

# The Herald

## Of Christ's Kingdom

*March/April 2001*

In the Beginning

## The Last Days of Jesus' Life

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.—Matthew 26:37

Throughout the last week of his life on earth, the words of Jesus displayed a deep concern for his closest followers. He noted their internal strife. He saw how imperfectly they comprehended the fact of his oncoming death. Their weaknesses stood in sharp contrast to his own strength of faith and determination. He detected their lack of readiness to carry on his work and message. These were just some of the reasons he was "troubled in spirit" as his earthly pilgrimage neared its end (John 13:21).

And his disciples—how their hearts would ache when they could no longer go to him personally for solace, help, and direction. Jesus knew them intimately; they had shared so much during the previous three and a half years. Now the time of parting was close at hand and the Master had much to share with them.

Of all the apostles, perhaps none was closer than John. He often referred to himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:7). It was to him that Jesus conferred the responsibility of caring for Mary (John 19:27). John seemed to understand the heart of his Master perhaps better than any of the other apostles. And it is John who records so many of the last words of Jesus. How grateful we are that these words are preserved, not so much for their historical accuracy, but because they reveal the inner heart-felt feelings of the "elder brother" of the church.

The words that were spoken softly in the upper room at the Passover season, the conversation with the troubled eleven as they walked slowly and contemplatively around the southern walls of ancient Jerusalem and then down into the dark valley below, the tender-hearted intercessory prayer which the Lord uttered before crossing the brook Kidron to lay out the feelings of his own heart before his loving Father—all of these words John, the ever-loving disciple, remembered and penned for our edification.

These are the words upon which we are seeking to dwell in this issue of The Herald.

## Matthew 23

# Berating the Scribes and Pharisees

*Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.—Matthew 16:6*

Richard Suraci

In considering this subject at memorial time, we receive a glimpse of how Jesus' love operated for everyone. To understand why Jesus berated the scribes and Pharisees, we need to understand the Father and his son's feelings for the human race, and also why Jesus came to earth.

Jesus was the son of God in his pre-human existence, the first and only creation of God. He was known as the Logos: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was [a] God. This was in the beginning with God. Through it everything was done; and without it not even one thing was done, which has been done. In it was Life; and the Life was the light of men. And the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not." (John 1:1-5, Diaglott)

Logos, as translated by Professor Strong, means something said. It is taken from the Greek logo, Strong's #3004, meaning "lay forth, to relate in words." In addition to being God's communicator, the Logos was also God's agent in all his created works.

### **A Pen Picture of the Logos**

Proverbs 8:22-31 gives us a pen picture of the Logos who was alone with his heavenly Father. "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (verse 30). This implies a vast amount of time that the Logos spent with his Father as he was nurtured and taught divine principles.

"Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men" (verse 31). This refers to the creation of man on the only habitable part of earth which was Eden. The Logos rejoiced in the creation of humans and their perfection! The word "men" in this text is Strong's #120, a human being. Rotherham renders it, "Yea, my fullness of delight was with the sons of men."

The Logos conveyed God's word to his people as we have it recorded from Genesis to Malachi, and as the man Christ Jesus from Matthew to Revelation. He learned God's methods of dealing with the human race before and after the fall from perfection.

## **God's Just Vengeance**

After Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, the vengeance of God came upon them and Satan (Genesis 3:9-19). It took approximately 1,656 years for mankind to digress to the point where God decreed the destruction of every living thing on earth, except for Noah, his family, and some animals.

We read this description of God's deep sorrow: "The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain" (Genesis 6:6, NIV). The Logos entered into his grief because he too saw what happened for "his delights were with the sons of men."

They were grieved that an attempt was made to frustrate their loving plan for man which entailed the price of giving mankind freedom of choice. On the other hand, they gloried in the beauty of their handiwork. How great then was their grief when their handiwork became soiled by sin (see Genesis chapters 6 and 7).

In placing a curse upon the serpent (Satan) God said, "Enmity will I put between thee and the woman, and between thy seed, and her seed [note: not the man's seed]—he [Christ] shall crush thy head, but thou [Satan] shalt crush his heel" (Genesis 3:15, Rotherham; see also Hebrews 2:14).

This is an important feature of God's plan for man and it is centered in our Lord Jesus. Jesus is the "seed" that shall crush Satan. In God's providence the church will assist in this momentous work (Romans 16:20).

## **Blessing All the Families of the Earth**

It was written of Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). The apostle Paul confirms who this seed is: "Now unto Abraham were spoken the promises and unto his seed; he saith not—and unto thy seeds as of many, but as of one—and unto thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16, Rotherham).

In Galatians 4:4 the apostle Paul informs us of the appearance of this wonderful one: "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman" (see also John 3:16).

Jesus tells us why he came to earth: "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This is in harmony with what he told the apostles: "The son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:56). Adam and Eve lost perfect life, communion with God and their Edenic home; Jesus came to restore all that was lost.

The apostle Paul in Hebrews 7:26 reveals Jesus' perfection as the man Christ Jesus: "For such an high priest became us ["meets our need"—NIV] who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens." While Jesus spent

his earthly life among sinners, he was disunited from their ways, thoughts, and actions. However, he associated with them, taught them, and loved them dearly. We read, "He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he power [margin: right or privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name" (John 1:11,12; see also Acts 3:26). The scribes and Pharisees were among "his own" even though they did all in their power to refute his gospel and to destroy him.

### **The Scribes and Pharisees**

The scribes joined the Pharisees in rebuking Jesus and tempting him to give them a sign from heaven (Matthew 16:1). To this end they worked with the Sadducees and Herodians, even though their ideologies conflicted greatly.

The scribes were closely associated with the Pharisees and were considered a part of them. They were the teachers and expounders of the law and professional writers. Acts 23:9 speaks of "scribes that were of the Pharisees." They existed from early Old Testament times and are first mentioned in 2 Samuel 8:17: "Seraiah was the scribe." In the New Testament the first mention of a scribe is found in Matthew 8:19: "A certain scribe said unto him, Master I will follow thee withersoever thou goest."

The name Pharisee means separatist. This definition describes their lives which separated them from the common people, publicans, and sinners. They believed they could gain ritual purity by this separatist attitude and the minute observance of the law such as the washing of hands, cups, and utensils. They based their faith in the oral traditions handed down from the fathers. They followed the books of Moses and writings of the prophets. They fasted often and looked down on commoners who did not fast. The Pharisees came into power about 150 years before Jesus' birth.

### **The First Year of Jesus' Ministry**

The first year of our Lord's ministry was quiet. As the common people gladly listened to his gospel and followed him, the scribes and Pharisees, out of jealousy and fear, started their vendetta against him. They were disturbed and said among themselves, "The world is gone after him" (John 12:19).

They upheld the tradition of men above the laws of God (Mark 7:3). They were careful in fulfilling outward details while neglecting the fundamental features of the law (Matthew 23:23). They were overly zealous for Judaism (Matthew 23:15). They were proud and loved to display themselves as pious and honorable (Matthew 23:5-7). They were covetous (Luke 16:14). They were blind to spiritual things (John 3:1-10). They over-emphasized the ceremonial features of the law (Matthew 15:1-9). They perverted the Scriptures (Matthew 15:1-9). They justified themselves (Luke 16:14,15). They hindered potential believers in Jesus (John 9:16-22).

In Matthew 23:33 Jesus called them serpents, a throwback to the "serpent" who deceived Eve. In John 8:44 he called them children of the devil. In Matthew 23:27 Jesus likened them to whited sepulchers, beautiful on the outside, yet filled with hypocrisy and iniquity within.

As Jesus observed the words and acts of the scribes and Pharisees, he was deeply concerned. It was one thing to sin against him and quite another to sin against the holy spirit which was manifested in his life and gospel (Matthew 12:31,32, Diaglott).

### **Teaching in the Temple**

Jesus and his apostles went into the temple where he taught the people in parables. It wasn't long before the chief priests and elders asked him by what authority he did those works (Matthew 21:23). From this point to the end of chapter 23 we have a wonderful course of instruction directed primarily to the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, those who conspired to kill him. Jesus had only four days left and was willing to devote some of his time to help his enemies in pointing out to them where they stood as opponents of God and his plan.

Jesus possessed the greatest wisdom ever possessed by anyone. He was able to view a person's heart condition or thoughts and immediately express a word picture (a parable) to show the wrong course they were taking. The parable that follows was intended primarily for the scribes and Pharisees.

"There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. They will respect my son," he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir, come, let's kill him and take his inheritance." So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to these tenants?" "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.' Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit."—Matthew 21:33-43, NIV

This parable was a plain statement and a witness of their wrong course and its certain result. And they understood what he said because verse 45 states: "They knew he was talking about them." But their hearts were not softened. They would have seized the Master but they knew the crowd was sympathetic toward him. Jesus didn't fear them because he knew his time was in the Father's hands. He proceeded to give them the parable of the marriage feast (Matthew 22:1-14) reminding them that others would take

their place because of their unfaithfulness. All these warnings and parables fell on deaf ears. Had they heeded our Lord's counsel, they could have become a holy nation with exclusive rights to the heavenly call. Instead, they took counsel together to determine how they might entrap him.

### **An Order to Arrest Jesus**

In John 7:32 we are told that the Pharisees sent two temple guards to arrest Jesus because he was swaying the people. In Verses 45 to 52 (NIV) we read: "Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, 'Why didn't you bring him in?' 'No one ever spoke the way this man does,' the guards declared. 'You mean he has deceived you also?' the Pharisees retorted. 'Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.' Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked. 'Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?' They replied, 'Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.'"

In retrospect, we can answer the Pharisee's question affirmatively! We know of at least three Pharisees who believed in Jesus: Nicodemus (a member of the ruling council), Joseph of Arimathea, and the apostle Paul, "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6). There may have been others.

Jesus was nurtured by God and was God's channel of communication. He delivered God's word and instructions to Israel. God said what he meant and meant what he said. His words were stern and to the point. God loved Israel very much. By his judgmental accusations and decrees of punishment he desired to bring them back into his fold. He lovingly said of them, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2).

### **Judgmental, Yet Therapeutic Words**

Although Jesus' piercing words to the scribes and Pharisees were blunt and judgmental and caused shock and embarrassment, they were meant to be therapeutic. But the words they spoke to Jesus were vindictive and spiteful. His words were intended as a "wake-up call" shaking them out of their complacency and pointing out to them where they stood as opponents of God and his plan.

Jesus was aware of their hatred and provocation toward him. Their attitude didn't alter his love for them as he sought to lead them in the way of truth. In John 8:12-59 we have examples of his love for them. He spoke to a mixed group of people: his apostles, believers, and scribes and Pharisees. The scribes and Pharisees challenged statements Jesus made concerning the validity of his existence and gospel.

In verse 28 Jesus said, "When you shall lift up the Son of Man you will know that I am he"(Diaglott translation) This was a prophetic statement of the future. Verse 30 states that many believed in him.

In verses 31 and 32 Jesus made a statement the scribes and Pharisees heard, showing that they too could be recipients of his words of life: "If you abide in my word, you are certainly my disciples. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (Diaglott translation).

These intimate words which we love and cherish, he shared with those who were plotting to kill him. This chapter ends with an attempt to stone Jesus, but he slipped away because his hour had not yet come.

### **Jesus' Last Message to the Scribes and Pharisees**

In Matthew 23 Jesus gave his last message to Israel which included the scribes and Pharisees. He warns the people about the scribes and Pharisees and the judgments coming upon their nation, trying to bring them to repentance. In his final message he labored to bring them back to God. In the first two verses Jesus was conciliatory toward the scribes and Pharisees in telling the people that they sit in Moses' seat, bidding them to do what they say, but not do as they do: "They say and do not perform!"

Even though Jesus had a few days left on earth, he was willing to devote some of his time to instruct and warn his people. In speaking to the scribes and Pharisees, he used the word "woe" seven times which was an exclamation of grief. Grief is intense emotional suffering caused by loss, disaster, or misfortune. This was a prophecy of what would happen to them, and it did happen in 70 A.D.

Jesus sums up this chapter in verses 37 to 39: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

What loving and tender language: "Ye shall not see me henceforth." He was going away, not forever, but until the time when they will say from the heart, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." What a remarkable attitude Jesus had! He was able to rejoice, even though they were planning to kill him, that a day would come when he would bless them. "Hallelujah, what a Savior!"

John 12:1-19

## A Supper at Bethany

*Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.—John 12:7*

Regis Liberda

During the last week that our Lord spent in Israel before his death, he had supper at Lazarus' home. We read about the event in John 12 which tells us that it was "six days before the Passover." This focuses our attention on the importance of the events of that last week of Jesus and even the timing.

Jesus had many suppers at the homes of friends, disciples, and even Pharisees during his earthly mission. However, as we will see in John's narration, this one had special importance. Probably it was due to the moment, to the solemnity created by the declarations of the Lord about his near death and to the fact that Lazarus, whom Jesus resurrected from the dead a few weeks before, was present.

### **Whose Home Was It?**

There are some difficulties with identifying this supper of John 12:1-8 with the meal described in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9:

One was two days before the Passover, the other was six.

The owner of one house was Simon the Leper, the other was that of Lazarus.

The woman who came with the nard is not identified in one instance, and is Mary in the other.

One anointing was on the head of Jesus, the other on his feet.

A number of disciples spoke up at one meal, while only Judas expressed indignation on the other occasion.

Considering these differences it is likely there were two different suppers with similar circumstances. It could indeed be possible that our Lord was honored two different times since the love of those women was an act of hospitality expressed on a very exceptional occasion. One woman may even have copied the other. **Tell Us About Death!**

John 12:9 (NIV) reads, "A large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead."

The resurrection of Lazarus was exceptional, even compared to the two other resurrections Jesus performed. In the two other cases persons were resurrected a short time after their death. Critics could claim it could just be a mistake concerning their real deaths and that the supposed "miracles" of Jesus were just a coincidence. Since the resurrected ones were children, their testimony might be considered suspect.

Here the resurrected one was a respectable citizen of Bethany, old enough to answer all the questions many wanted to ask. Because he had remained three days in the grave, no one could question that he was really dead. After all, the friends of Lazarus expressed skepticism when Jesus told them to roll away the stone.

The friends of Jesus were present at this supper and, according to verse 9, the common people as well. They were probably numerous, drawn by the same curiosity: to see a man who had been dead! We can imagine their questions to Lazarus: "How was it? Do you remember anything? Did you see God?"

We can imagine how Lazarus might have answered: "I really remember nothing. It was as if, during a very hard moment of my illness, I suddenly lost consciousness until the moment I heard the words, 'Lazarus, come forth,' and so I did."

There was no paradise, no hell—Lazarus had seen nothing. Lazarus was really dead. "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

But what happens beyond death is still a question, a big mystery, for many. We can imagine the curiosity of Lazarus' friends. Even today many do not think of death as if it really exists, but prefer to believe one life fades into another. Many think they can communicate with their beloved ones who have died.

Jesus said that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28,29). The resurrection of Lazarus was a wonderful picture of the blessings mankind will experience when all will hear his voice and be resurrected, will see again their families and friends and have fellowship together as pictured at this supper at Lazarus' home.

This is a wonderful lesson to show that God has provided not a judgment of man immediately after his death, but after a resurrection which gives him a second chance to obey God's will!

### **Mary and Martha**

In verse 2 we read that "Martha served." During that time Mary anointed the feet of Jesus which John relates in the subsequent verses.

We remember a different supper at the same place where Martha served and Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to his words. When Martha complained that Mary did not help her,

Jesus said that Mary took "the best part." During this last supper in Bethany, both sisters are performing the same roles they had previously. This time it is not written that Mary did not serve, only that she took very expensive ointment of spikenard to anoint Jesus' feet.

These two sisters illustrate different categories of Christians appreciated by God for their zeal. Some Christians express their consecration in long efforts, others in exceptional demonstrations of love. God appreciates both. Our Lord's personal example shows a long and perpetual sacrifice for others as well as warm moments of compassion as, for example, at the resurrection of his friend Lazarus.

We can easily understand the deed of Mary, who did not hesitate to use such an expensive perfume to thank and to honor the one who had resurrected her brother, and do it in front of many friends. Had the resurrection of Lazarus a price? Not for Mary.

It is also possible that Mary knew something. At about this time, Jesus had mentioned that he was going to die. While many probably refused to think this was a possibility, perhaps Mary understood. Jesus confirmed that she did it for his burying.

Martha also had sublime moments. We remember her answer to Jesus when Lazarus died: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24), giving the very first testimony in the New Testament of this most important hope for mankind.

Mary probably had a deeper emotional sensibility in such moments. The fact that Jesus accepted her gift shows his appreciation for her spontaneous decision.

### **The Costly Gift**

We see during that supper the special attention of Mary for Jesus. The price estimated by Judas was very expensive: 300 denarii represented about a year's wages. For those who were present that night, such a gift might have seemed unnecessarily extravagant. The gift Mary gave was worth ten times the price Judas received for betraying Jesus (30 pieces of silver). This vividly illustrates Mary's exceptional deed and gives it a spiritual dimension that probably only Jesus and Mary could together understand.

It is generally not so easy to make a rational choice between spending a large sum to feed the poor, and an impulsive yet magnificent act to honor a precious friend in front of others. But this deed contains a good lesson for Christians. In many cases, any demonstration of love to somebody may be better understood by others if we previously also demonstrate our ability for rational generosity, managing wisely what God has given to us. We can suppose that Mary's noble character was both ready to take care of the poor as well as show her love to a precious friend.

The public acceptance of her gift by our Lord shows that Mary had again chosen "that good part" (Luke 10:42) near him.

## **The Chief Priests**

We know about the growing anger of the chief priests and Pharisees against Jesus, an anger that climaxed in the words "Crucify him" shouted to Pilate. We also see in verse 10 that they hated Lazarus as well and wanted to put him to death.

Why did they hate Lazarus? How could a man who had just been dead and now resurrected be dangerous to them? It was because their insatiable desire to keep their power over the people was much more important to them than to consider that a miracle had occurred.

A desire for power and glory and the fear to lose either may be dangerous for a Christian too. It makes a person blind, blind even in front of the miraculous evidence of a miracle being wrought on behalf of another.

Our Lord was a noble example of the opposite of the Pharisees' pride. He was willing to be despised and condemned by those who were jealous of his popularity. He also accepted the loss of popularity by refusing to establish immediately a kingdom of power. Instead he taught and demonstrated the doctrine of love. He accepted the loss of "friendship" of his close friends who would not follow him in his darkest moments.

Can we excuse the behavior of those Pharisees as being normal and logical considering the political and religious situation in Israel? No, we can not. Even among them there were noble Pharisees like Joseph of Arimathea who did not follow the majority, but obeyed his own conscience which told him Jesus was the Messiah. True, the disciples of the Master did abandon him in Gethsemane, but they eventually had the courage to be his best servants. And no, we cannot excuse such hatred as politically expedient, for in Bethany we find a family of sincere and true friends of Jesus who expressed in a wonderful way their love for their Master no matter what the consequences.

John 12:20-50

## We Would See Jesus

*And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.—John 12:20,21*

Carl Hagensick

At the beginning of Jesus' life on earth certain wise men from the east came to worship Jesus. Now, at the end of his ministry, certain Greeks came to see and converse with him. As the wise men from the east were Gentiles, probably Persian followers of Zoroaster, so these Greeks were not Greek-speaking Jews (hellenistes), but Gentiles (helleenes), Greeks who presumably were Jewish proselytes.

Why they did not approach Jesus directly is unknown. It may have been that they were not sure he would accept them because of their Gentile birth, but more likely he was in the inner parts of the temple where non-Jews, even proselytes, were not permitted. In any case, they approached Philip, seeking an audience with the great teacher. Perhaps they chose this disciple because of his Greek name, or perhaps since they came, as tradition has it, from the Decapolis, they may have known Philip from neighboring Bethsaida. Philip was apparently uncomfortable with deciding to grant this request alone, so he confided with Andrew who was a fellow-citizen of Bethsaida (John 1:44). The two together approached the Master who proceeded to give them one of the final lessons delivered during his life on earth.

### **Jesus' Words to Philip and Andrew**

Jesus' response implies that he took this request as a sign of his approaching death. Perhaps the interest of even the proselytized Greeks of the Diaspora was an indication that it would not belong before the word would spread beyond Judea, not only to Jews but to Gentiles as well.

Using the agricultural example of sown seed, Jesus illustrated how it would be only by his death that fruitage would come from his mission of the salvation of all mankind. He proceeded to show how his followers must follow him into death in order to receive eternal life themselves. It would be only those who disdained their current life on earth who would truly save it. Only thus could they follow him to his heavenly reward.

The apostle Paul may have used these words for his teachings of the resurrection of the dead. He writes: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may

chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (1 Corinthians 15:35-38).

As Jesus, like bare grain, gave his life to redeem mankind, so the church, as a handful of seed, must do the same. Note the words of David: "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth" (Psalm 72:16).

The mood of Jesus' discourse to Andrew and Philip changed dramatically when he confessed "now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" The lexicographer Thayer defines the Greek word *tarasso*, translated "troubled," as "to cause one inward commotion, to take away his calmness of mind, to disturb his equanimity . . . to perplex the mind by suggesting scruples or doubts." Similar expressions are used of his emotions in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:38,39; Hebrews 5:7).

Despite this mood change, the resolve of the Master is shown in the very next phrase: "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" (NIV translation).

The response was spectacular. A sound like a thunderclap was heard from the heavens with the words, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." Apparently the crowd in the temple did not make out the words for some heard only thunder while others, apparently more astute, said it was an angel speaking to Jesus.

### **A Final Witness**

The net affect was to gather a crowd and Jesus used that opportunity for a final witness. He attested that the voice was, in fact, for the sake of the people and not that Jesus needed reassurance. He asserted that the events of the succeeding days would not be because the Son of Man was judged. The very reverse was true—it was the judgment of "the prince of this world." His judgment would be attested by the fact that the coming crucifixion of Christ, the "lifting up of the Redeemer," would attract all men to him.

This attraction of "all men" to him would be accomplished in three phases. First, shortly after his resurrection, thousands of Jewish people would be convinced of his Messiahship and begin to follow him (Acts 2:41; 4:4). Second, beginning with Peter converting Cornelius and continuing with special rapidity through the missionary work of Paul, Gentiles were also drawn to follow him. But the third and final phase is still future when all are raised from the grave and given instructions in righteousness and a world-wide drawing of "all men" will be a reality.

The crowd was curious. They had been led to believe that the Messiah would abide forever (Psalm 110:4). How, then, was he to be lifted up in death? And why? "Who is this Son of Man?" If he was to be lifted up in death, how could he be the Messiah? The questions were logical.

Jesus responded with a simple illustration of the natural cycles of the sun in dividing day from night. The apostle John opened his account by saying that the life of Jesus was "the light of men" which shone in the darkness (John 1:4,5). For the Jew, the intense darkness of the night of sin and death had been partially illuminated by the moonlight of the law. The gospel of Christ, in contrast, was as a brilliant sun, bringing both life and immortality to light (2 Timothy 1:10).

That sun was now about to set and darkness would again ensue. The sole exception would be to the "children of light" who would continue to "walk in the light" (John 12:35,36). However, as surely as the setting sun will rise the next morning, just so, as the psalmist sings, though "weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). Then shall the "sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2). Then the sun will rise to set no more for there shall be "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23).

Although John 12:36 concludes by saying that Jesus "departed, and did hide himself from them," it is probable that this was not before he uttered the final words of this discourse in verses 44 through 50.

### **The Reaction**

In verses 36 through 43 we have a commentary of the evangelist on the crowd's reaction to these words. The apostle notes that despite the logic of his words and the attestation of his miracles, the people did not believe. This was not surprising because of the words of two prophecies of Isaiah.

The first of these is found in Isaiah 53:1, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" This verse introduces an entire chapter describing the suffering Messiah and predicting his death. The testimony of the prophetic word was not sufficient to convince the multitudes.

The second prophecy is Isaiah 6:9,10, "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." This prediction immediately followed the glorious vision of Isaiah of the glory of God.

Neither the prophetic testimony of Messiah's suffering nor of his glory was to be understood before the due time. God does not make men blind, but he does make the sun so bright that those who look at it without the proper filter can become blind. So the gospel light was too bright for unrepentant men, which was to their advantage lest premature healing bring them into greater jeopardy.

Notable among the exceptions to this rule of unbelief were many of the chief rulers, the majority of whom were too fearful of the Pharisees to confess him. We are not informed

who these were, but probably they included Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Simon who invited the Lord to a notable supper. The cause of this fear was simple: they "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43).

### **The Final Witness**

John picks up Jesus' words in John 12:44-50. The final words of the Master stress one basic point, that the words he spoke were not his own, but those of his Father. And it was not just his words, but his every action was in complete harmony with Jehovah's will. He told the crowd what he was to tell his disciples shortly thereafter: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

He also made clear that he had no intention at that time of judging those who rejected him, but that the words he spoke would be the criteria by which they would be judged at the last day.

On the other hand, to know and do the commandments which he had received from Jehovah and passed on to them would mean everlasting life. This was a certainty guaranteed by the Creator himself.

Today each individual must react to these words. Will he choose the path of obedience to the principles of righteousness, or will he wait for a future day when he will be judged by his acceptance or rejection of these principles? The question remains to be answered by each one of us.

## John 14

# In the Upper Room

*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also—John 14:2,3*

Austin Williams

Before our Lord's last discourse as recorded by the apostle John in chapter 14 and the touching moments he spent during the closing hours while here on earth and after washing the disciples' feet, giving the sop to Judas, and foretelling Peter's denial of him three times, our Lord said, "Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1). He sensed that their hearts were filled with fear knowing that he would no longer be with them. These words were not to prepare them to mourn but that they might see and internalize the things he had been saying to them about his mission on earth which would culminate in his death.

The disciples did not understand what he was saying; they were troubled and bewildered. Notice the words in verse one: You believe in, adhere to, trust in, and rely on God; also believe in, adhere to, trust in, and rely on me. He was asking them to look back on all the things they had witnessed, heard, and experienced during his 3 year ministry when he always honored and acknowledged the heavenly Father. He was comforting them by telling them that his objective was to please the heavenly Father and that they must continue to trust in him.

Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "In my Father's house there are many mansions [planes of existence]; I am going to prepare a place for you and afterwards I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am, there you may be also." The significance of this verse is so profound. There was no place yet created in heaven for his bride, so the master as the first-born to this condition (the divine plane of existence—Hebrews 9:24) would, upon his return and upon the completion of his "bride class," receive his church unto himself on this new plane of existence.

In verse 5 Thomas asks how they would know the way. We can understand why Thomas and the others did not know the way. It was expedient for our Lord after laying down his life, to ascend to the Father and present the merit of his ransom sacrifice, thus enabling a comforter to be sent. This comforter would open their minds of understanding and give them an experiential knowledge of God's plan. Jesus answered: "I am the way, the truth and the life." This is true not just for those who are called, chosen, and remain faithful during the Gospel age, but also for the world of mankind during the next age.

The called are first drawn before they can come to Jesus (John 6:44). Then they must come to Jesus before they can be accepted in the beloved by the Father as sons

(Ephesians 1:6). The Father does not draw anyone arbitrarily; he draws through his word. The mechanism through which we are drawn is by hearing and meditating upon his word in our hearts, whether it be obtained through a tract, a radio broadcast, or through other human agencies.

In verse 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father." He implies that is all he asks; if he were given that, he would be satisfied. How do we know our heavenly Father? We see him through our Lord Jesus by his suffering, his obedience, and fully manifesting the Father's love by his character, revealing him by words and deeds as the God of Love. Jesus repeatedly told them that the Father was greater than he was and that the works he did were through his Father's power. It was said of him, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). Jesus always honored the heavenly Father in the works he accomplished. He was faithful in the greater as well as the lesser things. Nothing we can ever do could be in the category of great things, but we can do many small things. By virtue of having received the holy spirit we can preach the good news and comfort those around us so that any with a receptive heart will have their blind eyes opened, if not now, then during the next age.

The Master assured his disciples that they would not be left as orphans, comfortless. When he asked the Father to send a comforter, it was not in the sense of a soothing presence, but as an encourager, sustainer, strengthener. This comforter was not only for them, but through them to the entire church. It thus enabled them to be energized and strengthened to endure anything divine providence might permit in the future. Notice that the Master did not say he was sending the comforter to the world at that time.

His reassurance—"let not your heart be troubled" (verse 27)—was coupled with the peace he wanted to give his disciples. Once again our attention is drawn to the peace of God he enjoyed in spite of all the things he suffered for righteousness' sake. This peace made it possible for Jesus to make his calling and election sure. He left this legacy for us so that in our busy and eventful lives, we can still walk in his ways. He said, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace" (Luke 19:42). Those who become entangled with the world lose the peace that God gave them.

The most important thing which would make one lose the peace of God is the lack of appreciation of the truth which the heavenly Father gives. This gives peace that surpasses anything the world can offer. The world craves for peace and happiness and they cannot find it. The Christian must cling with his whole being to the truth because the adversary will try to destroy every consecrated child of God.

In verse 30 the Master concludes his words in the upper room by showing us that the adversary could not find any sin in him.

Are grace and peace being multiplied in us, or are they being subtracted? We need to build our faith structure with gold and precious stones. This legacy of peace started in the upper room.

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## Pastoral Bible Institute News

### Date of Annual PBI Meeting

The annual meeting of PBI Members and Directors will be held on Friday, July 20, on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown in Pennsylvania. The General Convention of Bible Students will begin on Saturday, July 21, at the same location and end the evening of July 26. Those who are interested in the Pastoral Bible Institute, whether members or not, are encouraged to attend this meeting. Contact the Institute's secretary for details concerning accommodations.

### Temporary Closing of the PBI Office

Our California office will be closed for three weeks beginning April 9. Orders received during this time will be filled after April 30. We regret any inconvenience this may cause.

## World News

### Religious

The National Council of Churches, a mainline Protestant and Orthodox group, is reaching out to Roman Catholics, evangelicals and Pentecostals to create a "new national expression of Christian life." The National Council—comprising 35 mainline Protestant, black Protestant, and Orthodox denominations—has been a leading voice in the movement for Christian unity, or ecumenism, for more than 50 years. But most Christians in the United States are not in the council. "The difference this time is that we have invited the Roman Catholics, evangelicals and Pentecostals to build a new table together without dictating what that table will look like," said council General Secretary Bob Edgar.

—Associated Press, 11/16/2000

In a statement that bears strong similarities to the Vatican document *Dominus Iesus*, the Russian Orthodox Church has claimed to be "the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, the keeper and provider of the holy sacraments throughout the world." The 5,000-word statement by the Russian Orthodox Church is entitled "Basic Principles of the Attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church toward Other Christian Confessions." It was approved by the Jubilee bishops' council on August 14—just days before the publication of *Dominus Iesus*. "The Orthodox Church is the true Church of Christ established by our Lord and Savior himself," the Orthodox statement begins. Furthermore, the Russian Church insists the road to unity leads directly to acceptance of the Orthodox stance—"That genuine unity is possible only in the bosom of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. All other models of unity seem to us to be unacceptable."

—MOSCOW, 11/10/2000 (CWNews.com)

Across the country, churches and synagogues are giving renewed attention to an ancient belief—that worship can fight disease. While the effort is stirring debate within the clergy, it is getting surprising support from new research on the subject and from doctors themselves. The result has been an array of new rituals, from daily devotions for dieters to entire services devoted to healing. In Memphis, Tennessee, Scott Morris, a physician and minister who runs a clinic for needy patients has helped educate congregations about spiritual healing. [Of the] 1,200 studies in a new compilation on the subject published by Oxford University Press, about two-thirds suggest some connection between religious involvement and better health.

—Wall Street Journal, 12/22/2000

## Social

More than 1 million people worldwide die each year in road accidents, most in developing countries, according to the World Health Organization. The Assn. for Safe International Road Travel [says that the] chances of dying on the road abroad can be 20 to 70 times higher than in the U.S. It's a growing problem. By 2020 a Harvard School of Public Health study predicts road accidents will be the planet's third leading health burden.

—Los Angeles Times, 12/3/2000

A gloomy new government report forecasts sharply reduced mountain snowpacks, increased flooding, and the ruin of some coastal freshwater sources as global warming has an increasing impact on U.S. water supplies. The report, a two-year compilation of scientific studies commissioned by the Interior Department, is one of the most detailed so far in assessing current and likely future damage from the warming of the Earth's atmosphere on a specific resource such as water. It also is among the first to categorically say that at least some impacts from global warming are unavoidable, even if the trend were to be reversed over the next few years.

—Wall Street Journal, 12/15/2000

According to recent government and industry data:

—[Americans] have a median income of \$40,816 per household. In 53 percent of married couples, both spouses work.

—The cost of raising a child born in 1999 to age 18 is \$240,590.

—23 percent of households have an older family member living with them.

—More than 43 million Americans have no health insurance.

—\$23 billion is spent [by Americans] on pets each year.

—Each American generates 4.46 pounds of municipal waste per day, 66 percent more than in 1960.

—Consumer Reports, January 2001

## Financial

American consumers continue to spend furiously. In the third quarter, and maybe in the fourth, their spending will have exceeded their income for the first time since the 1930s. In other words, they had a negative saving rate. Nobody is storing up for a rainy day. In the early 1990s, American households were saving around 9% of their disposable income. That Americans now prefer consuming to saving is a familiar story. Less widely appreciated is the fact that saving is also going out of fashion in many other developed economies. Germany's personal-saving rate has fallen by half, to some 8% over the past decade; Canada's has plunged from 12% to 1%; and Italy's from 19% to 13%. The main exception is Japan, where households still save 12% of their income, exactly the same as they did in 1990.

—The Economist, 11/30/2000

The challenge to globalization has brought along with it a related challenge—to American domination of the world economy. It is not exactly anti-Americanism, though that, too, may be on the rise. Rather, it's a sense that the triumph of capitalism need not mean the triumph of the supposedly "ruthless" economic model that so many Europeans think they see on the other side of the Atlantic. As economic growth returns to their long-stagnant continent, West Europeans believe they've found a way to preserve the comfortable props of their welfare state without sacrificing the pleasures of prosperity. Only a few years ago, the marketplace seemed to carry all before it; now, as Fareed Zakaria notes, political choices and local options seem to have more scope. The Putin regime in Russia is seeking to reinstate a dash of the old authoritarianism—and after a decade of domestic anarchy and dwindling world influence, most Russians seem to be applauding. China's rulers are contemplating a delicate transfer of power and a drastic opening of the economy without even the faintest effort to listen to the voice of the people. And the utter collapse of order in countries like Sierra Leone and East Timor is forcing the world to confront the dilemma of how to deal with failed nations. Traditional "peacekeeping" has a spotty record and too often smacks of a new form of colonialism. In 2001 a new regional approach—relying on nearby neighbors, not Western forces from afar—will get a test.

—Newsweek, 12/27/2000

## Civil

Today, nearly all wars occur not between countries but within them. Of the 27 substantial armed conflicts that took place in 1999, 25 were civil wars. These wars also took place within relatively poor countries. Of the 40 poorest countries in the world, 24 are either in the midst of war or have recently emerged from it. A fifth of all Africans live in countries ravaged by armed conflict. Economic research at the World Bank comes to what might seem counter-intuitive conclusions: neither inequality, whether of incomes or assets, nor absence of democracy, nor ethnic and religious diversity has any discernible impact on the likelihood of civil war. Unequal, ethnically divided countries with few political rights may seem to need or deserve successful rebellions. They are not the places most likely to have them. So what does create a viable rebellion? To answer this question, Paul Collier of the World Bank and Anke Hoeffler at Oxford university have analysed data on 47 of the 73 civil wars that occurred between 1965 and 1999, with civil wars defined as conflicts that have caused at least 1,000 battle-related deaths. They conclude that the conditions that have raised the likelihood of civil conflict are: heavy dependence on primary commodity exports; low average incomes per head; economic decline; the geographic size of a country; whether a civil war has just ended; the existence of a large diaspora in wealthy countries; the cold war; low levels of education; high population growth; and whether one ethnic group constitutes between 45 per cent and 90 per cent of the population.

—FT.com, 12/26/2000

The National Intelligence Council, in a report issued under the direction of Central Intelligence Agency Director George Tenet, said it expects the world's population will surge to 7.2 billion by 2015 from 6.1 billion today, with 95 percent of the growth in developing countries and almost all in urban areas.

—New York Times, 12/18/2000

The risk of a missile attack against the U.S. is higher today than during most of the Cold War and will increase in the next 15 years according to a report by the government's National Intelligence Council. The most likely missile threat involving chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons will come from short and medium-range missiles deployed on surface ships or covert missions, the report said. Other chemical and biological threats to U.S. interests are expected to continue as terrorists "will become increasingly sophisticated and [their attacks] designed to achieve mass casualties," the report said.

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—Washington Post, 12/18/2000

## Israel

The atmosphere of Arab-Israeli relations today remains fundamentally altered from what it was. In fact, it resembles the bad old days of pre-1967. Back then, Israel's enemies widely believed that they could dispatch the Jewish State with one good blow. Their overconfidence explains why, with no one planning or wanting it, full-scale war broke out in June 1967. Israel's astonishing victory in the Six Day War then seemingly destroyed Arab exuberance and forever closed the question of its permanent existence. But it was not to be. The Oslo process, along with other signals of Israeli demoralization over the past seven years, reignited Arab overconfidence and wakened the sleeping dogs of war. The enemies of Israel are again tempted by the military option. As usual, Iraq acts the boldest, calling for a jihad to "liberate Palestine" and "put an end to Zionism." Saddam Hussein has noisily recruited two million volunteers to fight Israel and sent a division of soldiers to his border closest with Israel. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, has called Israel a "cancerous tumor" that must "be removed."

—Jerusalem Post editorial, 12/20/2000

The President of the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD) has expressed concern that U.S. mainline churches are issuing unbalanced statements, siding with the Palestinians and against Israel in the latest Middle East conflict. "U.S. churches are reflexively criticizing Israel, which is a democracy, and uncritically accepting the claims of Palestinian leaders, whose own commitment to human rights is less than clear," said IRD President Diane Knippers. Statements in recent years from U.S. mainline churches have portrayed Israel as the primary aggressor and human rights abuser in the Middle East. Ironically, these same denominational leaders continue to ignore human rights abuses by Palestinian leaders and by Arab governments, even when those governments persecute Christians and other religious minorities. Mainline church officials have largely endorsed the Palestinian claim that the present violence can be blamed almost exclusively on Israel's "heavy-handedness." Most have called for a full Israeli withdrawal from all "occupied territories." Some have called for a reduction in U.S. aid to Israel. None have mentioned significant U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority, and none have mentioned incendiary statements by Palestinian authorities inciting violence and questioning Israel's

right to exist. Recent statements about the Middle East have come from officials and agencies of the National Council of Churches, the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Geneva-based World Council of Churches.

—PRNewswire 11/2/2000

Hydrologists and other water experts are warning of possible disruptions and even cutbacks in drinking-water supplies next year. But these experts are adamant that the crisis in the nation's water resources is far more serious than the public realizes—it borders on the catastrophic. Lake Kinneret's level is at its lowest mark in recorded history, 213.78 meters below sea level—nearly five meters lower than the maximum mark of 208.90m. below sea level. It would take around 850 million cu.m. of water to fill the lake to the brim. This is nearly as much fresh water as is used during a normal year by the entire farming industry, and even more than the annual consumption in the urban and industrial sectors put together. In the past, exceptionally heavy winter rains have raised the level in the Kinneret by several meters to the maximum mark, even to overflowing. But the lake has never, even according to the most ancient of records, recovered from such a low point. "From research we have carried out, this is the lowest level in the lake in the past 150 years. Even a meteorological miracle would only stave off the long-term problem that the country faces. Water experts argue that with Israel's semi-arid climate, population growth, and need for independent food production, the country cannot afford to rely on the vagaries of the weather. If rainfall is less than average, the effect on agriculture would be catastrophic. Fresh-water quotas would be cut 70%. Some experts, however, believe drinking-water supplies could be disrupted in parts of the country, even with average rainfall this winter.

—Jerusalem Post, 12/17/2000

Jews in the western Russian city of Kursk are living in a state of fear after the newly-elected governor said it was time to rid Russia of Jewish "filth," and an official of the outgoing administration was beaten up by thugs shouting anti-Semitic slogans. The remarks by the communist governor, Alexander Mikhailov, have provoked a political storm in Russia and aroused fears among Jewish leaders of a re-emergence of Soviet-style official anti-Semitism. There has also been dismay at the Kremlin's silence on the issue. Vladimir Putin has made no attempt to distance himself from Mr. Mikhailov, who claimed the President actively supported his campaign and was an ally in his crusade against the "world Jewish conspiracy." The new governor said in a newspaper interview that the election marked a victory for ethnic Russians over Jews, and showed Russia was beginning to "liberate itself from all the filth that has piled up over the last ten years." He said he had defeated not only the outgoing governor Alexander Rutskoi, who has a Jewish mother, but also Mr. Rutskoi's backer, Boris Berezovsky, the businessman who is of Jewish descent.

—Moscow Daily Telegraph, 12/3/2000

## Book Review

**Darwin's Black Box, Michael J. Behe, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 1996. 307 pages.**

Michael Behe is a professor of biochemistry. The more he learned about the complexity of life at the molecular level, the more convinced he became that the near total embrace of Darwinism by the scientific community is wrong. (Charles Darwin in *Origin of Species* [1872] theorized that natural selection working on random variation produced life as we know it on earth.)

Behe says it has only been since the 1950s that science has begun to understand a few of the molecules that make up living organisms. Life can be understood as consisting of "machines" made of molecules. Behe asserts that not only does Darwin fail to explain how these molecular machines "evolved" into the form we see them, the entire mass of scientific literature since his time remains silent on this question.

People often call something a "black box" when they want to refer to its function without being cumbered with the details of how it does what it does. Darwin was never concerned with the implementation details of his theory. Molecular biologists, on the other hand, are intensely interested in the details.

Most machines are irreducibly complex. They do what they do because they were designed that way. New machines generally do not evolve from a simpler form. If, for example, one makes even a slight change to the spring, hammer, catch, or holding bar of a common mousetrap, it won't catch mice. One does not "evolve" a mousetrap into its present form from simpler forms.

Within the body consider the phenomenon of blood clotting. Generally liquids escape when a container springs a leak, but blood does not do so within a body. Why does blood clot and stop an animal from bleeding to death? It is the result of a complex process of interdependent protein parts. The absence of any of these proteins would cause the system to fail. Either bleeding would continue unabated or clots would form inappropriately and stop blood circulation within the body. It is a system that cannot have reached its present state of complexity through step-by-step evolution because any mistake in any part of the process quickly renders the host animal dead.

Behe asserts that the only satisfactory answer to the origin of life is that it was the work of a designer who, at the molecular level, made it the way it is. Whether that designer was God, aliens from another galaxy who "seeded" our planet in the dim past, or someone else, the evidence that all life on earth works the way it does because it was designed that way is so overwhelming as to be incontrovertible.

Discussing life's origins at the molecular level is a different approach to the subject of Darwinian evolution. Those with an interest in science will be fascinated with some of the details that illustrate the correctness of the psalmist's declaration that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

—Michael Nekora

John 14 thru 16

## A Legacy of Peace

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—John 14:27*

Richard Doctor

Knowing you are walking into a trap does not feel right. Knowing one you love at that very moment is set on betraying you does not feel right. Knowing that Satan has nearly "sifted" out another friend does not feel right. Knowing that your evening meal only proceeded unmolested because you had secretly arranged for a surprise location does not feel right. Knowing your most trusted companions, those whom you have mentored for over three years are unprepared, immature, and undependable does not feel right. Beyond all this, knowing your death is at hand does not feel right.

### **Jesus carried a heavy prayer burden.**

Mary alone sensed the danger and the turmoil of Jesus' heart. And she alone had the wisdom and foresight to plan for a show of love. It was she who anointed him with precious spikenard. Did the clinging perfume later help Judas to betray his victim in the dark confusion of the garden?

Despite his inner turmoil of heart, what beauty and peace resonates from this sweet dialogue of Jesus with the apostles as the supper ended and they prepared to leave for the garden. His first words: "Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1). What leadership! His sheep needed his care and he tended to them though his heart was troubled. His prayers soon to flow in the garden were to be intense and physically exhausting.

But then came the most unwelcome word of all, "I go."

Clearly this was no metaphor. Now the disciples recognized the seriousness of the circumstances. Silenced was the foolish bickering about who was to enjoy the pre-eminence in the kingdom. In its wake were grave uncertainties and unanswered questions. The gospel of John records five questions asked of Jesus between this closing of the dinner and when he took his last unfettered steps on the road to Gethsemane. Here, the disciples set the agenda.

### **"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"**

"How can we know the way?" asks Thomas. The answer, never captured in an earlier sermon, stands as an unwavering assertion that Jesus indeed was the Messiah upon whom the hopes of Israel rested: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6)

It always will be true that we need to follow Jesus. Yet, the gospel of John focuses on this challenge of intimate identification with Jesus that speaks of something deeper. Once again, the profundity of commitment that must consume our consecrated life confronts us. We learn that ultimately, our lives must be devoted to going beyond our Savior's earlier calls of "follow me" (John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26). We must be "in" Jesus as the way.

Early in his ministry, many were stumbled at the thought of "eating" and becoming part of Jesus and he of us; "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). At that time many turned away and walked with Jesus no more (John 6:66). Here the challenge of intimate identification with the one we love opens up a new view of our relationship. We are to go beyond following. We are to be "in" him as "the way," in him as "the truth," and in him as "the life." Being "in" Jesus is a process. For this reason it is properly declared a "way" that moves us from where we are to where we long to be. Through this process of being "in" Jesus we are assured that we are in "the truth" and in "the life."

### **"Show Us the Father"**

Philip, fully assured that Jesus was the prophet like unto Moses (Acts 3:22), asked if Jesus would show the awesome power of Jehovah as Moses did at Mount Sinai. At the meeting between Jehovah and Israel, the ground shook and thick clouds and darkness made all the people tremble. "Lord, show us the Father, we ask no more" (John 14:8, NEB). But the time for such testimony was yet future. For the present the Father was seeking those who would worship him in spirit and in truth. The greater-than-Moses was not seeking for worship grounded in the sort of terror that gripped Israel (John 4:23).

Again Jesus returned to the theme of the indwelling of those in him: "He that has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Surely, this was not because Jesus was himself the Father. Rather we here learn that the theme of "indwelling" now is enlarged to include the Father.

"Ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20). Here the closeness of God's intimate family is presented in language that could and has been confused as a Trinitarian confession until Jesus adds the phrase, "and I in you." How much greater would the blessing be for those hearts touched by our Savior's words if they were to abandon the confusion of non-biblical dogma as the Trinity and seek only for the oneness of the "indwelling" Christ.

For the first time the gift of the holy spirit is announced. Jesus would pray, and the "comforter" who is to abide with the church forever would come (John 14:16). What a blessed promise to the troubled disciples walking with Jesus on the road.

### **"If a Man Love Me, He will Keep My Words"**

Judas—the faithful apostle—next asks: "How is it you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?" (John 14:22).

We are told that this manifestation will be to those who keep the words of Jesus, and that the Father and Jesus would make their abode with him. Again the promise of the holy spirit is repeated, but now for the first time, the promise that the comforter would both teach and recall to remembrance the words of Jesus (John 14:26).

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

### **"Arise, Let Us Go Hence"**

O to be with our Lord on the road to Gethsemane! Once outside, as Jesus answered their questions, each word, even those whispered, easily pierced the cool evening air and found its mark. Possibly the vineyards on the route offered the suggestion for the lesson of the vine and its branches. How powerfully the lesson of abiding in Christ is once again taught.

The Lord announced himself as the true vine, his Father as the true husbandman who planted the true vine, and his followers as the true branches of that vine. What a clear picture of the relationship between God, Christ, and the Church.

Let us consider carefully the "true vine" and our relationship as branches of it. Let us treasure the character of the fruit that the greathusbandman expects, that this last of our Lord's parables may greatly profit us, strengthen us, encourage us, and assist us as we walk with Christ. Each apostle was united in heart, in faith, in hope, in love, in devotion to the Lord himself. In the true vine the branches are not sects, nor the parties that inevitably arise in human institutions. And so we should not join even the apostles, nor say, I am of Paul, I am of Peter, etc. Each should individually join the Lord as a member, as a branch; each must have the sap of the vine if it would bear fruit. Sectarian sap is of no value in producing the real fruitage that the Lord desires—it is only a hindrance—"The Lord knoweth them that are his."

### **"Bear more Fruit"**

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth [pruneth] it, that it may bear more fruit." Everything in the Scriptures teaches us that our salvation and our relationship to the Lord are an individual and personal matter. Nevertheless, our Lord's declaration that where two or three of his disciples are met together in his name they constitute a church or body of Christ, and he, as the head, leads us to conclude that all the blessings of branches and all the privileges of fruit bearing likewise belong to such companies.

Sometimes a healthy, strong branch develops from a good stock and root but it has no fruit-bearing qualities. The husbandman with a trained eye discerns between buds that would bring forth grape clusters and the buds that would produce only leaves. Those that do not have the fruit buds are known as "suckers," because they merely suck the juices of the vine and bring forth no fruitage such as the husbandman seeks. These are pruned or

cut off so that the strength of the vine may not be wasted in such merely outward splendor, but may be conserved for its purpose of fruit bearing.

There are branches which bear fruit buds but will never bring the fruit to a good ripe development if allowed to take their own course. Hence the wise husbandman, noting the bud, is pleased with it, and pinches off the sprout of the vine beyond the bud, not to injure the branch but to make it more fruitful. So with us who have not only joined the Lord by faith and consecration and been accepted as branches, but who as branches desire to bring forth good fruitage, which the Lord seeks in us—we need the husbandman's care so that we may bring forth much fruit.

The spirit of the vine must permeate all the branches, and the fruit of the vine must be in every branch. These fruits of the spirit are enumerated: meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love; if these things be in us and abound, says the apostle, they make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. These fruits are all one in some particulars for the essence of proper Christian patience is love; the essence of hope and faith and joy is love for our Father, and our confidence in his love, as expressed in his promises to us. So the name of all these fruits and graces of the spirit is expressed in the one word, Love.

At the same time, Jesus shared a most sober warning—perhaps as the road passed a brush pile of winter die-back. These branches were gathered for burning so that the healthy growth should not be infected with pests or disease. The declaration that those who will not bear the fruit of the vine will be cut off from being branches and will wither and ultimately be burned. Burned seems to imply the second death, the utter destruction of the class indicated. This is not the worldly class, for those of the world were never united to Christ, never were branches in the vine that could be cast off. It refers only to those who have gone the lengths of making a full consecration to the Lord, a full union with him, a thorough consecration and begetting of the holy spirit.

### **"That Your Joy Might be Full"**

Our Lord concluded this portion of the lesson, not on a warning of judgment, but on a word of encouragement: "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be filled full. This is my commandment that ye love one another even as I have loved you" (John 15:11,12).

What wonderful words of life are these! How they have helped to cheer and encourage so many of the Lord's followers. As we consider the walk to Gethsemane and the further lessons—lessons of endurance; lessons of the promise of prayer answered; the prayer of Jesus for our unity—let us be filled with his joy, as he promised. His joy is an increasing joy which day by day and year by year becomes more nearly complete. But it is a joy which will not be absolute until that which is perfect shall come and that which is in part shall be done away, until in the resurrected condition we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known. Then we shall experience in full the joys of our Lord, hearing his

welcome invitation for those who have walked the road to Gethsemane with Jesus: "Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

## John 17

# A Prayer for Oneness

*I and my Father are one.—John 10:30*

A verse by verse study in John 17

Jesus was a man of prayer. Many times in the gospel records we read of him going apart into a mountain or desert place to spend hours in communion with his heavenly Father. He taught his disciples how to pray. However there are not many accounts of the words of his prayers within the earshot of the disciples. The prayer of John 17 is a beautiful exception to this rule. This chapter preserves a model example of a prayer that rises out of concern for others.

### **Prayer for Himself—Verses 1–5**

*These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

Many artists picture Jesus as kneeling in prayer. But both here and in the simple prayer before the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:41), we see Jesus standing and raising his eyes to heaven. Kneeling is appropriate for a Christian because it demonstrates humility and the attitude of a supplicant. Lifting up his eyes was equally appropriate for Jesus because he was initiating a conversation with his Father. He was having a personal dialog with the one with whom he had spent countless eons in the special relationship of father and son.

In this family prayer with the eleven Jesus again specifies that the "hour is come." He uses this expression some seven times in the gospels, always relating to his final hour as a human—to his death on Calvary's cross.

He asks now, because he could not so ask in death, for his glorification. But it is not a selfish request; his object was to render greater glory to his father. In this simple and straightforward statement lies the highest motive for all Christian service—that it may redound to the greatest glory of the Creator of the universe.

Although he had not yet died as the atoning sacrifice for all mankind, his mind is set. He knows he will carry through with his sacrifice. Therefore he knows that he will be given power over all flesh and he also knows how he will use that power—to give eternal life to the ransomed race. More than this, Jesus defines that eternal life by giving its purpose

and the only way of maintaining it when he states, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It will take eternity to fully know both the Father and the Son.

In this prayer we have the only reference by the Master to the combined phrase, "Jesus Christ." This adds yet another dimension to his life on earth. It is one thing to know Jesus as the man who came to earth to provide a ransom for Adam and his posterity, it is yet another matter to know him as "Christ," the anointed, the Messiah. Paul speaks of Christ having a body that is composed of "not one member, but many" (1 Corinthians 12:12-14). Therefore a full recognition implies a recognition of his body members, the Church, also.

The prayer continues by referring to the fact that his accomplished work (of which he would again say "It is finished" as his final words on the cross—John 19:30) was the method by which he glorified his father while on earth. It is on this basis that he requests a return to his former glory. It should be noted that this request is not to a former nature, but to a former glory. This prior glory was to be personally in his father's presence in the heavenly realm. His exaltation was to an even higher nature than he had in his pre-existence (Philippians 2:8-11).

#### **Prayer for His Disciples—Verses 6–11**

*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

Having finished his supplication for his Father's glory and for the fact and purpose of his own glorification, Jesus' prayer now turns to his followers. He begins with five assertions about his disciples:

1. That God was the one who had given Jesus the care of his disciples.
2. That he had been faithful in directing them to God as the Father.
3. That he had indeed instructed them with God-given words.
4. That his followers had understood all these instructions.
5. That they had been faithful in following them up to that time.

Jesus then limits this section of his prayer to his followers, excluding the rest of the world. This does not mean that he was disinterested in the balance of the human race, but it does mean that there is a recognizable distinction between those who followed him and those who did not. Later he will include the remainder of mankind, but the next requests concern his disciples alone.

The Master proceeds to establish that the close family relationship that exists not only between himself and God, also exists with his followers. He acknowledges that all those whose care God had entrusted to him belonged to the Creator and were only his as a result of his own familial relationship with God—they were his as an "heir of God" (Romans 8:17).

The statement "I am glorified in them" further cements this union. Jesus, through his life and in his death, glorified the name of his Father (John 12:28). As his works had glorified God, so he prays that his disciples' work would be a glory to their Master. The words of Pastor Charles Taze Russell are noteworthy in this connection:

"It is blessed to mark this oneness between Christ Jesus and the members of his body. Our Lord does not selfishly grasp all the glory and seek to retain it for himself. On the contrary, with loving solicitude he marks the progress of his body-members as they develop in character-likeness to himself, and says, 'They are mine; and I am glorified in them' (John 17:10); and he would have them all bound up together with himself in the Father's Love. He would also have them with himself, beholding and sharing the glory which the Father has conferred upon him as a reward for his loyalty and obedience throughout all the crucial testings which came upon him."—Reprints p. 5213.

His concern focuses on the fact that, although he had kept all (except Judas Iscariot) of those whom God had given him while he was with them, he pleads that God will continue to keep them after his departure from human life.

The translation of verse eleven is ambiguous, but much weight must be given to the American Standard Version (and many others) which renders the latter part of the text this way: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we (are)." Here the keeping power is through the special name which the Father had given Jesus—Jehovah-tsidkenu, the righteousness of Jehovah (Jeremiah 23:5,6).

A parallel illustration is found in Revelation 7 where 144,000 are seen as having a protective mark or "seal" in their foreheads. This mark is identified in Revelation 14:1 as being "his [Jesus'] name and the name of his Father" (ASV, following the most ancient manuscripts). It is by or through the obtaining and maintaining of this divine righteousness that the saints are kept. It is only through this that Jesus' prayer will be answered, "that they may be one, even as we are one." Because they have the same character of righteousness, Jesus and his father can be said to "be one." Only through the attainment of the same character can the followers enjoy that same type of oneness.

This development of righteousness is further implied in the title of address which Jesus uses of Jehovah in this verse. This is the only instance where Jesus calls upon Jehovah as "Holy Father" instead of his usual "my father," implying that it is the particular quality of holiness in the Father's character that is the basis of claim for a oneness in such holiness among his disciples.

### **Sanctifying Power—Verses 12–16**

*While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Once again Jesus avers his faithfulness in keeping the twelve he had uniquely been given as apostles. Even the one who had been lost, Judas Iscariot, was lost so "that the scripture might be fulfilled." It appears that the eleven, at least, felt that the Old Testament references were to Psalm 41:9 and Psalm 109:6-8 which read, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. . . . Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office." (See also Acts 1:15-20.)

Some feel that the word "perdition" indicates that Judas will not have a resurrection. In fact, the Greek word *apoleia*, translated "perdition," is neutral in that debate. The word appears 19 times in the New Testament and is first used in Matthew 7:13 where it is translated "destruction": "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." In this text it certainly indicates a state from which recovery is possible.

The words he had spoken to his disciples "while in the world" may have reference to the entire body of his teachings for three and a half years. However, it was especially applicable to the words he had just spoken (John 14 through 16). In John 15:11 he uses a nearly identical expression: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Jesus strongly felt the anxiety of his disciples. In fact, he was himself "troubled in spirit" (John 12:27). Now he was praying that that anxiety would be replaced with fullness of joy which would come from the "full assurance" that comes alone from the understanding which, through faith, produces hope (Colossians 2:2; Hebrews 10:22; 6:11).

Next he addresses the relationship of his disciples to the world. Not only are they separate from the balance of the human race, they will be despised for the very reason of their separateness and adherence to his words. He had warned his followers of this when he

said earlier that evening, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). It should be only for the cause of the Lord's word that his adherents be looked down upon. It should be just as true of them as it was of Daniel: "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Daniel 6:5).

Knowing that his followers could not be part of the world since they were following him who was not of the world, and knowing that this would bring upon them opposition, Jesus prays in almost the same words as he taught his disciples to pray, "deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13).

### **Sanctification and Unity—Verses 17–24**

*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

This holiness which would be the mark of spiritual oneness to the church was to be achieved through a process of sanctification. Not only would this bring their characters to maturity, it would also separate them for the future service of God. The process of this work was to be accomplished by the power of truth while they would be accomplishing the mission for which they were sent—the Master specifically stating that he "sent them into the world."

It was for their sakes that Jesus sanctified himself, so that through his example and instruction they would become set aside for the same future work of uplifting mankind from the pit of sin and death to the glories of everlasting life. Once again he petitions the Father to help them develop this oneness. It was the vision of the same glory and work which Jesus had been given as the future rehabilitator of humanity that would inspire them to the perfecting of holiness.

In verse 20 the prayer broadens from his immediate disciples to those who would believe on him through their word. While this primarily applies to the bride class to be selected in the next two millennia, it has a secondary application to all who will eventually serve him among the countless millions who will be raised from the grave.

Not only their words, but their conduct also, would be a witness to all who knew them, that the world would know that Jehovah had sent his son not only to redeem the race from the grave, but to lift them up to the standing of perfection before God.

Jesus prayed that this work which he shared in common with his followers on earth, would continue to be their mutual activity in the heavenly realms to which he would soon be going. Then they would share the ultimate unity with their Lord and Master—the same unity which Jesus shared with God. It was this oneness that the apostle Paul described as the object of Jesus' ascension in Ephesians 4:12,13, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Thus, when the present work of perfecting the saints fades into their future work of instructing mankind in the rules of God and the principles of righteousness, "the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

His final statement in this section, "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," leaves the strong implication that Jesus as the Logos had an essential part in the laying out of God's plan for mankind. It was not only love for the church and for the entire race, but it was also love for his only-begotten son that sent Jesus into the world to suffer for man's transgressions and to die for his sins.

### **The Close of the Prayer—Verses 25–26**

*O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

The Master concludes by summarizing the whole of his heart-felt feelings. The world, depraved by sin, knew not the true requirements and goodness of Jehovah. But Jesus did know God as he is and, through his ministry, his followers would also have such knowledge. He had not only proclaimed his name to them while on earth, he avers that he will again declare it. This includes not only the gospel message of this age, but the yet future declaration of God's name that will come in the kingdom when he would be united with his followers in a oneness that will truly be indivisible.

We rejoice that Jehovah overruled that the words of this prayer, the only detailed prayer of the Master thus preserved, have been written for our edification. In it we have a wonderful glimpse into the planned oneness of the human race with the Creator when truly "God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). It also provides an example of intercessory prayer and love of Jesus for his disciples.

## John 18

# Contrasts in Courage

*Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.—Matthew 26:33-35*

Russell Marten

The account of the betrayal and trial of our Lord offers us many insights into courage and commitment. We especially see this in contrasting Peter's actions with that of our Lord on his final night on earth.

John recorded his gospel long after the other three had been written and thus could reflect and contrast his account with the other accounts. The other three give detailed accounts of the events recorded in the first half of John 18, but it is John who gives more details of the first appearance of Jesus before Pilate. John also is the only one who records the discourses given after the memorial but before entering the garden (see chapters 14 through 17).

### **The Capture**

Chapter 18 begins with the entry of Judas into the garden with the agents of the high priest (verses 2 and 3). Throughout his ministry Jesus had avoided situations in which he would be liable to an arrest in a relatively private area, away from the throngs of people that often followed him. This evening would be different. He was ready to partake of the cup that his Father had poured for him. His resolve to be faithful and his courage are immediately shown in the opening verses of John 18. He knew Judas was betraying him, but he was not certain as to the exact circumstances of the betrayal. The Garden of Gethsemane apparently was frequented by our Lord and the apostles before this, so Judas would have known it would be the most likely place where they would feel comfortable. When Jesus caught sight of Judas, he immediately offered up himself with the simple phrase, "I am he."

There was one point to be made to his captors which Jesus would also make clear to Pilate: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). In verse 6 some unknown force caused the armed band who came for Jesus to be pushed backward when he uttered the simple phrase, "I am he." The implication is clear: Jesus was surrendering to them but it was not because of their power. He had access to power far greater than they could ever resist; his surrender to them was totally voluntary. The terms of the surrender would be his, conditional on the release of the rest of his followers with him in the garden. Our Lord's concern was not for himself

but for his disciples and their safety. Peter (and perhaps others too) showed some courage in the drawing of his sword and attacking the servant of the high priest. But when Jesus healed the servant, he indicated that he had no intention of resisting arrest.

### **The Scattering of the Disciples**

Some of the disciples left and presumably scattered in different directions, either individually or in small groups, leaving the Lord alone with his captors. Some, like Peter, would put some distance between themselves and the captors but remain close enough to determine what was happening. Jesus' deepest concern for those closest to him never wavered, neither in the best of times nor here at the start of his darkest hours on earth.

Jesus would be led to Annas first, a man who was formerly the high priest and the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas. Annas' acquiescence to the arrest was deemed necessary in order to get enough people to support the execution of the Lord.

### **Peter's Denials**

John 18:14-18 records the start of Peter's actions. Just before the discourses in the preceding four chapters John relates the prophetic remarks of our Lord regarding Peter's promise of support (John 13:37,38). "Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." Although Peter was courageous in drawing his sword in defense of our Lord in the garden, he would fail to demonstrate his courage and resolve in less theatrical circumstances.

He was in the company of another disciple as he went into the courtyard of Annas. Who was the disciple who went in with Jesus? It might have been John, although all we know is that it was "another disciple." It could have been either Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus who were known by the high priest because they were members of the Sanhedrin. Whoever it was, he went in to the palace as Peter lingered cautiously outside. This "other disciple" asked a woman to get Peter and bring him inside, apparently sure there was no interest in prosecuting any of Jesus' followers.

It is somewhat easy to understand the cautious attitude of Peter. If we look deep within ourselves, we likely would pale at putting ourselves in harm's way. At this late hour the streets were probably deserted and somewhat eerie. The light from the torches of those escorting Jesus to the home of Annas would cast menacing shadows at the feet of Peter as he trailed the throng at a safe distance out of immediate sight.

There would have been a group of people at the gateway to the residence and greater light revealing the faces of those who entered. Discouragement was influencing Peter's thoughts. He could not see any possible positive outcome to the events unfolding before him. The woman sent to bring Peter inside found him and started to escort him through the door. Whoever the "other disciple" was, he undoubtedly was known to be

sympathetic and a follower of Jesus, so a natural question was posed to Peter as they approached the entrance: Was he not one of Jesus' disciples? This question and the looming entrance to a place where the enemies of the Master were gathered instilled a fear that took control of Peter. Afraid that an admission of being a disciple might cause one of Annas' men to take him into custody, he denied his association with Jesus, broke away from the woman, and tried to blend in with the officers of the high priest standing outside at a fire to keep warm.

### **A Lesson in Contrasts**

Peter's behavior was in sharp contrast to the way the Lord reacted when he was alone and surrounded by his enemies. Even given his pre-human experience with the Father and the intimate communication which he still enjoyed, we cannot discount the human emotions of fear and uncertainty which he might have felt in this hostile environment. He had previously, while in the garden, been assured by the Father that he had been faithful to that point, but the trials, human emotions, and anxieties that were coming to bear would be greater than he had ever before experienced.

Jesus stood before the council and with quiet confidence answered the questions of Annas. Had he been covertly teaching doctrine that undermined the Jewish faith? Jesus replied that his teachings were always made in public where any Jew might listen. Our Lord chided Annas: "Don't ask me. Your people were there at the temple; they heard me, ask them." This provoked one of the officers to strike him. Our Lord's simple reply would again put his accusers somewhat on the defensive. This hearing was purportedly for the purpose of establishing facts. Jesus had not threatened anyone and disparaged no one. A physical attack was not warranted and he demanded to be told the justification for the attack. Unimpressed with his calm and logical responses, Annas sent him off to his son-in-law Caiaphas, the high priest recognized by the Roman government.

At the entrance to Caiaphas' house a similar scene took place. It was now perhaps two or three o'clock in the morning. A chill was in the air as Peter loitered outside still trying to look for an opportunity to rescue the Master. A fire here was burning as a source of warmth for the soldiers who had arrested and escorted Jesus. Peter stood there with them also trying to get warm. Peter again was questioned, "Are you not one of Jesus' disciples?" Now, a second time, Peter denied his association. This exchange caused others in the group to look closer at him. One of Caiaphas' men recognized him as the one who drew his sword to defend Jesus and again challenged him to admit his discipleship. Regrettably, Peter failed a third time to acknowledge that he was a follower of Jesus. The cock crew, a stinging reminder of the Master's prediction that he would deny him thrice.

Many are willing to engage in a bold, visible defense of our Lord as Peter had done in the garden: "Lord I would gladly die in your defense." The nobility of action is satisfying and builds up one's ego. As we learn from Peter, that is the easy part. The hard part is the way in which Peter and all of us must acknowledge our discipleship every day, breaking with the hopes, aims, and ambitions of those we meet in the world. It is not easy to say, "I can

not engage in that because I follow the Master." It is easier to give some other reason that portrays us as less religiously fanatic. But if we do so, we deny the Lord as Peter did.

It appears that Jesus remained at Caiaphas' house until perhaps eight o'clock the next morning. They had to get an early start as Passover started at sunset. The quicker they moved the less chance there would be for significant hostile public sentiment to build against the execution plans of the Sanhedrin. Jesus was marched to Pilate who tried to stay out of the religious affairs of the Jews. Only the Romans had the power of direct execution so the Jews' insistence on the death of Jesus required Pilate's authorization. Pilate questioned Jesus, trying to ascertain the danger of the man before him. Rome knew the Jews hated its occupation of Israel. It was highly unusual for one Jew to be accused and brought before him by another Jew. The Jewish leaders apparently were expecting a quick approval to their charges and demand for Jesus' execution.

As Jesus had done before the Sanhedrin, no compromises or embellishments of the truth were given to Pilate. With a few clever responses Jesus could have easily convinced Pilate that an execution would not be good for his career. But partaking of this cup meant he would speak nothing but the truth. Yes, he was the King of the Jews, but not a king that would threaten Caesar militarily. His servants would not fight on earth for a kingdom that was not of the earth. Pilate's sarcastic question ("What is truth?") was not a request for information; it was an expression of disbelief that anyone of an inferior nation could have any insight into "the truth." It was simply a rhetorical question.

### **The Lesson for Today**

This contrast in courage is not a disparagement of Peter's character but it does contain a lesson for our edification. As babes in Christ we are sometimes reticent to declare our allegiance to the Master. The pressure to be politically correct by not being too fanatical or too moral, while quite timeless, has been intensifying over the last few decades. It should be a great concern for every true Christian. It becomes more incumbent upon us to strongly identify ourselves as soldiers of the cross, confidently and courageously. We undoubtedly have had our Peter-type denials in one form or another, but let us each strive to go forward as we boldly acknowledge our discipleship in every aspect of our life.

## Luke 15 and 16

# Parables of the Lost

*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.—Luke 16:10,14*

Michael Nekora

One of the best teaching techniques is the use of a story to illustrate a point to be learned. Jesus often employed such stories. One could well imagine his listeners going home and accurately repeating what they had heard to others in their household. Of course one pitfall of this technique is that unless the lesson of the story is explicitly explained, one could well come to a wrong conclusion.

Luke chapters 15 and 16 contain five parables delivered to a mixed multitude: disciples (Luke 16:1), publicans, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes (Luke 15:1). Each parable describes something lost: a sheep (Luke 15:4-7), a piece of silver (Luke 15:8-10), a son (Luke 15:11-32), a trusted position (Luke 16:1-13), and a destiny (Luke 16:19-31). Although there were many lessons for the different ones in his audience, Jesus gave them all to specifically answer the accusation that he "receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2).

### **The Lost Sheep and Lost Silver**

The first of the five parables concerns one sheep that becomes separated from a flock of 100. This is the only one of the five explicitly identified as a parable (Luke 15:3), though it is clearly the first in a sequence that all teach a similar lesson. The audience would certainly understand why a shepherd would not spend his time with 99 sheep which were safe. Therefore, Jesus should not be criticized for trying to rescue those who were "lost," who were not, at least in the estimation of some, in God's favor.

The Pharisees considered themselves highly esteemed by God and in need of nothing. Without debating whether this appraisal was correct, Jesus showed that good "shepherds of the flock" would reach out and rescue those who were alienated from God.

The lost piece of silver taught the same lesson, but with an increasing sense of value. McClintock and Strong's Encyclopaedia suggests that the word drachma should be seen as equivalent to the Roman denarius which was the equivalent of a day's wages for a laborer in Palestine (see Matthew 20:2). This point of view makes the parable describe something of lesser value than a single sheep.

But this is not the way the audience of the time would consider it. A more likely thought is that this set of ten coins represented a gift from a bridegroom to his beloved and was

worn by her either as a fringe on her forehead or as a bracelet. Because of its sentimental value, the loss of one coin would far outweigh the intrinsic value of the coin. Emotionally we could perhaps best understand this second parable as though it said, "Either what woman having an engagement ring, if she lose it, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" When we consider something valuable, something that possesses emotional significance to us, no effort is too much to find it when it is lost. Likewise no effort is too much for our Lord to spend in finding those who are estranged from God.

### **The Lost Son**

One of the most beloved parables in the Bible is that of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The lesson is the same: from the perspective of the heavenly Father, one of his sons leaves the family and goes far from home while the other remains at home, presumably serving the father and expecting eventually to inherit everything. No explanation was needed to explain the point of this parable. The publicans were employed by the pagan Romans to collect the taxes, a position considered by many to have the same status as unclean "pigs."

But suppose a publican or a sinner decided one day to return to his father's house. What kind of reception should he expect? Clearly in his own mind he did not expect much. He knew his "elder brother" would probably not let him in the door. "The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2). But the father's love is far greater than that. The father has been on the lookout for him since the day he left. We know that because verse 20 says, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." If he were a great way off, he would not be seen except by someone specifically looking for him.

The elder brother is so angry he refuses to join the reception banquet and even refuses to acknowledge the prodigal as his brother. He says to his father, "But as soon as this thy son was come" (Luke 15:30). The father gently responds by saying, "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" (Luke 15:32).

There can be no doubt that everyone in the audience knew exactly what was being taught by this parable.

### **The Lost Position**

The fourth parable describes a steward who is about to be removed from his trusted position. A steward was one who managed the household of another. Great confidence was placed in the one who held that office. Paul associated the word steward with those who would be overseers in the house of God (Titus 1:7). In the parable, a rich man's steward is charged with unfaithfulness and told that he would lose his position within the

household. Fearing the worst, the steward does what he can to make friends so that he would not have to "dig or beg" (Luke 16:3).

Some have questioned the way the steward made friends because he reduced the debts owed to his lord. The one who owed 100 measures of wheat got to rewrite the bill (and presumably pay it) as 80; the one who owed 100 measures of oil rewrote his bill as 50. Rather than "giving away the store," verse 8 says, "The lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Notice that both bills were not written down to half. In fact, they were not written down to 10 or even zero. The steward adjusted each bill to match the debtors' ability to pay. It is better to get 50 cents or 80 cents on the dollar than to sue in bankruptcy court and get 10 cents or perhaps nothing at all.

The phrase "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" can best be understood from the viewpoint of the audience who heard these words. If at that moment one were to ask the question, "Would all those who consider themselves children of light please raise their hands," who would raise their hands? Certainly it would be the scribes and Pharisees. They were not reducing the burdens of anyone. Quite the opposite: "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke 11:46). Luke 20:47 says that they "devoured widows' houses."

Did the Pharisees understand this lesson? Yes, they did. "The Pharisees, who were fond of riches, heard all this and poured scorn on him. And he said to them, You are always courting the approval of men, but God sees your hearts; what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in God's sight" (Luke 16:14,15, Knox translation). If they had not gotten the point of this and the other parables, they would not have "poured scorn" on him. They would have walked away mumbling under their breath, "Who can understand these rantings of a man who speaks in riddles?"

Among the lessons the master brings out from this fourth parable, is one of great importance to all those who claim to be his disciples: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). People who disregard the little things expecting to do great things later find there are no great things. It is a cup of cold water, one talent, one jot or tittle. The little things count. Faithfulness to the Lord is demonstrated by what we do in everyday life. Similarly unfaithfulness can start with a little thing: a little leaven (1 Corinthians 5:6), little foxes (Song of Solomon 2:15), a little tongue (James 3:5-8).

### **The Lost Destiny**

The fifth and final parable in this series is called "The rich man and Lazarus." It describes the fate of an unnamed rich man when he dies. The Lord's audience knew who was rich, who wore purple, who "fared sumptuously every day." It was the Pharisees. The Pharisees never spoke about their lot after they died, although they did tell the people to bear their trials patiently because God would surely reward them eventually. They said

that trials came from God and so it would not be right, in good conscience, to do anything to help those who had them. This is aptly illustrated by the rich man who does not give Lazarus a single crumb from his table.

Lazarus evidently does take his trials patiently because he finds himself in "Abraham's bosom" (the Scripture does not say he is in heaven). Now the situation is reversed: Lazarus is favored, the rich man is not. The rich man pleads for a "crumb": "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue" (verse 24). But he gets nothing. "Abraham"—who is really a surrogate for our Lord—tells him why: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (verse 26). This great gulf was visible even as our Lord spoke. It was the physical separation the scribes and Pharisees kept between themselves and those they considered unworthy of God's favor.

The allegorical nature of this story is clearly shown by the request of the rich man. If he truly were being tormented in flames, he would hardly make his one wish be for a wet finger on his tongue. It would be for permanent escape to anywhere else.

After his wish is turned down, the rich man makes a second request: "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (verses 27 and 28). But that request is not granted either. "Abraham" replies: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." The rich man counters: "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." "Abraham" ends the parable with the words: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

This is an extraordinary statement: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Surely this can only be hyperbole. Wouldn't everyone be persuaded by someone who came back from the dead?

Though the audience which heard this parable could not have known it at the time, Jesus knew that not only was this statement true, he would soon prove it. This parable is the only one in the Bible where one of the characters has a name: Lazarus. For whatever reason, Luke does not recount the events that took place in Bethany a few weeks later when Jesus actually raised a man named Lazarus from the dead. And this man was really dead. It is Martha who says, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he has been dead four days" (John 11:39).

So because Lazarus returns from the land of the dead, does everyone believe on Jesus, the one who did what no "rich man" could do? Some did: "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done" (John 11:45,46).

The irony of having the Luke 16 parable acted out for them was lost on the chief priests and Pharisees. In their meeting they debated what to do because so many were believing on Jesus because of his miracles. It never occurred to them that they too should believe the miracles even if they could not believe the man. Their hatred was so intense that this was their conclusion: "From that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death" (John 11:53).

Their hatred had no limits: "The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death" (John 12:10). A living Lazarus was a living rebuke. A dead Lazarus would make it easy to say the miracle had never happened, that the people had simply imagined it. No wonder our Lord on one occasion said to them: "Serpents! Broods of vipers! How should ye flee from the judgment of gehenna?" (Matthew 23:33, Rotherham).

Gehenna was a literal place of burning, but it was not a place of torment. Everything thrown into it was destroyed. It is a fitting symbol of the second death. We do not presume to judge the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees, but unless they undergo a change of heart condition in the kingdom, they will surely be destroyed as unfit to inherit the kingdom God has prepared for those who love him. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

### **An Important Lesson for Us**

James writes: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). He might just as well add, "and they remain devils." What they believe does not change them. The scribes and Pharisees said they believed in Moses and in Abraham, but they did nothing to put those beliefs into practice. Thus their belief had no practical benefit for them.

What about us? We have seen God's hand in our lives. We have placed our trust in him. We believe there is one God. Let that faith, that belief, transform our lives.

"Don't throw away your trust now—it carries with it a rich reward in the world to come. Patient endurance is what you need if, after doing God's will, you are to receive what he has promised. For yet a little while, he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. Surely we are not going to be men who cower back and are lost, but men who maintain their faith until the salvation of their souls is complete!"—Hebrews 10:35-39, Phillips translation.

# Poems and Short Features

## Alabaster Boxes

If you and I are pouring out our hearts in sympathy, and love, and service upon the followers of Jesus we are pouring that much out upon Jesus. He counts it this way. This woman pouring the ointment upon Jesus beautifully pictures the church. When she poured the ointment upon the head it pictures the loving service rendered to Jesus himself by his followers. As the ointment was sprinkled over his garments it pictured how during the age some of the members of the church helped to sprinkle the fragrance of love and sympathy upon the followers of Jesus. And when she poured what remained upon his feet it suggested the time where the feet members of the body come in. We understand the feet members of the body are to have their share of this fragrance, and as it is poured upon them it is to prepare them for the completion of their course, to be joined with the Lord beyond the veil in the glory of his kingdom.

When the last member of the body has passed beyond, we will not be able to pour out the alabaster boxes upon the church any more. They will not need it. They will have been glorified. Then will come our chance to give to the poor. Then the poor will be there. What a glorious opportunity it will be. The dead poor will come back. Rockefeller will be there, Carnegie will be there, Morgan will be there, George Washington will be there, Napoleon will be there. All of these will be there to receive at the hands of this glorified class. It means, dear friends, that there will be a further blessing bestowed upon the whole world of mankind. Not one will fail to receive their share in this blessing.

—Benjamin Barton, "Pilgrim Echoes," ppg. 476, 477

## "Father, Glorify Thy Name!"

"Father, glorify Thy name!" is my humble prayer,  
Not because in all Thy joys I may have a share;  
But because my love for Thee has grown deeper, Lord,  
I would have Thy blessed name by all hearts adored.

"Father, glorify Thy name!" is my earnest prayer.  
It may cost me keenest pain—yet, O Lord, I dare  
To uplift this fervent plea, and the answer claim:  
Though it mean the cross for me, Glorify Thy name!

"Father, glorify Thy name!" is my daily prayer.  
All the loss my life may know Thou wilt help me bear;  
To Thy will I say, Amen! In Thy love I trust: Father, glorify  
Thy name through unworthy dust!

"Father, glorify Thy name!" is my constant prayer;  
I have nought to dread or fear—Thou hast all my care.  
Death can be but gain to me, e'en a death of shame:  
Father, grant my humble prayer, Glorify Thy name!

—F. G. Burroughs

## Is It I?

What deep emotions in their hearts did beat  
As that small group who lay at Jesus' feet  
Did hear him say that one would go astray  
And traitorously their loving Lord betray.

In unison their anguished cry arose  
That none of them would sell him to their foes;  
In heart-felt fear they asked, "Lord, is it I?"  
For each one loved him dear; they'd ne'er deny.

Not loving John, who lay on Jesus' breast,  
Nor Peter bold, who towered o'er the rest,  
Nor Mathew, Andrew, James—they all were sure  
They'd stand the test with fervent love and pure.

But Jesus gave the fateful sop to one,  
Who quickly did his wicked errand run,  
Though he did join their ardent protest strong,  
He set about to do his Master wrong.

And now we too, with deep concern, exclaim,  
"Lord is it I? Will e'er I harm thy name?"  
We each must search our inmost heart and thought  
, "Will I betray or serve him as I ought."

—Carl Hagensick

## Our Father's Care

Our heavenly Father, as Thy saints press on,  
Toward their eternal Home beyond the skies,  
Pilgrims and strangers in a hostile land,  
Thy loving hand their every need supplies;  
Food, raiment, shelter, promised for each day,  
And angels, hosts to guard them on their way.

Within Thy Holy Place they dwell secure;  
No evil can come nigh, no foes invade;  
The shining walls protect on every side,  
No pestilence, no plague can make afraid.  
While all around the stormy winds increase  
Jehovah keeps His own in perfect peace.

With linen garments Thou hast covered them  
Which garments cost the life of Thy dear Son.  
In these white robes they work embroid'ry fine  
With patient careful stitches one by one,  
Till all complete in golden glory shown  
The borrowed robe is now their very own.

Here in the harvest time Thou hast prepared  
Thy table full of food, both rare and sweet,  
The richest milk for all Thy tender babes,  
And for the stalwart man the strongest meat.  
With bread of life Thy table dost abound  
And here the living waters may be found.

Of bitter herbs and honey, there is spread  
A full supply that they may stronger grow:  
With wine to strengthen them for days to come,  
And oil to cause their cup to overflow.  
Oh who could lack with such a rich supply,  
Our Father, here we'll feast until we die.

If we should wander Lord, from that abode,  
If we should soil our robe, or wrinkle it,  
Oh let us hear, and heed Thy warning voice  
"Ye cannot come within till ye are fit."  
Help us to cleanse our robes, our steps retrace,  
That we may dwell within Thy Secret Place.

—Rebecca Fair Doney, Poems of the Way, p. 131.

## Falling to Rise Again

By suffering his children to be foiled by a temptation, God settles them the more in grace. They get strength by their falls. The poets feign that Antaeus the giant, in wrestling with Hercules, got strength by every fall to the ground; so a saint, when foiled in wrestling with Satan, gets more spiritual strength. Peter had never such strength of faith as after being foiled in the high priest's hall. How was he fired with zeal and steeled with courage! He who before was dashed out of countenance by the voice of a maid, now dares openly confess Christ before rulers and the councils. Acts 2:14. As the shaking of the tree settles it the more, God lets his children be shaken with the wind of temptation, that they may be more settled in grace afterwards. Let not those Christians whom God has suffered to be foiled by temptation, cast away their anchor, or give way to despairing thoughts.

—Thoman Watson, "The Lord's Prayer," p. 366

## Prodigal, Return!

"Return, return!" thy Father's voice is pleading,  
"Tho' far astray, I bid thee turn again!  
Thy robe is rent, thy tender feet are bleeding,  
Thy heart is faint and sick with famine pain:  
Return, my child: a welcome here awaits thee;  
No longer in the distant country rove;  
Resist the cruel tempter that berates thee,  
And keeps thee from my dwelling and my love."

Return, return! Thy Father's loving-kindness  
Thou long hast scorned, and done his grace despite;  
Yet in his touch is healing for thy blindness,  
And he can turn thy darkness into light.  
Return in all thy rags of sin's defilement;  
Return with all thy want and sore distress;  
Thy Father's voice bespeaks his reconcilment  
:Flee to his breast, and there thy guilt confess.

Return, return! Thy substance hath been wasted—  
Thou hast not aught to bring but thy poor heart;  
Yet art thou longing for the bread once tasted,  
And for his paths of peace, and faith's good part?  
Return, for why shouldst thou delay the pardon  
Thy Father's great compassion waits to grant?  
Arise and go, before thy doubts shall harden  
The homesick yearnings of the penitent.

Return, return! Leave thou the swine and famine  
And seek again the plenty of thy home!  
Why dost thou toil among the husks of mammon,  
When to his rest the Father bids thee come?  
Return thou to his arms, his kiss, his blessing;  
Accept the robe, the sandals, and the ring;  
And there, thy sinfulness and guilt confessing,  
Thou shalt be found, lost treasure of the King!

Return, return! The angel-hosts bend o'er thee—  
They wait to bear the tidings' joyful sound.  
They have beheld the Saviour dying,  
And will rejoice to sing, The lost is found!  
Return, for he will heal all thy backsliding—  
Will love thee freely, and will thus forgive;  
Come, weary soul, rest in his love abiding.  
Thou hast been dead—arise today and live!

## Tell Me About the Master

Tell me about the Master!  
I am weary and worn tonight;  
The day lies behind me in shadow,  
And only the evening is light!  
Light with a radiant glory  
That lingers about the west.  
My poor heart is weary, aweary,  
And longs, like a child, for rest.

Tell me about the Master!  
Of the hills he in loneliness trod,  
When the tears and blood of his anguish,  
Dropped down on Judea's sod  
.For to me life's seventy mile-stones  
But a sorrowful journey mark;  
Rough lies the hill country before me,  
The mountains behind me are dark.

Tell me about the Master!  
Of the wrongs he freely forgave;  
Of his love and tender compassion,  
Of his love that is mighty to save;  
For my heart is aweary, aweary,  
Of the woes and temptations of life  
,Of the error that stalks in the noonday,  
Of falsehood and malice and strife.

Yet I know that whatever of sorrow  
Or pain or temptation befall,  
The infinite Master hath suffered,  
And knoweth and pitieth all.  
So tell me the sweet old story,  
That falls on each wound like a balm,  
And my heart that is bruised and broken  
Shall grow patient and strong and calm.

—Poems of Dawn, ppg. 22, 23