was the journey from the carpenter shop in Galilee to the river bank on the outskirts of Jerusalem, where John was demanding repentance from high and low and baptizing those who heeded his call. Jesus came, needing no repentance, accepted baptism as a public sign, and disappeared at once into the wilderness. When tingling with exalted purpose, he reappeared, like a lash across his face, there came a message of bad news. His handsome young cousin no longer stood beside the river bank defying wickedness. Wickedness had struck back at him with a ruthless hand. John was in Herod's prison, and his little band of disciples was scattered.

Small good it would have done Jesus to march up to the prison doors and demand release of the captive. Nobody had heard of him. He was only one more misguided young man who had left a good place in a country town to attempt an impossible thing in the city. He was alone, new to this experience, with as yet no clearly

formed message, no influence, no reputation. The city which had been so wonderful when it seemed almost persuaded by the earnestness of John was now a devouring monster, too big and too cruel for any young man. John was gone. The power that had dared to silence him, with all his popularity, would make short work of any new disturber. Homesick, Jesus turned north to his native country—"into Galilee."

Back to Galilee, but not to Nazareth. Home towns are not kind to young prophets. No man for whom he had mended a plow would ever believe that he could be anything wonderful. No woman whose cupboard he had built could possibly suppose his words important. He went to the neighboring town of Capernaum. And here everything was different. The people were friendly and eager to hear him. They believed in prophets—those simple Galileans—and in miracles. More than one agitator and wonder-worker had arisen under Galilee's blue skies to rouse the spirits of its inhabitants. Some of them had acquired strength enough to disturb the peace of far-off Jerusalem. Galilee liked young men with a message, and Jesus, beginning at first with a mere echo of John's call to repen-

tance, quickly gained self-confidence and began to speak in accents of authority.

The response was immediate. Business men, absorbed in their daily occupations, left their work at his call. Women read new hope and freedom in his message and gladly offered their devotion. The sick heard the news of his healing power and gave their friends no peace until they were carried into his presence. In no time his fame had run beyond the horizon of John's. "And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan."

Then came the days of his greatest happiness. Sitting on the side of the mountain, he uttered words that will never die. Walking beside the lake, he healed lepers and paralyzed men, and cast out demons. Confidence grew within him, and every day the crowds were larger, until "the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand."

From every town in Galilee small groups of neighbors had set out on their journey to Jerusalem. As they emerged from the by-paths into the roads, each group coalesced with other groups from other neighborhoods. Descending into the

highways they swelled into caravans. It was inevitable that there should be congestion as the roads converged near the Sea of Galilee, but this year there was an added reason for it. A Prophet had taken up his residence there, and many pilgrims went a little out of their way to see him.

Jesus loved a crowd, but he was quick to sense the difference in crowds, as in individuals. He would stretch out his hand in healing to the poorest sufferer, but he would not do a mighty work for public effect, not even when it might have gained the adherence of the powerful. He would give himself without stint to sincere seekers, but this crowd of light-hearted pilgrims was chiefly curious. They had stopped off to see a miracle between trains, as it were. There was nothing great that he could do for them, and besides, the days in Capernaum had left him tired. "There were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." He wanted to get away from people for a little while, and while he hesitated about going, there came a message that decided him.

For the third time John the Baptist set him on a journey.

In Herod's palace Salome, the daughter of

Herodias, danced to amuse the noisy guests on the king's birthday. "Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head . . . When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart."

"There was much grass in the place." That was not true of many places in the neighborhood. There were many barren spots around, slopes sadly denuded of their soil. But in this place across the lake, to which the disciples had brought him, there was the quiet and peace and restfulness of grass. And much he needed it. The dark cloud had spread across his sky, casting a shadow over his pleasant path. John had called for repentance; he had baptized and gathered disciples; he had shaken the pleasure-loving city, and spoken things unpleasant for the king to hear. It seemed as if he were too strong for even Herod to dare to kill him. But Herod had dared. John was dead. And he whom John had commissioned, who also had preached and gathered disciples and said harsh things to men in high places—what did it mean for him?

For a little while he was alone, but that time was all too short. The word had spread among the crowd, and by noon many hundreds had followed him on foot around the end of the lake. By the middle of the afternoon there was an army of more than five thousand, and practically all the food had been consumed at noon. Tired by the ceaseless pressure, worried by the plight of the crowd, the disciples urged him to send them away.

"Give ye them to eat," he answered.

It seemed an absurd question. They had a hundred denarii in their treasury—call it two dollars—a fair enough sum for the needs of thirteen simple men, but not a mouthful apiece for five thousand people. And if they spent it all and left the purse empty, what would become of them?

One among their number had initiative and a practical turn of mind. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, had been investigating, and in the corner of the crowd he had discovered a little lad whose mother had not sent him forth unprovided. In his lunch kit were five biscuits and two dried mullets as large as a herring, a good lunch for two grown men or for one

growing boy. Wide-eyed and open-mouthed the boy was brought to the center of the stage, into the very presence of the Master. And there he stood while the people were seated by the disciples in companies of fifty and a hundred upon the cool green grass, and Jesus took the little basket, and lifted up his eyes and gave thanks.

Aside from the resurrection, there is just one miracle related by all four of the Gospels, and that is the one that tells of what happened next. It was not a miracle of healing nor even of forgiveness. Hunger is neither disease nor sin.

Let us hope the day will come when we shall rid ourselves forever of the idea that the mission of Jesus was wholly one of restoring something that had been lost through either sin or disease. His ministry was to every normal human need. He could give pleasure at a party to those whose need was pleasure. He could give cheer to little children who flocked around him as he walked. He could give comfort and encouragement, and he could give food.

Somehow, while the disciples looked on half in awe and half in apprehension; somehow while the boy's mouth opened wider and his

eyes swelled into great orbs of wonder, somehow "they did all eat, and were filled."

Measured by the number of people immediately affected, this was the miracle of greatest magnitude. Judged by the impression it made upon the beholders, it must also rank high, for all four of the biographers remembered it. Men have many attitudes toward it, according to their type of faith. Why need we argue? It is a great, bright spot of color in the glorious portrait of him—so friendly, so human, so sympathetic that even in his hour of weariness and sorrow he could not forget that men must eat.

And we may never cease to wonder at the mysterious interweaving of all human lives which made two women a part of it all, though they themselves never knew. Salome who danced and, by the cruel aftermath of her dancing, caused him to cross that lake. And the nameless woman to whom nothing ever happened, in whose life one day was exactly like the next. She rose early and did her ordinary duty for her little boy. And was a partner in a miracle.

The Man who was Rich but not Wise

NOW and then the rich man entered his storehouse alone, and barred the door, and opened one by one his secret stores.

THE MAN WHO WAS RICH BUT NOT WISE

THERE was a great crowd around him one day, and he had been talking to them about the importance of the things that are hidden as against the things that are seen. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, he said, and "That which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." No man should be afraid of externals, not even of death which kills the body. That which kills the soul is what should be feared, for as to outward circumstances the sensible man views them with a certain courageous indifference, knowing that there is a Power in control. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings," he said, "and not one of them is forgotten before God?"

It was one of the noblest of his utterances, and how little it was understood by many of the crowd may be judged from what followed. A man who had only one thought, how to get an

advantage over his brother in the division of the family estate, conceived the bright idea that this was the occasion to enlist authority on his side. He would secure a pronouncement from this wise and powerful young Teacher, and armed with it he would whip his brother into line.

"Master, speak to my brother," he said, "that he divide the inheritance with me."

A more inauspicious time for such an interruption could hardly be imagined. Jesus was forever having the most discouraging experience that can come to a teacher: talking to people whose faces seemed to indicate that they were absorbing everything, but who gave distressing evidence at the first opportunity that they hadn't the slightest notion what it was all about. Thus, when he spoke to his disciples about the Kingdom of Heaven, they began to dispute among themselves as to who should have the best position at the court. When his brothers heard his teachings they thought him insane, and wanted him to leave Galilee for fear his radical utterances would get them all into trouble. And now, following hard on his plea for a fine superiority to externals, came one who wanted to enlist his help in a petty dollars-and-cents dispute.

Jesus answered crisply, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" And he added with more than a touch of severity: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Looking around at their blank faces and seeing that his words had made little impression, he resorted to his favorite strategy. Patiently, in simple words, he told them a story about a rich man.

Of what did his riches consist? Of wheat and barley, probably, secured in granaries of sun-dried brick; the bricks plastered smoothly with earth and lime to close all the cracks against robbers, mice, and insects. Of oil, doubtless, pressed from the olives in his groves, and sealed into large earthen jars. Of wine, also in jars, but in smaller ones with narrower necks. Of wool and linens, tied up in bundles and piled high above the bins where the grain was stored. Of all such articles of food and clothing as could be kept with reasonable safety against theft or depreciation. All these he had put away safely, not in outbuildings, but in a great storehouse entered from the courtyard of his home. Its door was

immediately opposite his door; his windows looked out on its strong blank walls; his goods were never out of sight.

Nor were these bulky goods his only wealth. He had sold the increase of his flocks and invested in precious things easily concealed. He had several crocks of gold and silver. He had a little jar of jewels. When his servants were inside with him, he dared not uncover them, but now and then he entered alone and barred the door, and fastened up the lamp carefully where it could not set fire to the wool, and opened one by one his secret stores. The glittering things trickled through his fingers and gladdened his eyes. They were security; they were stored-up happiness. Some day he would begin to draw on them, to convert them into pleasure. But not yet. He knew of things that he still desired in the way of possessions. And he saw that he had practically reached the limits of his storage. What could he do?

He must make his courtyard and living quarters smaller and enlarge the storage structure. He must begin on a line farther back on one or more sides and erect new outside walls. They must be thicker and stronger than the present

walls, for they would have richer treasure to safeguard. Having built the outside walls, he must tear down one by one his inside structures. He could best begin with the stables, in a season when the flocks were out in the fields. He could build the new stables so strong that they would serve as a temporary storehouse while alterations were being made in the granaries and oil vats. The whole enterprise would require almost a season, but with right management it could be done. The result would give him double capacity and more secure hiding-places for his riches.

Yes, he had been very fortunate, and he was almost ready to begin to enjoy his good fortune. But not yet. Not until he had completed the new scheme of building, and then, of course, he must fill the new storage space with more corn and oil and wool and flax, and all the rest. Then, then he would begin to get some fun out of life. So he argued to himself, bending over his plans and fingering his jewels.

But suddenly a pain like the thrust of a knife —a dull throb—seemingly a voice: "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

He had prepared for everything. But the one event on which he had not calculated descended on him out of the night and found him unprepared.

A great deal of folly is written and spoken in America by people who affect to despise money. No sensible man with family responsibilities despises money. Money is power stored up. It is hard work put away in such form that it can be converted back into work again. It is that part of one's life which has not got entirely away. Hence anybody who says that money is not worth thinking about is foolish, and when he adds, as he often does, that the Bible describes money as the root of all evil, he is piling misquotation upon his foolishness. For what the Bible speaks of is not money, but *the love of money,* which is something very different.

It is interesting to see just what the attitude of Jesus was. It is clear that he must have had some true friends among men of wealth. Somebody with money owned the garden of whose friendly silences he availed himself so often. The wife of Herod's steward was a devoted follower, contributing from her fortune to his comfort; and doubtless her husband was sympathetic,

though political necessity prevented him from being too openly allied. Jesus feasted and dined in wealthy homes; and it was a rich man who claimed his body after the crucifixion and laid it away with princely dressing in a princely tomb. So he had no scorn for rich men merely because they were rich.

He was brought up on the literature of the Old Testament, which is the history of a business people. They believed in a just-dealing God, who could be talked with in terms of definite promise and future obligations. The book of Proverbs is not a religious book at all in the strict sense, but a volume of practical advice on how to get on in the world. Whatever religion there is in it lies in its emphasis on honesty as the best policy. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand," says the Proverbs, "but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." But it adds in another place, "And the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

Jesus accepted what was sound and wisest in the Old Testament, but he gave it a far wider, nobler interpretation. Instead of the God who was merely a just dealer, he proclaimed a God who is Father, superior to the petty obligations

of give and take, substituting an all-embracing love for the strict and unimaginative rule of just deserts. Instead of the regard for money as something all-important, he insisted on its comparative unimportance in relation to the more enduring values of life.

The young man who wanted to make his life count for good, but was withheld from full discipleship by his love for his money, was sent away "sorrowful, for he had great possessions." The man who thought of nothing but hoarding more was condemned as a fool. But there was no condemnation for those who regard money as merely a means to an end, a way to live with less anxious thought for the morrow, a means of making life happier for other people, a power to do more and do better.

John Ruskin tells of a man who was crossing the Pacific Ocean when a storm assailed the ship so that it was doomed. Passengers were ordered to don their life-preservers. He did as he was ordered; but having a great quantity of gold in a money belt, he could not persuade himself to part with it. Accordingly, he strapped it around his waist, jumped into the water, and forthwith sank.

"The question is this," says Mr. Ruskin, "whether when that man was sinking he had the gold or the gold had him."

We are all making a voyage on a turbulent sea called Life, and it is certain that we shall not finish without storms and danger. The wise carry enough gold and in such fashion that they own it. The foolish rich are owned by it. It destroys their comfort, poisons their dreams with apprehension, and finally drags them down.

The Healing of The Sick

WHEN Jesus walked in the twilight, he was stopped at almost every doorstep. Here a mother with a sobbing baby; here a man long bedridden; here a little child sick since infancy.

THE HEALING OF THE SICK

THERE are no dates in the New Testament. The biographers of Jesus were not skilled historians. They were so eager to set down just *what* happened that it did not occur to them as important to state just *when*. If it were not for the lucky reference to the edict of the Roman emperor ordering a universal tax, we should be left adrift. We are told that the edict was the direct cause of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, and since history records its date, we can fix the birth of Jesus with some degree of definiteness and the approximate time of the chief events in his life.

As to days and hours, however, we are almost completely in the dark. We are not told how long a time elapsed between two incidents, nor how much time was consumed in traveling from one place to another, nor if the events as given to us are set down in chronological order. In-

deed, we know they can not be, for the order differs widely in the four versions. Whether the cleansing of the temple took place early in Jesus' ministry or at the end; whether the Sermon on the Mount was one long discourse, as Matthew records it, or a collection of many different sayings of Jesus gathered together—these and many other questions offer everlasting opportunity for debate. Fortunately, we can be sure of what happened during the last week of his life, day by day and almost hour by hour, for the narratives are more complete regarding this week than for any other period; and we can check against the events of the Passover Feast which still are celebrated by the Jews, as they were then, on specific days. We would give a great deal if one of the four Gospel writers had been of a more mathematical turn of mind; if he had said, "This miracle happened in Capernaum on Thursday afternoon, April fourth, at about four-thirty"; or, "Lazarus stepped forth from the grave in Bethany at ten-fifteen A. M. on such and such a day."

Matthew was the most businesslike of the four writers, having been a tax collector and accustomed to dealing in figures. In the eighth and

ninth chapters of his Gospel he sets down events which seem to have happened on two or three succeeding days. As one of the events was his own calling to discipleship, followed by a feast which he provided in his own house, we may assume that his memory of these happenings was accurate. The two chapters give some idea of the immense amount of energy that was required of Jesus during the most active periods of his three public years. Let us number the things he did in those two or three days, and marvel at the vitality that could give so much and still be fresh and patient and endlessly sympathetic.

1. There came "a leper . . . saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

2. A centurion came, who, though not a member of the Jewish faith, was generous-minded and had furnished the money for the synagogue in Capernaum. (A well-built synagogue it was, for fragments of it can be seen today.) His servant was grievously ill, but he said to Jesus, "I will not ask you to come to my house, for I am

a man like yourself, accustomed to giving orders, and I know that if you will only say the word, my servant will be well." Jesus answered, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He spoke the word, and the servant was cured.

3. When they came to Peter's house they found his mother-in-law sick with a fever. Her, also, Jesus healed.

4. "When the even was come they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick."

People stay indoors in the middle of the day in Palestine towns. But as the day nears its ending, they come out on the housetops or into the streets, and there is the hum of life and buzz of conversation. We may imagine how dramatic were the scenes in Capernaum that evening. Men began to move beds out into the street, no great task, for the beds were merely pallets, easily rolled up and removed and spread out again. All the afternoon anxious questions had been flying about in many households. "Do you imagine he could cure our poor little girl?" "Do you suppose he could help mother?" "Do you

think he will pass this way when he walks out in the twilight?"

There were not many ways to walk. One could follow the narrow street either down to the lake or up toward the hills. Jesus probably walked in both directions on occasions, for he loved the water and the mountains, and at almost every doorstep he was stopped. Here a mother with a sobbing baby; here a man long bedridden; here a little child sick since infancy—each clinging desperately to this new last hope. And he had time for all of them "at even when the sun was set."

5. He took a boat and went across the lake to gain a little respite from the crowd and, being terribly tired, he slept. But a storm blew up, and the disciples wakened him. "Then he arose and rebuked the winds, and the sea; and there was a great calm."

6. Hardly had he landed on the other side, in the country of the Gergesenes, when two men possessed of devils met him. And when he healed them, the devils passed out of the men into a herd of swine, which rushed terrified down a steep place and into the sea.

7. The next morning early he took a boat

back to Capernaum, and there was a man sick with palsy, who had compelled his friends to watch for the Master's return and hurry him down to the landing. "And Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy: Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

8. The scribes raised a theological objection to his words. By what right did he claim to be able to say whose sins should be forgiven? It led doubtless to a long, taxing argument—another drain on his energies.

9. Passing along the street he saw a business man named Matthew, carrying on his daily work. There must have been something marvelous in the look of Jesus, for he only glanced at Matthew and said, "Follow me," and immediately Matthew rose and left his work and followed.

10. The addition of a new disciple to the sacred brotherhood would seem to have been a proper occasion for some solemn religious ceremony. Matthew elected rather to celebrate it by giving a dinner, and pretty much everybody in town was invited, including many publicans and sinners. It is interesting to note that Jesus made no protest at their presence, nor any at-

tempt to keep them out. He did not stand at the door, saying to each one: "Do you believe in my miraculous birth?" or "Are you worthy to be a member of my organization?" Everybody came, and the food was good, and they had a happy time.

11. The Pharisees were not so complaisant as Jesus. They thought they knew better than he did who should and who should not be admitted to a meal at his table. Accordingly they grumbled to the disciples, saying: "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" They were sure of themselves, those righteous Pharisees, and confident that they could make much stricter and better rules for his conduct than he could make for himself. Another argument, tiring to Jesus, but ending as all his arguments ended, in triumph.

12. The disciples of John brought a disconcerting question which showed that they and their leader were wondering whether one who conducted himself so happily could really be the Messiah. They had to be answered with patience and kindly thought.

13. Then came a ruler whose daughter had died. Jesus left the table to go to his house, where

the professional mourners were already making the air miserable with their wails. He cleared them out and announced that the girl was not dead but asleep. "They laughed him to scorn," but the girl got up.

14. On his way to this miracle, a woman in the crowd touched him. She had been sick for a long time, but had enough desperate faith to believe that even the hem of his garment would restore her to health. She was cured, but Jesus was conscious that there had been a drain on his vitality—"virtue had gone out of him."

15. Two blind men were brought. He touched their eyes, and they saw.

16. A dumb man was hurried into his presence, and left shouting aloud his praises.

Sixteen great pieces of work in two days—or call it three days if you will. Any one of them would have been a sufficient achievement to make a lifetime notable. He did them all as he passed up and down the street and in and out of houses—easily, quietly, without strain, and always without ostentation. If these days are typical, and there is no reason to suppose that they were not, they give us some conception of the incessant demand upon his heart and health. No

three years upon this earth ever were packed so full.

Books and books and books have been written about his miracles. Theologians, scholars, and doctors all have their different points of view. Did Jesus believe in demons, as did most of his contemporaries? Were many of his cures the result of clearing up a mental condition with which a modern psychiatrist would know equally well how to deal? Are the accounts sometimes exaggerated? Do the four recorders differ as to details? These are all good questions for those who like to argue. To you and me they are not particularly worth while. For the thing that strikes us as most interesting is this: with all his mighty power he could not heal everybody. Only those who had faith to offer received benefit at his hands.

He could heal a simple blind man, but he could do no good for scribes who had more interest in theological debates than they had in matters of eternal importance.

He could cure the servant of a trusting centurion, but no Pharisee profited from his health-giving powers. Pharisees knew too much to be cured by one who had no college education.

He could restore speech to a poor dumb man, but the people of Gergesa got no benefit from his visit. A herd of swine drowned in the sea was more vital to them than the presence of the Master. Swine were worth money. His miracle had cost them cash; he was bad for business. "And, behold, the whole city . . . besought him that he would depart from their coasts."

He could do wonders in Capernaum, where they accepted him with open minds, but in Nazareth, his home town, they were sure that they knew it all. They would not be tricked into faith at Nazareth, not by one of the hometown boys, the boy of Joseph who had run the local carpenter shop.

So the trusting received his precious gifts, and the very wise, who had read a little and studied a little and knew that "it couldn't be done"—they were no better because he passed by. How much of the wonders of life are missed by those who are so very wise!

The Good Samaritan

"BUT a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him he had compassion on him."

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

WHEN people debate about the miracles in the Bible, the wisest men decline to be very much excited. Whether the Red Sea actually did divide in order to let the Israelites pass through and then swept back to drown the pursuing Egyptians; whether Moses provided refreshment for the thirsty wanderers by striking his staff against a rock; whether Elijah was caught up to Heaven in a chariot of fire; whether Jesus walked on the water—these are not the foundations on which the Christian religion stands.

The triumphant miracle concerning which there can be no historic doubt is the life of Jesus himself. Strip this life of all controversial details, and what are the bare facts?

A young man is born of poor parents and grows up in a country town. He leaves a humble trade, and without formal training of any sort steps forth into the limelight of public action

and debate. For three years he is under searching criticism, exposed to the attacks of the most skilful minds of his day. Yet in every single situation he is master. Of any other great life it is possible for biographers to say: "At this point our hero made a wrong decision," or "In this particular circumstance he would have done more wisely to have uttered a different remark." There are no such spots in the life of Jesus. What he spoke in a crisis was decisive: what he did was invariably right.

Recall, for a moment, his handling of some of those who sought to trap him.

They asked him whether it was lawful to render tribute unto Caesar, thinking that if he answered yes, the patriotic crowd would turn against him, and if he answered no, they could report him to the Roman authorities. His answer was neither yes nor no, but:

"Bring me a penny.

"And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marveled at him."

They hurried into his presence a woman taken in adultery, asking his permission to stone her. Whatever decision he made would be wrong. He made no decision.

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

And when he looked around a minute later, they had slunk away, one after another, and he and the woman were alone.

They demanded by what authority he was preaching and healing, and he said he would gladly answer the question after they had answered one of his.

"The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? Answer me."

How could they answer? If they said, "From heaven," he would say, "Then why didn't you accept it?" If they said, "Of men," the crowd would tear them to pieces, for in their sight John was a prophet.

A lawyer "stood up and tempted him," asking what he should do to be saved. Jesus reminded him of the law: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

"And who is my neighbor?" the lawyer persisted.

The answer to that question is one of the finest little stories in all literature. It begins:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, leaving him half dead."

There was not a single person in the audience who was not gripped by the drama of that opening sentence. Every one of them knew the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. It does indeed run "down." Jerusalem is about twenty-three hundred feet above sea-level, and the Dead Sea is thirteen hundred feet below. From the top of a wind-swept plateau down into the deep, hot valley of the Jordan, the descent is a journey of about eighteen miles.

It is a wild and desperate country. One who makes the trip today passes through a scene of increasing desolation. Human habitations disappear and, except for the inn which is about half-way and a single spring, where it is quite certain that Jesus and his disciples must have stopped more than once to refresh themselves, there is little to tell of human life. At the bottom

of a ravine is the brook Cherith, where Elijah hid from the wrath of the wicked queen Jezebel. Today a monastery stands there, a kind of penitentiary for erring priests of the Greek Church. They are almost the only dwellers along this ugly road—these monks and priests who have sinned—they and the robbers.

The man of the parable, who had been in Jerusalem and was on his way back, had presumably sold his merchandise and was carrying the money with him. He was an ideal victim for the robbers. They sprang out from behind some sheltering rock, struck him to the ground, plundered him, and were off into the hills. The poor fellow lay there unconscious and bleeding, and a priest passed by, gave him one look, and hurried along. So, likewise, a Levite. Doubtless both of them had temple duties at Jerusalem; they were responsible for important affairs and too busy to be bothered by a single case of misfortune. Also they were timid. What had happened to him might also happen to them.

But there came another traveler of sterner stuff, a Samaritan. He was a man of substance, for he had both money and a beast. He, too, was in a hurry. But he stopped and lifted the poor

fellow, took him to the inn, arranged for his board and room and medical attendance, promised to pay for any additional expense when he should pass on his way back, and not until he had completed the task of mercy did he go on about his own affairs.

Jesus said to the lawyer:

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy unto him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise."

Was ever a shrewd lawyer's question answered so effectively, so memorably?

In another picture Mr. Cornwell has portrayed the woman at the well, and we had occasion to tell something of the Samaritans. Breaking off from the Jews five or six hundred years before Christ, they had clung to their sacred mountain and haughtily refused all intercourse with their erstwhile relatives. Today a pathetic little remnant of them remains at the foot of Mount Gerizim. Only last year an earthquake shook down their little dwellings and left them camping in their cemetery, about the only spot of ground they own. It is an interesting side-

light that when this calamity descended upon them, the first gift of money came by cable from America in the name of the Christ whose parable about one of their number has kept and will keep their name forever alive.

Jesus had several contacts with Samaritans, though the rigid law of his people forbade the exchange of even commonplace courtesies. It was a Samaritan woman, as has been related, to whom he spoke one of the finest sentences of his whole ministry. It was a Samaritan village which, near the end of his work, refused to entertain him and his disciples overnight. The disciples would have called down fire from heaven and burned it up, but he did not consider their outburst as worthy even of rebuke. Weary and worn as he was, he led them quietly to another village.

He healed ten lepers one day, and nine of the ten were so eager to get home and exhibit themselves to their families that they did not take time to thank him. One only expressed his gratitude, and that one was a Samaritan. Jesus praised him publicly. Finally it was a Samaritan, and not a member of his own race, whom he selected as the illustration for his great par-

able on neighborliness and mercy. If we could realize one half of the bitterness that separated these two groups—each in its own sight deeply religious—and then remember that Jesus refused time after time to pay any attention to their religious differences, it would give us a new conception of the meaning of tolerance. How petty our divisions! With what a towering indifference he would sweep them all aside!

Being one of the millions of men and women who are pegging away in business, it pleases me to remember that the Good Samaritan was probably just an ordinary business man. The priest and the Levite who looked at the sufferer and hurried by were professionally religious. They were skilled in all the detail of observance and creed. They knew the arguments; they moved on a high intellectual plane, and doubtless had many a contemptuous laugh for the slow-minded and rather dull individuals who made their living in trade. The Good Samaritan, sitting in one of their meetings, would not have understood what they were talking about. There was nothing sparkling or subtle about him. He just made his trips and sold his goods and tried to show a profit at the end of the year. He

probably read few books, and certainly knew nothing of the niceties of theological discussion. He was on his way to make some money when the chance came to do a decent turn.

It is a very comforting story for us ordinary people. Jesus did not say that the Samaritan ought to give up his business and become a preacher. He did not even suggest that the lawyer who occasioned the story ought to give up his law. Keep on about your own affairs, was his teaching, as the Good Samaritan was keeping on about his. But when you are given an opportunity to help, as he was, be sure you do likewise.

The Prodigal Son

WHEN the prodigal son came to himself, he said: "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

THE PRODIGAL SON

IT BECAME evident that there was little to hope for from the righteous and the respectable. The priesthood wanted none of him. Why should they? Their business was in splendid shape. They had developed a ritual so complicated that no man could possibly find salvation without priestly aid. The simple, easy teaching of Jesus threatened disastrous competition. The propertied classes, dreading conflict with the Roman power, looked askance at his crowds. The sophisticated sneered because he came from a country town; and as for the cultured—who could possibly imagine a Messiah except as a graduate of one of the very best schools?

So he was driven more and more into the company of men and women who had neither social standing nor the desire for it. Some of his finest parables were spoken in their defense, and as a biting rebuke to those who were sure they were very much better.

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

"And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

It was in response to this murmuring that he told about the Prodigal Son. Each of his parables is a perfect literary production; no writer has ever had the temerity to suggest that one of them could be improved. But there are degrees of excellence even in perfection, and in its revelation of the nature of God and the meaning of human life, the story of the prodigal is the noblest parable of all.

It consists of three brief chapters. The first relates to the son at home; the second tells about his wanderings and misbehavior; the third describes his home-coming and his welcome.

It was a well-to-do home in which the boy lived. His father had fields and flocks and servants—everything, as we say, to make a family happy. But the boy was not content. He did not like the churlish goodness of his elder brother. He wanted to be freed from family restrictions, to see the world beyond the hills; so he went to his father and asked for a division of the estate.

Most readers criticize him in their minds for what seems like a selfish and inconsiderate demand. It certainly was not gracious. According to law he was entitled to nothing until his father's death, when he would receive one-third, and his elder brother two-thirds, of his father's estate. Still, there is nothing inherently wrong in the desire of a boy to leave home and make his own way in the world; and since his father did not criticize him for the request, we need not feel obliged to. There is plenty of ground for criticism later in the story.

His father gave him the money, and the boy started out. What were his thoughts that morning when he stopped for a moment at the top of the hill and took a last look at the family home? Was he setting forth deliberately to waste his money and spoil his life? Not likely. Few young men ever leave home with any such foolish notion. The idea that there are two kinds of people in the world, good and bad, is inaccurate. There is a third class, larger than either, consisting of those who have no purpose, either good or bad, and these are most often in danger, and sometimes most dangerous. He was just a lad with money which had come to him without

any work. A lad who was sent into the world as millions of American fathers are struggling to send their lads—"well-fixed" financially—"well-fixed" with everything except character and the training that comes only from struggle and hard knocks.

The second chapter is told in a few bold sentences. He "wasted his substance in riotous living." Civilization has produced many inventions, but it has not developed any new vices. The ways of going to the devil are distinctly numbered, and were as well known to the very first inhabitants as they are to us. This is a disappointing discovery which some members of every generation feel impelled to make all over again. Wine, women, and gambling—that's all there is, and their possibilities are soon exhausted. The prodigal tried them all, and when his money was gone he found that the friends it had brought him had disappeared also. "He began to be in want.

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him."

Much sympathy has been wasted on the prodigal for that part of his experience which really calls for little. We should be sorry for him during the time when he was wasting his substance; but when he was hungry and had a job feeding swine, that was the beginning of better days. Hunger is a harsh master, but it has produced some glorious masterpieces. A great writer will one day go through history and record the number of books that have been written and battles that have been won by men who would have done nothing if they had been better fed. As for the job which the prodigal got—the feeding of swine—it was a disgraceful job for a Jew, or, indeed, for any man But at least it was a job, and as such a step up. It instilled the beginning of self-respect; it gave him his first clear chance to think.

And "he came to himself." That is a wonderful line when you consider it. Every man is a combination of many different personalities, a battle-field in which the fighters are his different selves. Jesus recognized that the *best* self is the *real* self. "When he came to himself," he realized that his whole theory of life had been wrong. It required no reading of the Bible to

persuade him that he had been a fool; he had inside information. It was neither a priest nor a preacher who rebuked him; his conscience was his mentor. "He came to himself" and said, "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" That was a profitable reflection, but it got him nowhere. Plenty of men have been deluged with self-pity at the thought of their lost opportunities and have remained with their feet in the trough. The prodigal was led to emphatic resolution.

"I will arise and go to my father."

He was going home to ask for employment at servants' wages. His speech to his father was all carefully worked out: but while he was still a long way off his father saw him and ran and threw his arms around him. A banquet was made, and the neighbors were invited to celebrate. Everyone around the house was happy except the elder brother. He watched the preparations with ill-humor and a not altogether unjustified resentment. Where did he come in? What had his hard work ever got him?

"Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment;

and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

"But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

A reasonable complaint, in a way. But the father's love was far too big to be measured by a mere balance of good works and rewards.

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

"It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

So, in a few simple, human paragraphs we have Jesus' whole system of theology. Let us look at it carefully; let us know exactly how much of a theological creed one must have to interpret his teachings to men.

The prodigal took the first step for himself. It was necessary for him to do something on his own account before anything great could be done for him. That would seem to be the initial article in the creed. Jesus came, as he said, "to seek and to save that which was lost," but the father in this story, who represents God, did not send out search-parties to persuade the young

man to return. That was left to the working of natural forces—to hunger, and the sobering thoughts which come with the realization that selfishness and waste are not, and never can be, a road to happiness.

But when the boy had reached that point, the father met him more than half-way. He would have been entirely within his rights if he had waited sternly in the library, there to receive stammering apologies and confession and administer a stern rebuke. Instead, he ran far out onto the road and met the lad with joyous enthusiasm, forgetting entirely to punish or even reprimand. The old theology which represents God as taking a personal delight in the administration of harsh justice finds no comfort in this parable. The father cared little for his "rights," for his own dignity and glory. It was enough for him that the lad had learned his lesson and had turned his bruised feet toward home.

As for the elder brother, with his self-righteousness and self-pity—he gets small glory in the narrative. He was a good man, in the sense in which many people interpret religious goodness: he did not drink or smoke or gamble. He went to bed and got up early, and performed

his duties with unsmiling diligence. He had a "Puritan conscience," and the Puritans, as Daniel Webster remarked in a recently sold autographed letter, possessed every virtue except charity. He provoked no laughter, he gave no alms—at least none which were not carefully computed—he inspired no pleasure and was not tolerant of human faults.

It is still startling to many people to be reminded that Jesus seemed to have a decided distaste for this gloomy, negative sort of goodness. He studiously avoided professionally good folk, and associated with publicans and sinners, not merely because he could do them good, but because he recognized, in spite of their lack of religious profession, warm hearts, sunny natures, and generous impulses. He rebuked Martha, who allowed her stern sense of duty to cast a shadow over the household. He rebuked the disciples of John who believed that self-denial and a mere withdrawal from the world were the principal steps to salvation. He did not seem to enjoy the companionship of those whose righteousness made them and other folks uncomfortable.

On the other hand, he had no rebuke for happy children, even when they trespassed on

his time and overran his person. He had no rigid schedule, no stern sense of self-importance, making necessary the elimination of human pleasures. He liked to be in a crowd; to eat and talk and laugh. When he called Matthew, that newly chosen disciple held no somber prayer meeting to mark his entrance into the Master's service. Instead, he gave a dinner, and all and sundry, including a liberal proportion of publicans and sinners, were invited to sit down.

The father in the parable acted in similar fashion. Doubtless, there were family prayers of thanksgiving at the return of the prodigal, but no one was made to feel too solemn about it. The celebration was a feast, joy and laughter were the ritual of praise.

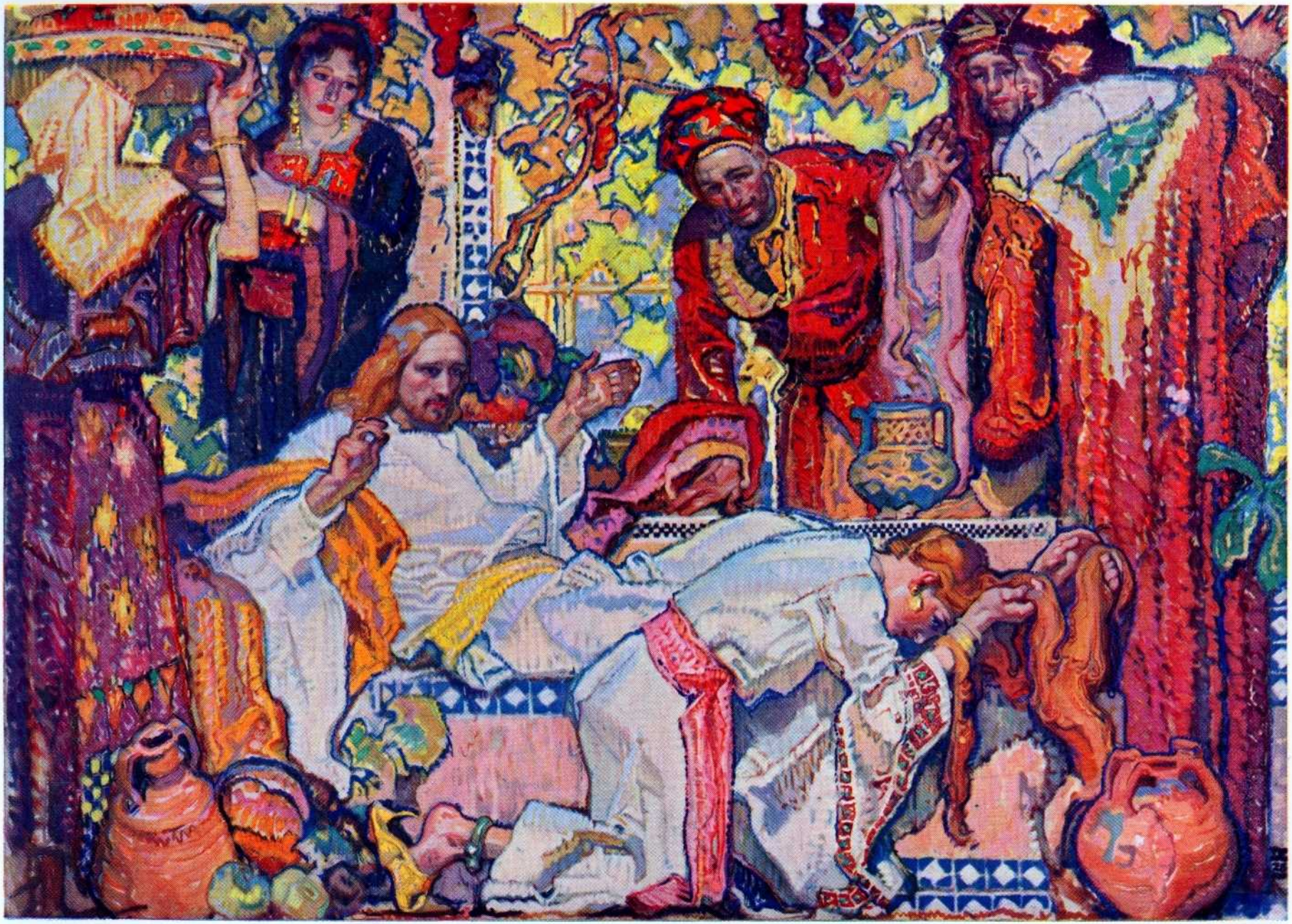
This, then, would seem to be the picture of God, and humanity and Heaven, which Jesus came to give. God, a loving father, not jealous of His rights but overflowing in His love; humanity, a blundering son, falling often from the good path, causing sorrow, but finding—through hunger and hard experience—that the path to home is the only satisfying path and determinedly taking the first step; Heaven, a home in which—while the solemn good are also pres-

ent—the prevailing atmosphere is one of happiness and cheer.

All this is taught, according to the version of Luke, in a few more than five hundred words. The whole lesson of prayer was taught by Jesus in a petition of about sixty words. The grandest poem in the Bible, the Twenty-third Psalm, is one hundred and eighteen words. Many lessons in the life of Jesus the world has been slow to learn. One of them, to which preachers, orators, and we writers pay scant attention, is the blessed virtue of being brief.

The Washing of His Feet

"A WOMAN . . . which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment . . . and began to wash his feet."



THE WASHING OF HIS FEET

THERE are some passages in the Gospels which present permanent difficulties. Did Jesus drive out the thieves from the temple twice or only once? If once, was it in the early days of his ministry, as told in one account, or in the last week, as related by another? Did he heal one blind man at Jericho, or more than one? Was the healing done as he entered the city or on his way out? Were his feet washed twice, by two different women, or do the authors of the Gospels merely differ in their records of the same occasion?

Says Luke:

"And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

"And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

"And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

Says John:

"Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

"There they made him a supper; and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

Specific accounts; different accounts. Seemingly, there must have been two women who were moved to the same splendid act of reverence. Who, then, was she whom Luke describes? "Mary Magdalene," many answer. "The woman is identified as a sinner. Mary Magdalene was a sinner; therefore this woman was Mary."

What makes us so sure that Mary was a sinner? Why has her name come down through the centuries as a synonym for feminine weakness?

Why have the women of the streets been known for two thousand years as "Magdalenes"? First, because Mary came from a town that had a bad reputation. Magdala was the fashionable lake resort where the rich disported themselves. It was an "open town"; many a man indulged in Magdala the tastes which could not safely be indulged at home. Because a part, and probably a small part, of the town was wicked, every inhabitant had to carry a share of the shame.

In the second place, it is told of Mary that he cast seven devils out of her. The phrase is an insidious one; it contains the suggestion of evil things. But in Palestine two thousand years ago there was no such implication. Whoever was mentally unbalanced, whoever had suffered a nervous breakdown, was said to have a devil. The devils which Jesus expelled from other sick folk were the devils of shattered nerves and divided minds, and what we term "complexes." Why should we not be fair to Mary Magdalene?

She followed him faithfully all his days, and was the first to greet him on the first Easter morning, when most of the others had given up hope. Surely such faith is a powerful reason for extending the benefit of the doubt. The world,

perhaps, will not change its opinion. For two thousand years it has been allowed to believe that Mary was a woman with a past. But you and I may be kinder, and possibly more just. We will not believe against a woman what has not been proved. We maintain that it is not fair to destroy her good name just because she happens to have been associated with an ambiguous phrase. And because she came from a wicked town.

About Mary of Bethany, whom John describes, there is no doubt. She and her sister and their brother Lazarus lived in a home that Jesus loved. He seems to have been there often. The two sisters differed in habit and type. Martha was a doer. She organized and accomplished. On her fell the burden of the house. She was cumbered with much serving, and because Mary sat and listened while Jesus talked, giving him the great joy of her woman's understanding, Martha was annoyed and complained to him, and received his gentle rebuke.

Rudyard Kipling, in "The Sons of Martha," recites the scene and imagines that the rebuke has descended as a burden upon all who do the world's unpleasant work:

". . . And because she lost her temper once, and because she was rude to the Lord her Guest,
Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons, world without end, reprieve, or rest.
. . . Raise ye the stone or cleave the wood to make a path more fair or flat;
Lo, it is black already with blood some Son of Martha spilled for that!

"And the Sons of Mary smile and are blessed—they know the angels are on their side.
They know in them is the Grace confessed, and for them are the Mercies multiplied.
They sit at the Feet—they hear the Word—they see how truly the Promise runs;
They have cast their burden upon the Lord, and—the Lord He lays it on Martha's Sons!"

Jesus was fond of women. They were attracted to him, and they gave him an intuitive faith and a loyal affection that outshone the stumbling loyalty of the men. We are told only a few of their names:

"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village . . . and the twelve were with him.

"And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

"And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, *and many others.*"

Who were the others? How did they "minister unto him of their substance?" Were they present all the time or only occasionally? How many of the mighty works did they witness? Were they allowed to come close enough to hear his parables, or were the front rows so reserved for men that they could get the glad tidings only at second hand? Did any one of them keep a secret diary? What a marvelous thing if there had been a fifth Gospel—his three great years as seen through a woman's eyes!

This one thing we know, that they never intruded. Only once did one of them attempt to shape his policies or present a suggestion with any tinge of self-interest. The mother of James and John loved her sons so much that she tried to assure their future. She asked that they should have the places of honor, one on his right hand and the other on his left, when he should come into his kingdom. And, as often happens when a woman seeks to help her men folks through influence with their leader, she succeeded only in bringing a rebuke upon herself and in stirring up resentment against the boys.

In every other instance the service of the women to him was the comfort of thoughtfulness and the joy of a responsive heart. Without the creature satisfactions which they furnished —good food, a clean bed, and the hospitality of pleasant homes—his life would have been much more bare and lonesome. For these blessings he was grateful. But most of all he needed and appreciated the inspiration of intuitive understanding and of loyal love.

It was so with this woman who washed his feet. She made no speeches in his behalf. She did no organizing; she contributed no money to the cause. All she did was to be her own loving, generous, understanding self. But in pictures and poems and songs and prose it still is being told.

Weeping Over Jerusalem

JESUS looked below him into the valley and across at the temple. For weeks he had planned every detail of his entrance. And now, when it was working out according to the plan—at that strange moment—Jesus wept.

WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM

TWICE in his public life Jesus of Nazareth wept. The first time, he was at the grave of Lazarus, and the event is recorded in the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." It was a fitting occasion for tears. He had been busy preaching and healing when the messengers came from the distracted sisters of Lazarus with the sad news that their brother was at the point of death. Frantically they besought his aid, but he postponed his coming, and now it was too late. Lazarus was dead and buried. His sisters and the whole household were in hopeless grief. Even though he had his plan and the knowledge that Lazarus was about to be restored to them, still the tragedy of their loss made its powerful appeal. They were weeping, and he wept.

The other occasion was totally different.

For a long time he had been looking forward to his entrance into Jerusalem and trying to pre-

pare his disciples for what would happen there. He knew the consequences. Certain friends among the Pharisees had come to him with a warning months before. "Get thee out and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee."

He not only rejected the invitation to flee, but he hurled defiance into the teeth of the wicked king.

"Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

"Nevertheless I must walk today and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

He knew that he must go to Jerusalem, and, far from seeking to placate any of the powers who could afford him protection, he flung down the gauntlet of defiance. Herod was not likely soon to forget the sneer of derision that ran through the city when it was told that the bold young Teacher had christened him "that fox."

There was much work to be done before the final week. The disciples were still without any real conception of his meaning and purpose. Though the crowds had largely left him, though his home town and even his own brethren had rejected him, they clung desperately to the hope

that some great act of power would retrieve his fortunes and seat him, and them, upon golden thrones.

So in parables he tried to make them see the truth. He noticed how at a dinner everybody rushed for a seat at the head of the table. It should not be so among his followers, he said. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

He told them of the rich man who made a feast and, when those who ought to have been his guests disdained the invitation, sent out and collected the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind. They received the bounty which was intended for the chosen. "And I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Again and again he repeated the teaching in different stories. A certain shepherd had many sheep, but it was for the one lost sheep in the wilderness that he cared most. A woman had ten pieces of silver and, losing one, lighted a candle and swept the whole house, searching for it. So he had been compelled to search for the few lost and lowly who would be his followers.

A certain man had two sons, one of them good

and smug and self-satisfied, the other wayward and foolish. But it was the wayward son who found the pathway to forgiveness through a contrite heart and who, coming home at last in rags and disgrace, received the father's blessing.

A poor man named Lazarus lay at a rich man's gate, sick and bereft and suffering. The rich man was absolutely sure of his standing both in this world and in the world to come. But in the Judgment he was condemned, and, looking up from his misery, he saw Lazarus enthroned in glory.

Thus, day by day, when they looked hopefully for words of enthusiasm and cheer, he kept repeating that they must leave behind all earthly happiness if they would share his next few weeks. A cross and not a crown was what was waiting for them. At last he believed they were ready for the whole truth:

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

"For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

"And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again."

And still "they understood none of these things."

Quietly then, and keeping his own counsel, he began to prepare for his entrance into the city. There was an ancient saying of the prophet Zechariah which was much in the minds of the Jews of that day:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

He determined to fulfil that prophecy.

They had come up from Jericho, where he had distressed the prejudice of the disciples by turning his back on the influential people and accepting the hospitality of a despised little tax gatherer named Zaccheus. They were approaching the town of Bethany, and he sent two of them ahead, saying that they would find a colt tied in the city "whereon yet never man sat: loose him and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him."

They found the colt and brought him; and on this humble little beast he started from Bethany that great morning for Jerusalem.

Bethany is hidden from sight of the city by the shoulder of the Mount of Olives. The road curves around the southwestern end of the top and turns northward and again westerly, winding down into and across the valley of the Kedron.

This morning it was crowded with pilgrims on their way to the Passover, many of them from his own simple and enthusiastic Galilee. They caught one glimpse of the small cavalcade—the Master riding ahead on the pathetic little colt, the disciples following respectfully behind—and immediately the ancient prophecy leaped into their minds. The response was electric. Tearing off their garments and the leaves from the near-by palm trees, they made a pathway for his progress. With shouts of hosanna they gave notice to the city below that the great hour of fulfilment had come.

The sun was behind him, falling over his shoulder and lighting up the city whose strong angle, rising sheer on a high wall from the valley, supported the temple area. In that light, at

that time of day, and from that point of view, it is one of the most impressive sights to be seen on earth. He must be a man of little feeling who can behold it unmoved.

No wonder the little parade halted, and Jesus looked below him into the valley and across at the temple. It was a sight to thrill his heart. For weeks he had pictured it in his mind's eye. For weeks he had carefully planned every detail of the entrance. And now, when it was all working out according to the plan, when he was seated there in prophetic character, with the garments of the faithful before him and the shouts of hosanna in his ears—at that strange moment—Jesus wept.

In the light of what followed it is not so strange. He knew the fickleness of the human heart. No one needed to tell him that the enthusiasm of that hour was destined not to last. Already there could be heard the far-off murmur that would so quickly rise to a frenzied curse, drowning the shouts of "Hosanna" with the yells of "Crucify." All this, too, he had prepared for; but it was not for this, not for himself, that the tears were shed.

He loved that city. With all the intense emo-

tion of the most patriotic Jew, he held it sacred. To it he had come more than once, carrying his good news, healing its sick, seeking to make clear to its people that a new faith must rise within the hallowed walls of the ancient temple. He had labored and sacrificed and hoped. Such glorious hopes!

And because of its stubbornness the great plan had failed. It was too late now. The hour had passed. The day of hope was hid from its eyes.

"For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.

"And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

With these awful words of warning, he dried his tears, and went on. It was not yet too late to turn back. Knowing all that was to come to him, he could easily have reversed his steps, ridden the few miles that separated him from Jericho, and spent the Passover period quietly in the home of Zaccheus. Later, it would have been a simple matter to slip off into Galilee.

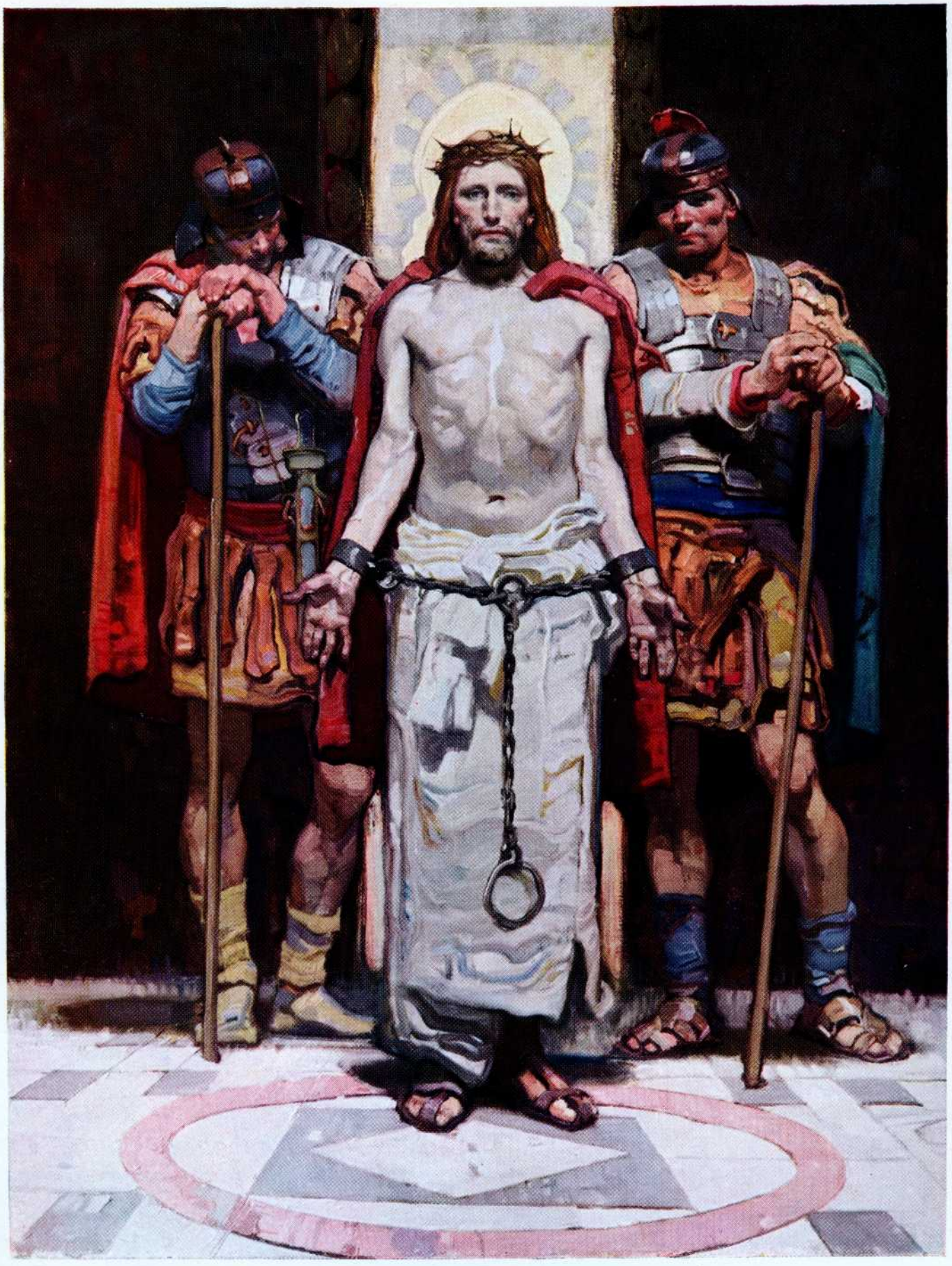
There he could go back to the carpenter shop, and the neighbors would receive him and come gradually to appreciate the fineness of his spirit. And when he was old, they would point him out as a man who as a youth had gone down to Jerusalem and stirred things up a great deal.

He could have turned back, but he didn't. This is the first great point. And the second is, that his tears in this instance—as at the grave of Lazarus—were followed not by surrender or self-pity, but by decisive action. He wept at the grave. But in the next five minutes he had called Lazarus forth and comforted the family. He wept at the sight of the city, but he proceeded down the mountain, across the brook, and through the Golden Gate. And instantly "he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought."

There are tears that are followed by weakness, but his were the tears of strength.

Christ Before Pilate

PONTIUS PILATE saw something in the regal face streaked with blood from the crown of thorns before which his own petty authority felt its lack.



CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

LIKE flies embedded in amber, two names have been preserved in the ancient creed side by side with the name of Jesus. Which two? Not John the Baptist, who did the monumental work of heroic preparation; not Peter, who assumed, in the thought of the early Church, the place of leader among the apostles. Not John, the apostle of love; nor Paul, who carried the gospel beyond the narrow confines of Palestine and made of it a world religion. None of these.

The first name is that of Mary, the mother, and all Christendom, regardless of sect or creed, would agree to her right to that glorious place.

But whose is the other name, and why is it there? We have to stop to recall the answer, and when we do, it comes as a surprise:

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by

the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

Just these two names, and no more. And what a contrast!

An officer of equestrian rank, Pontius Pilate was sent by the emperor Tiberius in 26 A. D. to be governor of a part of Palestine. The policy of Rome was to respect local customs and religions and not to interfere with provincial matters so long as they did not encroach upon imperial authority. Where the conquered people were complaisant, and the governor had a certain degree of consideration mixed with his firmness, things went fairly pleasantly. But no people in the whole empire were prouder and more quarrelsome, more resentful of foreign domination, than the population in the comparatively worthless province of Judea.

For ten uncomfortable years Pilate kept the Roman peace, always misunderstanding those whom he had been sent to govern, and all the time in danger of losing his position if he failed too far in pleasing them. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us much about him. Naturally Pilate emerges prominently in the narrative at

those points where his will collided with the will of his subjects or their leaders, the priests. We may be sure that he is given no glistening coat of whitewash; but there is reason to believe that the account, while far from unprejudiced, is essentially truthful.

Let us see, then, what Josephus has to say.

He tells us that Pilate sought to enlarge the prestige of Rome by secretly conveying the Roman standards into Jerusalem by night. Nothing was more hateful to the Jews than these imperial banners; they considered them idolatrous, and their intrusion a sacrilegious act. It was a tactless performance, to say the least, and Pilate was besieged for five days in his city, Cæsarea, by a mob demanding that the banners go out. He had to yield, and when the matter came to the attention of Tiberius it was ordered that the standards be not taken inside the walls again.

Seeking, in a blundering way, to do something for the good of Jerusalem, Pilate decided to build an aqueduct. The government revenues were insufficient, and, looking around for money, he saw the rich treasures of the temple.

Why allow this wealth to lie idle when it could be made to do some good? What better religious use for it than to bring clean water into town? So he probably argued, and forthwith appropriated the funds.

The result, as a more politic mind might have foreseen, was a riot. Pilate could no more appreciate the psychology of the Jewish people, who so obstinately refused material progress at the expense of their religious ideals, than King George could appreciate the stubborn resistance to the Americans over a petty tax on tea; and both assumed that a little application of the iron hand would straighten things out very quickly. Pilate ordered soldiers in disguise to mingle with the mob and club them into submission. They only made matters worse.

The act which led to his recall, according to Josephus, was his murder of certain devout Samaritans who were digging on Mount Gerizim to recover the holy vessels they believed Moses to have buried there. This murder was too much even for Tiberius, though the way for dismissal may have been prepared by a previous outrage which is mentioned incidentally in Luke and without explanation:

"There were present at that season some that

told him [Jesus] of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices."

Poor Galileans; their names and the reason for their destruction have been lost forever. They were merely a drop of paint in the portrait of one whom Agrippa declared to be "inflexible, merciless and obstinate."

Did he entirely deserve that harsh judgment? It must be admitted that the New Testament gives a somewhat less unfavorable picture, and the Church, perhaps to the credit of its compassion rather than the honor of its judgment, has shown a desire to treat him better than he probably deserved.

In the middle of the second century an unknown Christian faked a Gospel of Nicodemus, after the common custom of that period, and represented Pilate as a penitent. A considerable literature then began in alleged official records of this administration and grew so enormously that by the eighteenth century it extended to a hundred and ten treatises. Even to this day a fraudulent document goes the rounds of the papers every few years, purporting to be Pilate's report to Rome, giving a description of the personal appearance of Jesus, or in some instances a copy of the death warrant.

An early treatise entitled "Parodosis Pilati" relates not only that Pilate became a convert, but that he and his wife, Procula, were condemned by Tiberius for their adherence to Christianity. For which apparently good reason the Abyssinian Church canonized Pilate, his day in the calendar of the saints being June 25th; and the Greek Church made a saint of his wife, whose memory is venerated October 27th.

On the contrary, other literature, notably "Mars Pilati," told how, being condemned by Tiberius, Pilate committed suicide. His body was refused burial in the land, and thus corrupted the Tiber and later the Rhone. Finally it was cast into a deep pool near Lucerne, under the lofty mountain Pilatus, where it rises on every good Friday to be observed by those who have adequate faith, piteously washing its hands of the guilt which can never be blotted out.

So we have the two conflicting versions of tradition, and, since there is no firm historic basis for either of them, we are compelled to go back to the Gospels for the brief glimpse they give of this most unhappy of men.

"And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

"And they began to accuse him, saying, We

found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

"And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him, and said, Thou sayest it.

"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

"And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

"When Pilate heard of Galilee he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

"And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time."

But Herod, the wise old fox, refused to have the unpleasant responsibility passed over to him. Already he had had the experience of condemning one fanatical preacher, John the Baptist, and he did not care to burden his conscience with another. So he poked fun at this pretended King, dressed him up in robes of mocking dignity and, with a sardonic chuckle, passed him back to Pilate.

"Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

"But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

"And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

"And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

"And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required."

There you have the picture as Luke gives it —not a wilfully bad man, a rather pathetic figure, torn between his desire to render justice and his fear that if he outraged these people any further they would make a protest to Rome. He was not deceived by the shout that Jesus was an enemy of the Roman government. When he asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and Jesus answered, as John gives it, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" Pilate knew that Jesus put his finger on the exact spot where the prosecution was impotent.

If Jesus was guilty under ecclesiastical law, the ecclesiastical courts were at liberty to find him guilty, but they could not kill him legally; and if, on the other hand, he was to be tried

under Roman authority, the question was not how much he had offended in ecclesiastical matters, but whether the Roman government was menaced by his claims. Pilate could say only, "I find no fault in him." It was an honest verdict. He was wise enough; what he lacked was courage.

Of Judas it has been written:

> Still as of old,
> Man by himself is priced;
> For thirty pieces Judas sold
> Himself, not Christ.

Very much the same might be said of Pilate. It was not Jesus of Nazareth who was on trial, but Pontius Pilate. He was not to blame for failing to recognize Jesus as the most perfect spirit that ever walked the earth; he was to blame for an act of cowardice prompted by a selfish fear. Obviously his hesitation, his increasing consideration as the trial proceeded, his reluctance to be driven to the wretched verdict, proceeded from something more than a conviction that this peasant-preacher was not an anarchist. He saw something in the regal face streaked with blood from the crown of thorns, he saw in that form, already lacerated with the scourge and soon to be tottering under the weight of the cross, a

majesty before which his own petty authority felt its lack. The conduct of Pilate throughout the whole bitter day is one of the finest possible testimonies to the respect which Jesus must have everywhere inspired. And yet—"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

There is no indication that Pilate was deeply impressed by the incident. It was all in the day's work—a routine matter requiring no report to Rome. The crowd melted away; the tumult and the shouting died; Pilate and his wife rode back to Cæsarea rather thankful that the Passover was over and that there had been no really serious outbreak. As for the clear-eyed young Man whom he had met for the first time on Friday morning and saw for the last time Friday afternoon, it is a question whether he ever gave him another thought. In after years he may have supposed that his rule would be remembered in Jerusalem because he tried to build an aqueduct, or for some other official reason. The real reason why his name has endured would never have occurred to him. He lives in eternal infamy, not because he was the world's most wicked ruler, but because of one single moment of weakness. Because he wanted to do what was right, but did not, for fear of losing his job.

The Crucifixion

WHO was it that murdered Jesus? Just a fickle, thoughtless crowd. And the real thing to remember about the crucifixion—solemn and terrible, but none the less true—is that it still might happen almost anywhere.

THE CRUCIFIXION

INJUSTICE, cruelty, and oppression have not been rare upon this scarred old earth. The banishment of Aristides by citizens who were weary of hearing him called "the Just"; the judicial murder of Socrates, charged with being a corrupter of youth; the burning of Joan of Arc as a heretic and a witch—these and innumerable other tragedies have darkened the pages of history with innocent blood. Among them all the crucifixion of Jesus stands apart, a thing of unmitigated horror. Humanity hangs its head in perpetual shame at the memory of the cross.

Not in savage Africa nor in barbarian Europe, not by some cannibal tribe nor by marauding tribesmen, was this most perfect life destroyed. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Jerusalem was a cultured city, an intelligent city, a religious city and, as compared with Thebes and Babylon, a modern

city. Except for some details in form and manner, all that happened to him there might conceivably have happened here and now. That is the most tragic fact.

Look around and you can see the same motives that brought him to the cross: the treachery and cupidity of Judas: the bluster and cowardice of Peter; the bigotry of Caiaphas; the timidity of Pilate. All these are common enough in men we know, some of whom move in very good society.

Who was it that murdered him?

The soldiers, of course, who laid him on the rough wood and drove spikes through his quivering flesh, and at the end pierced his side with a spear. They were the men who killed him. And yet to them it was not a matter of hatred or even prejudice, only a part of the day's work. They threw dice for his clothes with no more than ordinary covetousness. If orders had come from Pilate to take him down, they might easily have given him back his raiment and been rather relieved to have him go free. Judged by the standards of their time and class, they seem to have been almost considerate, for they offered him the stupefying drug, which he would not take, and

the sour wine which mercifully eased by a very little the intensity of his sufferings. Not bad fellows, probably, those privates of the Roman guard; certainly not the guiltiest of those for whom he prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Pontius Pilate killed him. He passed sentence upon a man whom he knew to be innocent of any offense against the Roman law, and so won for himself eternal infamy and a place in the Christian creeds: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate." But Jesus knew that Pilate was not so guilty as Caiaphas, and he said, "He that hath delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

Caiaphas, the high priest, killed him. Hard-hearted, mercenary, crafty, and unscrupulous, he sent Jesus to the cross. And yet, even he could not have done it alone.

The crowd crucified him. They wanted to see something happen. Perhaps they soothed their consciences by calling it a vindication of justice against an impostor, but what they really wanted was a new sensation. Since Sunday he had shown no miracle. His triumphal entry and his vigorous cleansing of the temple had promised an entertaining week, but it had flattened out. All of

Monday and Tuesday he was in controversial dialogue with those who challenged his authority or hoped to trap or intimidate him. Wednesday he stayed in Bethany. Thursday he came back quietly into the city to stay at the house of a friend and eat the Passover alone with his disciples. And all the time, those who had hailed him on Sunday, and had been waiting to see what he would do, had lived in disappointment.

Some of them expected him to lead a revolt, to hurl Pilate from his seat and open the palaces to pillage. Some hoped to see fire from heaven, or a legion of angels. Others had no ideas, except that they wanted entertainment. And he provided nothing. If they had chosen, they might have seen Barabbas executed, but it would have been less interesting. Jesus was more prominent; there was always hope that at the last minute he might save himself in spectacular fashion. Besides, Barabbas was a bandit. Always there is a morbid sympathy for the criminal who operates on a large scale and commits most of his depredations against the rich. But as for this soft-spoken, gentle spirit who claimed to be a wonder-worker and a prophet, and had so stubbornly refused to furnish them excitement, they would force him

to give them a thrill in spite of himself. "Away with him." "Crucify him."

Thus the verdict was reached. The shocking thing to remember is that all the safeguards broke down. The crucifixion was not one accident to the orderly course of justice; it was a complete collapse of all the guards which had so confidently been provided to prevent any such event.

Civil government broke down. In many respects the government of the Roman Empire was the most remarkable institution in the history of mankind. It was grandly devised, and on the whole admirably administered. But Jesus was crucified on order of an officer of the Roman Empire acting in his official capacity—a representative of the greatest and, in many respects, the ablest government that humanity has achieved.

Organized religion broke down. The whole ecclesiastical machinery of the priestly system was called into function, not that it might save this righteous man but that it might destroy him.

Education broke down—the type of education which had been devised to fit men's minds for just such problems as the character and teaching

of Jesus involved. He had never told men to "search the Scriptures." He had no need to tell them that. He was talking to those whose daily business was with the Scriptures; yet all their searching and their education, which ought to have made it easy for them to accept him, merely hardened their minds to his murder.

Good government; highly developed religion; culture, founded on knowledge of history and the devoted study of a great literature—these are the forces which we moderns count on so much to make and keep our civilization safe. And these are the forces which united to bring about the greatest of all crimes.

There are many little incidents in connection with the tragedy, each of which might easily be the subject for comment.

One remembers the women who stood loyally about the foot of the cross, when all the men had fled.

One remembers the faith of the penitent thief, greater in some respects than any that was shown to Jesus throughout his life. Those who had believed on him earlier had seen him full of health, a master of the crowd, healing the sick, raising the dead, performing mighty acts. Now all that

was over. Wounded and bleeding and dying, he hung upon a cross. Surely this was an inglorious end of such a splendid promise. There could be nothing after this. Yet this nameless thief—how we wish we knew more about him!—looked up and, with his dying breath, hailed him as a king.

Where were the hungry whom he had fed? Where were the sick whom he had healed? Where were the oppressed whose rights he had defended? Not one of them was there. But a rich man, one of the class against whom he had spoken his most bitter denunciations, claimed his body from Pilate and laid it in a princely tomb.

Was Jerusalem terrified that day, as some of the Gospel stories tell us? Was the veil of the temple rent asunder? Were there terrible bolts of lightning? Were graves opened, and did the dead walk again? For those to whom all this makes the tragedy more impressive, there is plenty of detailed evidence. Others will find it more real and more impressive to believe that there was simply darkness and a storm.

The disciples scurried away into Galilee.

Residents of the city, who entertained guests that night at dinner, mentioned at the table that

a rather unfortunate thing had occurred; a young peasant from Galilee, a fisherman or carpenter or something, who had been preaching, had been arrested. They were not quite sure how it had ended but thought, rather vaguely, that he was one of three or four men who had been executed in the afternoon outside the city gates. An unpleasant thing, to be sure, but nothing to talk about, nothing to spoil a good dinner.

As for those who had seen the horror, they hurried back to town, more concerned with avoiding the rain than in deciding who was to blame. Most of them probably did not think anyone was to blame. They were perhaps disposed to commend the police for the prompt arrest, and Pilate for having ended a disturbance before the solemn feast day and the Sabbath that was to follow.

George Bernard Shaw, in writing about Joan of Arc, asks whether it must always be true that once in a generation some prophet must die because men have no imagination. Whether the lack of imagination is the principal cause or not, the fact remains that prophets have been dying at rather regular intervals all down through the centuries, and men have never been

at a loss to find some convenient, if entirely unconvincing, reason.

And the real thing to remember about the crucifixion is not that it happened in a city similar to our own; not that the crowd, seeking excitement, was maddened because it had been denied; not that it was done by priests and the representative of an emperor; but that men of education and of culture felt entirely comfortable in helping to bring it about.

Not that it happened in Jerusalem, but—solemn and terrible, yet none the less true—it still might happen almost anywhere.

THE END