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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

BY

C. H. TURNER, F.B.A., D.LITT., LL.D.

FORMERLY DEAN IRELAND'S PROFESSOR OF EXEGESIS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Professor Turner, shortly before his death in October, 1930, wrote to the Publishers asking that his Commentary on St. Mark might be reprinted separately, with a view to its possible use in the Sixth Forms of Public Schools and elsewhere. With the approval of his literary executors this has now been done. The reprint has been made from the plates. The references to the page numbers are to the New Testament portion of the complete Commentary; see, for example, page 48. The abbreviations for the most part explain themselves, but a teacher using this reprint with a class should have the complete volume in which they are explained.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

By C. H. TURNER

Introduction

I. Who was the Author of the Gospel, and Where and When was it Written?—To each of these questions we are fortunate in being able to give a definite and decisive answer. It is not matter of serious debate that the author was Mark, the disciple of Peter, and that he wrote his Gospel in Rome somewhere about the year A.D. 65.

(i) There is perhaps no one among the secondary characters of the apostolic age about whom we are, as it happens, better

informed than about St. Mark. His real name was John (Ac 12^{12, 25}, 15³⁷): but John was nearly as common a name in Jewish circles of that time—witness John Hyrcanus the predecessor of Herod, John the father of Simon Peter, John the Baptist, John the son of Zebedee, John the presbyter—as it is with us to-day, and just as the numberless Johns at school or college, where Christian names according to our modern habit are in normal use, have somehow to be distinguished from one another, so our John was known

as John Mark. If a Jew took a second name, the second name was Greek, such as Herod Philip or Herod Antipas, or, from the time of the Roman conquest, Latin. And this second name often quite superseded the Jewish name. Just as the Apostle is known to us only as Paul, so the evangelist is, save in the Acts, never called by any other name than the Latin Marcus.

His mother Mary was a prominent member of the Church at Jerusalem, and her house a centre of Christian intercourse; so much so that St. Peter on his deliverance from prison naturally turned his steps to it and found many gathered there for prayer (Ac 12¹²). Mary was clearly at that time a widow; but the house had presumably belonged to her husband, and it is at least not unlikely that it was in the same house that the Apostles and the other original disciples had made their headquarters after the Ascension (Ac 1¹³), and that the Lord and the Twelve had met for the Last Supper (Mk 14¹²⁻¹⁵). If further we accept the probable identification of the lad who followed Jesus to Gethsemane (see on Mk 14⁵¹) with the writer of the Gospel, it results that Mark had been from boyhood in the closest possible relation to the Church of Jerusalem.

However that may be, he was at any rate by origin a Christian Jew of Jerusalem, and also a member of the first Christian mission to the Gentiles, as 'minister' (the word was later on used technically of subdeacons) to Paul and Barnabas (Ac 12²⁵, 13⁶). St. Paul supplies the reason both for the original choice of Mark, and for the loyalty with which Barnabas held to him when Paul declined to take on the second missionary journey a companion who had left them in the lurch in the course of the first: Mark was related to Barnabas as first cousin or even nephew (Col 4¹⁰; Ac 13¹³, 15³⁷⁻³⁹). That second journey was probably undertaken in the autumn of the year 49; and St. Mark disappears from view till the mention of him by St. Paul in the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Col 4^{10, 11}; Phm²⁴), written some ten or twelve years later from Rome, mention which shows that a complete reconciliation had by that time been effected; for Mark is not only praised as one of the Apostle's few fellow-workers from the 'circumcision,' but is singled out as not unlikely to visit the Church of Colossæ in the immediate future and commended warmly to it. If Mark carried out this intention, he was apparently still in Asia Minor when Timothy was bidden to 'pick him up' on

the way to Rome and bring him with him, 'for he is useful to me for ministry' (2 Tim 4¹¹). But in view of the doubt which hangs over the Pastoral Epistles we can hardly place this bit of evidence on quite the same level as the rest.

Mark then had been for some time, though for what length of time we have no means of saying, in close contact with the Apostle; and so we should be prepared to find in his Gospel traces here and there of the influence of Pauline ideas and Pauline phraseology. See notes on Mk 1¹⁴, 5²³, 7^{5, 22, 23}, 10²⁶.

But it is as a disciple of St. Peter that Mark left his impression on tradition. Early writers are practically silent about any connexion of his with St. Paul: with one voice both Eastern and Western authorities, Papias and Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, dwell on his connexion with St. Peter. He is the 'interpreter' of Peter, the 'disciple and interpreter' of Peter, the 'long-time follower' of Peter: and when Peter, after the outbreak of the Neronian persecution, wrote his circular letter from Rome to the Christians of Asia Minor, the only name (apart from that of Silvanus or Silas, as the channel of his communication) which he adds to the salutation from 'the fellow-elect church that is in Babylon' or Rome, is the name of 'Mark my son' (1 P 5¹³). The phrase implies at once a disparity of not less than fifteen or twenty years in age and a special bond of long and affectionate relationship. Where are we to find room for this intercourse, and what exactly is meant by the word 'interpreter'?

These are not quite easy questions to answer. 'Interpreter' would naturally mean 'interpreter from one language into another': if so, as it seems impossible to suppose that St. Peter could have lived so long in touch with Jews of the Dispersion without acquiring (if he did not possess it already) a competent knowledge of Greek, we should be driven to suppose that Mark 'interpreted' into Latin what Peter said in Greek. And there is nothing in itself improbable in that. A Gentile Christian Church in Rome must have contained from the first a Latin-speaking element. No doubt the Roman Church was, and for some generations continued to be, predominantly Greek in speech; Greek was its official and especially its liturgical language till the 3rd century. But too exclusive stress has been laid in modern times on this aspect of things; and if Mark 'interpreted' in the literal sense, it must surely have been from

Greek into Latin. It is, however, not quite certain that the literal sense is necessary; in modern Greek (and cf. Lk 24²⁷) the verb means 'to explain,' and there is something to be said for a more general rendering such as our 'private secretary.'

To the second question, where in time we are to place St. Mark's discipleship to St. Peter, the evidence is not sufficient to enable us to give a precise chronological answer. But we may well lay stress on the opportunities of the first twenty years after Pentecost when St. Peter had his headquarters at Jerusalem, and Mark was a resident there and his mother's house a meeting-place for the disciples. It was no stranger, but one whom we may believe to have known him intimately in the past, that Peter had for 'interpreter' in Rome in the years before the outbreak of persecution late in A.D. 64. That Mark should pass from the service of St. Paul to the special and intimate service of St. Peter is but one more of the links which bound together the Apostle of the Circumcision and the Apostle of the Gentiles, and gave historical justification to the tradition of the early Roman Church in its combined appeal to the names of 'Peter and Paul.'

(ii) Our second question is by implication already answered: it was at Rome that Mark was Peter's interpreter, and at Rome that his Gospel was written. And the external evidence that this Gospel was written for the Roman community is borne out by certain definite features of its contents. The Church of Rome, as St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans amply demonstrates (see H. N. Bate, *Guide to the Epistles of St. Paul* [1926], 120-123), was by now predominantly, perhaps almost exclusively, Gentile: and it is clear that St. Mark has Gentile readers in view. He dwells less than the other evangelists on prophecy and on the Old Testament: and more particularly he explains Jewish terms or customs, e.g. 2²⁶, 7^{2, 3, 4}, 14¹², 15⁴², while in 7^{21, 22} he seems to follow up the transgressions named in the second half of the Decalogue with a sort of paraphrase of a less technically Jewish character. If he always accompanies any citation of an Aramaic word with its Greek equivalent (cf. 5⁴¹, 7^{11, 34}, 14³⁶, 15^{23, 34}), that no doubt might be almost as necessary for Hellenistic Jews as for Gentiles. More significant, and remote from the usage of the other Synoptic Gospels, is his use of transliterated Latin words: not merely such as may have been in use in Palestine, *prætorium*, *legio*, *denarius*, *census* (if that is the correct reading in

12¹⁴), but *centurio* (15^{39, 44, 45}), *speculator* (6²⁷), *quadrans* (12⁴²), *sextarius* (7⁴: in the form *xestes*)—of these four words no one recurs in Luke, and only one in Matthew—not to speak of his translation in 15¹⁵ of the Latin idiom *satis facere* 'to satisfy' into the verbally equivalent Greek. And perhaps we ought to place in the same category of indications pointing to Rome the special value which appears to attach in this Gospel to the evidence of the Western authorities for the text, the Græco-Latin codex Bezae (D), and the three or four oldest of the Old Latin MSS.

(iii) The third and last question concerned the date of the Gospel. Early testimony is divided on the issue whether it was in St. Peter's lifetime or after his death that the Gospel was written. But it is more natural to think that it was exactly the loss of Peter's oral teaching which prompted the Roman Christians to demand, and Mark to provide, the nearest possible substitute, a written record which should in some measure reproduce what the Apostle had taught by word of mouth.

The *terminus a quo* of the Gospel will therefore be the death of Peter, and that can be established within very narrow limits. That both St. Peter and St. Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome in the persecution which broke out in A.D. 64—when Nero, as Tacitus tells us (*Annals*, xv, 44), wanted to find scapegoats to divert from himself the suspicion of having caused the great fire which devastated a large part of the city in the July of that year, and found them in the Christians—is plain matter of historical fact, and would never have been doubted if it had not been for the controversial desire to throw discredit either on Christian origins in general or on those of the Roman Church in particular. Against the quite unconvincing attack of Professor E. T. Merrill of Chicago, *Essays in Early Christian History* (1924), 267-332, may be set the judgement of the greatest living authority in Germany on ancient history, Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, iii (1923), 498-500. Meyer does not write from a Christian point of view, and many things that he says we could not of course accept; but his book is of the highest importance, and his argument always commands respect. 'The mention of Mark in Paul,' he writes, 'contains an irrefragable testimony for the presence and the martyrdom of Peter at Rome. Quite apart from that point, the tradition itself is as certain as can be, and rejection of it

can only be explained as due to dogmatic prepossession. . . . In any case Peter, the Rock of the Church, lived and laboured with apostolic authority in Rome for some considerable time.'

The outbreak of the fire was on July 19. We do not know how long it was before Nero bethought him of making the Christians responsible for it, nor over what period of time were spread the holocausts of human victims in Nero's gardens on the Janiculum, of which Tacitus and Juvenal tell us. That Peter was one of these victims is probable from the fact that his body was buried on the Vatican hill, for that is near by to the Janiculum. If we place the date of his martyrdom in A.D. 64-65, we shall not be far wrong. And it will naturally have been rather soon after the martyrdom that the need made itself insistently felt for a written record of his teaching. Between A.D. 65 and 70, and I should think nearer the earlier limit than the later, the first Life of Jesus Christ was written down in the record of the experiences of His chief disciple St. Peter by Peter's 'interpreter' St. Mark.

II. The Unique Historical Importance of the Gospel according to St. Mark.—As the number of the original eye-witnesses of the Gospel story dwindled, as one after another of the Twelve and the other personal disciples of Jesus were removed by death—as further the expectation of an immediate end to the present age gradually lost strength, so that it no longer seemed superfluous to commit anything to writing for the benefit of contemporaries and even of posterity—a growing need began to be felt for 'Gospels,' that is for record in permanent written form of the Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ. We do not know how many attempts were made in this direction: we do know that before the middle of the 2nd century four documents were singled out by the instinct of Catholic Christians and became the four canonical Gospels. They owed their position to no formal or concerted or authoritative action, but just to a common and universal movement. In no way is the centripetal force, which made of 2nd-century Christians, without any federated organization, one closely knit community, more clearly illustrated than by this agreement as to which and how many were the Gospels of the Church.

Of the Canonical Four the special contribution of the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke is the expansion on different lines of the early collection of sayings known as Q, and the combination of the Teaching with an outline of the

Life; the Gospel according to John is a disciple's subjective interpretation of the meaning of the Incarnate Life; what of the Gospel according to Mark?

It is the unique record, objectively stated, of the experience of an eye-witness, an intimate companion of Jesus throughout His Ministry. And is it, then, paradoxical to say that historically it is the most important book ever written?

In support of this paradox let us try to estimate the value of this Gospel, first from the point of view of its relation to the other Gospels, and next from an analysis of its character and contents taken by itself.

(i) Modern critical enquiry into the origin and mutual relation of the three Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke—that is to say, into the Synoptic Problem, as it is called—began a few years before the middle of the last century, but for long it seemed to be lost in a quagmire out of which there was no exit. Firm ground was, however, reached at last: the intensive work of many devoted scholars converged before the end of the century on one secure result, the priority of Mark in relation to both Matthew and Luke. Whether, however, what lay before Matthew and Luke was the Gospel of Mark as we have it now, or only something so like Mark that it is conveniently known by the German term *Ur-Marcus*, 'the original Mark,' was still matter of dispute. There seemed to many enquirers to be just too much agreement, in the passages common to the three Gospels, between Matthew and Luke against the Mark we know to allow us to suppose that, as it stands, it could be the one and only source. But there are three considerations which between them rob this objection of all its force. In the first place, there are a few passages common to Mark and Q, and in these passages Matthew and Luke had a second source which will account for their agreements against Mark. Next there are a good many passages where the true text of Matthew has been corrupted from Luke, or the true text of Luke from Matthew, so that what have seemed to be agreements are not really agreements at all: e.g. Mk 12⁸ = Mt 21³⁸ = Lk 20¹⁵, where the true text of Matthew agrees not, as had been supposed, with Luke 'cast him out and slew him,' but with Mark 'slew him and cast him out.' In the third place, such agreement as remains is not more than may easily be due to the independent recasting of a rough and unliterary document like Mark by two more practised writers like Luke and Matthew.

Mark, then, our Mark, was used as a main source of their Gospels by both Matthew and Luke: and they are the only other documents bearing on the life of Jesus which have come down to us from the first sixty years after the Crucifixion.

(ii) There are, however, two other documents of early Christianity, one complete, the other a mere fragment, which, though later than Matthew and Luke, still have the form of Gospels, the canonical Gospel according to St. John and the unorthodox *Gospel of Peter*: and both of these use Mark, and use him at least much more than they use either Matthew or Luke. Whether the 4th Gospel knew Luke is doubtful, whether it knew Matthew is more than doubtful: but its knowledge of Mark is beyond question (cf. for instance Jn 6⁷ = Mk 6³⁷; Jn 12⁵ = Mk 14⁵, where in both cases the numbers are omitted by Matthew and Luke but are given in John). The *Gospel of Peter* in my judgement knew and used all four canonical Gospels: but its use of Mark is primary, its use of the other three secondary.

In other words, every known Gospel of early times, alike in the great Church and in heretical circles, used St. Mark as the leading authority for the history of the life of Jesus.

(iii) But for seventeen centuries and more, from the middle of the 2nd century till after the middle of the 19th, St. Mark's Gospel fell more and more into the background. No doubt it was always one of the four canonical Gospels, and a MS. of the Gospels was incomplete without it: indeed, if it had not been for this 'canonization' it may be wondered whether it would have survived at all, so slight came to be the use made of it. Some homilies of St. Jerome, the Greek *catena* of Victor of Antioch, a commentary by Bede, are almost the only writings specifically devoted to St. Mark in patristic times, and the balance was not redressed till our own days. We cannot be sufficiently thankful for the early formulation of the fourfold Canon which has preserved for us this primary authority, primary at least from a critical and historical point of view, for the life of Christ.

(iv) Matthew and Luke may indeed give us a fuller record of His words, John may give us more mature and deeper reflection on His Person: but in John we have to allow both for the individuality of the thought of the evangelist and for the long lapse of time which seems to some of us to have here and there played havoc with the facts; and even in Matthew and Luke

we have to allow for a more conscious writing of history and for the subtle growth of a changed attitude to the human element in the Lord's life and work.

Let us examine in some brief detail the relation of Matthew and Luke to Mark in the parts of their Gospels which one or both of them derived from him. Let us for this purpose put aside all their mere alterations of his language, and all their considerable abbreviations of his story—though these too are not quite without importance—and concentrate attention on those modifications which, however slight in themselves, have real and substantive meaning. Five points may be taken in succession as illustrating, by their cumulative effect, the contrast intended to be indicated. (1) In Mark the disciples always address our Lord by the Aramaic word Rabbi or its Greek equivalent 'Teacher,' and this no doubt correctly reproduces their actual usage: in Matthew and Luke other forms of address are invariably substituted, because Rabbi or Teacher seemed to the second generation of Christians a quite inadequate expression of the relation between disciples and their Lord. See for instance 4³⁸ (and note), 9⁵, with their parallels. (2) In Mark there is full place given to our Lord's working of miracles: but for all that in Matthew and Luke there is to be seen a certain heightening of emphasis. So 1^{32, 34} 'they brought all that were sick or possessed . . . and he healed many' (see note), where Matthew inverts 'many' and 'all,' and Luke says 'he laid hands on each one of them and healed them'; 5³⁹ Jairus's daughter 'is not dead but sleeping' (see note), where Matthew 'my daughter has just died,' and Luke 'they knew that she was dead,' transform Mark's miracle of healing into a raising of the dead; 6⁵ 'he could do there no mighty work,' which Matthew softens down into 'he did not do there many mighty works.' (3) And as the supernatural aspect is thus brought out by Matthew and Luke, so the more human side tends to be put in the background. In Mark our Lord finds out what He wants to know by the normal process of asking questions, e.g. 9³³ He asks the disciples 'What were you discussing on the road?' where Matthew drops the question and Luke says instead that 'Jesus knew' the subject of discussion; cf. 9^{16, 21}. (4) Mark notes too from time to time the human emotions of our Lord, His anger or indignation (1⁴³, 3⁵, 10¹⁴), His demonstrations of affection (9³⁶, 10^{16, 21}), His consternation (14²³), and speaks of His human 'spirit' (2⁶, 8¹²), while all such language

disappears from the other Synoptic Gospels. (5) So also of the Apostles: Mark alone records their naive remonstrances with our Lord in the earlier days of their association with Him (4³⁸, 5³¹, 6³⁷), and, both in his own narrative and in language ascribed to our Lord, speaks of their heart as 'blinded' or 'dulled' (6⁵², 8¹⁷); to Matthew and Luke the Apostles were already sacrosanct and above criticism, and therefore any statement or implication derogatory to them is almost sure to be omitted.

It has been an easy task to show the superior originality of Mark in comparison with the other Synoptists. There yet remains the last and most difficult part of the enquiry, namely the examination of the Gospel of Mark in itself. If we can trace, as between Mark on the one side and Matthew and Luke on the other, some tendency to modify as time went on the proportions of the original record, is it not natural, it may be asked, to suppose that the same tendency has been at work in Mark also, and that allowance must be made even in his case for some distortion of the original lineaments?

That question cannot be answered with the same precision as we have been able so far to attain, for the simple reason that we have no earlier document than Mark to bring into comparison with him. We must depend entirely on analysis of the Gospel itself. But the results of that analysis are, on the whole, extraordinarily reassuring.

The stages of such an analysis are two; the first is concerned with Mark, the second with Peter. We have first to ask, as to Mark, how far he has derived his material from Peter, and how far we can regard him as having conveyed to us the Petrine tradition in unadulterated form. We have then to go on and ask, as to Peter, how far he was likely to be, and how far he was, a faithful witness to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Mark and his Authorities.—For the whole of the Ministry and for the story of the Passion as far as the condemnation by the Sanhedrin (1¹⁴⁻¹⁴ 72) Peter was an eye-witness and so could have been Mark's sole authority. Two main questions therefore dictate themselves on the threshold of the enquiry: the one, Who were Mark's authorities for the remainder of his Gospel? (1¹⁻¹³ and 15¹⁻¹⁶ 8); and the other, Is there any reason, on internal grounds of analysis of the hypothetically Petrine portion, to segregate any part of it as non-Petrine? Only in one place, as it seems, does Mark give what is his own

personal experience, in 14⁵¹⁻⁵²: see the notes on those verses and on 14³⁶ ff.

(i) For 1¹⁻¹³ it is probable that Peter, though not there an eye-witness, was the source of Mark's knowledge. His brother Andrew was, according to the 4th Gospel (Jn 1⁴⁰), a disciple of the Baptist: and he himself, the chief of the disciples and intimate friend of Jesus, was as likely as anyone to have heard from Him the story of the Baptism and Temptation. But for 15¹⁻¹⁶ 8 Peter was not an eye-witness, and Mark's record of the events must have been drawn (perhaps mediately through Peter, but perhaps more probably direct) from other sources. The Trial before Pilate is more baldly told in Mark (see on 15⁸) than in any other of the Gospels; for the Crucifixion it may reasonably be conjectured that the witness of Simon the Cyrenian and of the holy women, or one of them, was at his disposal (see on 15²⁹⁻³²), for that is the obvious explanation of their being mentioned by name in 15^{21, 40}; for the Resurrection again he will have depended on one of the women, presumably the otherwise unknown Mary, mother of James and Joseph, though no doubt, if we had the Gospel complete, Peter would have come once more upon the scene (see the appended note, p. 124⁶). It seems not unlikely too that Bartimæus was the narrator of the miracle of his own cure, not only because that is the only healing related in the later chapters of the Gospel, but also because it is the only miracle that is told apparently from the point of view of the man healed: see on 10⁴⁶⁻⁵². All these characters in Mark's story may well have been known personally to him, Bartimæus and Mary in Jerusalem, Simon in Jerusalem or in Rome.

(ii) So far the Markan element in the Gospel contains nothing to surprise us: it is in the main dictated by the circumstances. But we have now to ask whether we find reason to suppose that what we may provisionally call the Petrine story of the Ministry (1¹⁴⁻¹⁴ 72) betrays at any point the presence of an alien element, intruded by Mark from other sources into the Petrine narrative. And it must at once be admitted that there is one—though in my judgement probably not more than one—passage to which this description applies. The second account of the feeding of the multitude (8¹⁻¹⁰; see note *ad loc.*) can hardly be anything else than a doublet of the first (6³⁴⁻⁴⁴); and, as between the two, it is the earlier story which by its dramatic touches approves itself as homogeneous with the Gospel as a whole. Moreover, 7²⁴⁻²⁷, the section immediately

before the second feeding, is unique in the whole record of the Ministry as containing no mention of any disciples in company with our Lord, while the introductory phrase in 8¹ is unlike any similar note of transition in the body of the Gospel after 1⁹. It would seem therefore that 7²⁴-8¹⁰ or 12 (with 8²⁰) were derived by Mark from some other informant (there is no real reason to suppose a written source), and that the differences in detail between the two accounts of the feeding led Mark to suppose (erroneously) that he was relating two separate miracles.

Such a conclusion must of course detract something from our confidence in Mark. But not necessarily very much: for if this passage does stand alone as the only considerable section which on examination suggests positively a non-Petrine origin, is it really more than an *a priori* consideration of the probabilities might lead us to expect? We may hold the connexion of the Gospel as a whole with St. Peter to be undeniable, and yet need not assert that the evangelist has absolutely suppressed his own individuality. When the attempt is made to stereotype oral tradition in written form, gaps are sure to be found here and there; minor inconsistencies will reveal themselves; personal reminiscence will have to be transferred into indirect narrative. The hand of the editor is necessary to put the whole on to a coherent basis, and so it is natural to allow for the possibility of the intrusion of some slight amount of alien matter, recollections whether of the evangelist himself or of other original disciples, into the main Petrine stock. Suppose that some such early disciple was resident in Rome, and knew that Mark was casting into written form the substance of Peter's reminiscences, what more likely than that he should have begged the evangelist to incorporate just his own little bit of independent knowledge, as he conceived it to be and as in part it was, of the Ministry of the Lord? It must never be forgotten that in history, human nature being what it is, general conclusions are not necessarily or ordinarily valid without some qualification. The general conclusion that Mark's Gospel reproduces Peter's teaching, if satisfactorily established on other grounds, does not in the least cease to be true as a general conclusion because exception to its truth has here and there to be allowed for. It is just a question of proportion: and the proportion of what can be fairly judged to be non-Petrine matter is small indeed.

What evidence then does the internal

analysis of Mark as a whole provide in confirmation or otherwise of the consentient tradition of early times connecting him with St. Peter? Very briefly we may emphasize in answer two characteristics of this Gospel.

(1) In strong contrast to Matthew and Luke, Mark's Gospel may be called autobiographical. They write Lives of Christ, he records the experience of an eyewitness and companion. It is crucial in this respect to note the predominant use of the plural in the narrative of Mark. Time after time a sentence commences with the plural, for it is an experience which is being related, and passes into the singular, for the experience is that of discipleship to a Master. So 1²¹ 'they enter Capernaum; and at once he taught on the sabbath in the synagogue'; 5²⁸ 'they come to Jairus's house; and he sees the tumult . . .'; 9³³ 'and they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house, he asked them . . .'; 10³² 'and they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going on ahead of them . . .'; 11¹² 'and on the morrow, when they had left Bethany, he hungered'; 11²⁷ 'and they came again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple . . .'; 14³² 'and they came to . . . Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples . . .' In none of these cases do either Matthew or Luke retain the plural: if the references given on 1²¹ (see *ad loc.*) are examined, it will be found that occasionally both retain Mark's plural, that more often only one of the two (more often Matthew than Luke) retains it, and perhaps more often still neither: and these references are only some out of many. Of course it is not suggested that any one of the three Synoptists had a rigid rule in the matter: but there is a clear and definite tendency in Mark to use the plural, in the others, and especially in Luke, to omit it.

(2) If the reader will now take one step further and put back Mark's third person plural into the first person plural of the narrator, he will receive a vivid impression of the testimony that lies behind the Gospel: thus in 1²⁹, 'we came into our house with James and John: and my wife's mother was ill in bed with a fever, and at once we tell him about her.' But this is to anticipate a little. Let us take our stand on the acquired result that the story as a whole comes from one of the intimate companions of Jesus, one at least of the twelve disciples who travel with Him on the last journey to Jerusalem. We can at once narrow our choice. For

five disciples special record is given of their call (1¹⁷⁻²⁰, 2¹⁴). Four of the five were the auditors of a very private and familiar talk, about the End and its signs, in His last days (13³). Three of these again made a sort of inner circle, who were not only admitted, to the exclusion of the rest, to the house of Jairus (5³⁷), but alone were with Him at the two great crises of the Transfiguration (9²⁻¹⁴) and the Agony (14³³⁻⁴²). Matthew and Luke derive these *arcana*, primarily and for the most part exclusively, from Mark: whence did Mark derive them but from one of the four, and from one of the three: But of the three James and John are named as a pair (besides their call only twice (3¹⁷ and 10³⁵); and John alone once (9³⁸). Peter, on the other hand, is given separate and distinctive mention in 1³⁶, 3¹⁶, 8^{29, 33}, 9⁸, 10³⁸, 11³¹, 14^{29, 37, 54 ff.}, 16⁷. And four of these passages call for special notice: 16⁷, because it implies that Peter played an individual part in the Lost Ending (see below, p. 124b); 11³¹, for none but Peter would have '*remembered and said*'; 8³³ and 14⁵⁴, since it is not easy to suppose that any other would have recorded the Apostle's two great failures, and impossible to suppose that any other could have recorded his triple denial with such minute detail. The internal evidence of the Gospel tells thus exactly the same tale as the external: Peter is the disciple whose reminiscences and experience lie before us in the main body of Mark's work.

Now as a whole Mark gives the impression of being, what all tradition tells us he was, a faithful 'interpreter' of another man's ideas. He is simple, straightforward, unversed in literary artifice, Greek in speech but native Jew in all that lies behind speech, telling his story in the Old Testament manner with coordinate clauses and abundant repetition. He is no conscious historian like Matthew and Luke, constructing a Gospel from heterogeneous sources, blending teaching and narrative so as to produce a finished composition, a complete picture of the Christ. He had, beyond any New Testament writer, the 'mind of a disciple.' His story is homogeneous, with the qualifications above noted, from first to last. What lies outside his master's experience is confined, almost entirely, to the limits of just what is necessary to string his story together.

Then, finally, what of Peter himself? If Mark is the amanuensis, and Peter the moving spirit, does Peter himself give us, through Mark, an objective and impersonal

record? We have worked back to the eye-witness, and an eye-witness who was of all the disciples the one best placed to tell us about Jesus, for he was the first and closest friend among them all. No doubt something must be allowed, at every new stage of the transmission, for some element of loss in the process. We would rather have had Peter's story direct from his own pen: but we have it in a form which, so far as analysis can tell us, has suffered comparatively little blurring of the sharpness of the outlines. And of Peter in turn all that we know goes to reassure us that what we have is a vivid and straightforward story of a real experience. He extenuates nothing: his ventures of faith and his failures, his slow apprehension and his steady growth of response to the Master's patient training, are all set down side by side.

Peter was not creative like Paul and John. He was the Rock on which the Church was built, just because he was the prototype of tradition. If we compare his 'memoirs' with those of John, we find indeed that they share some characteristic traits, the sort of things that give the impression of being told at first-hand, as against the other two evangelists: but John wrote a generation later, his purview is more or less limited to Jerusalem, and above all he is not so much a chronicler as an interpreter of facts, not so much an historian as a theologian, not only receptive but creative. His insight into the meaning of the story is supreme; the years that have passed have but deepened it: but his memory is an old man's memory, now strangely precise, correcting all three Synoptic accounts as to the relation of the Last Supper to the Passover, now as strangely off the lines of literal fact. Peter's mind was narrower in its range, but it was extraordinarily tenacious. He tells his own experiences; he does not suppress his own individuality; but the individuality is one which transforms itself on the model of a human friend who is realized to be a more than human Master, and the experience by which this realization comes about is related with no prepossession save to present it exactly as in fact it happened. It may well be that here and there what he recorded of the Master's teaching was beyond his understanding at the time: his apprehension of the Gospel message was not complete till he had welcomed Paul with open arms and admitted Cornelius to Christian baptism. That all meats were cleansed, that the new wine must burst the old bottles of Judaism, these lessons and such as these

were seed that took long to germinate in his slowly moving mind; but the words were the Master's, and it is to St. Peter's record, as set down by St. Mark, that we owe the most direct and literal transcript for posterity of the Life that has changed for all subsequent ages the course of the world's history.

[For analysis of the Gospel see notes at I. 1, I. 14, III. 13, VII. 24, VIII. 31, X. 32, X. 46, XI. 12, XI. 20, XIV. 1, XIV. 12, XV. 1, XV. 47.]

In all difficult passages reference should be made to the parallel passages, if any, in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

I. 1-13. **The Good News of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God; the Preparatory Mission of John the Baptist; the Preparation of Jesus for His Ministry.**—John preaches a baptism of repentance as a preliminary to the coming of One greater than himself who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. With the baptism of Jesus John's function is fulfilled: the Prophet makes way for Him to whom the Father bears witness, 'Thou art my Only Son.'

1-4. The construction of these four verses is difficult at first sight, but the clue to the true interpretation lies in recognition of the fact that ² and ³ are parenthetical—in an English text they should be placed within brackets—so that ¹ and ⁴ should be taken together: 'the beginning of the Good News of Jesus . . . was John the Baptist's preaching of a baptism of repentance.' The Greek verb translated 'came' in RV can equally well be rendered 'was.' Grammar, sense, Mark's fondness for parentheses, and the authority of the Greek Fathers, combine to recommend this solution of the difficulty. Only thus do we get good grammar, for the noun then has its verb, and good sense, for John's baptism was a real 'beginning of the Gospel' message. And the authority of ancient exegetes, like Origen and Basil, is of special value in the matter of understanding unpunctuated Greek MSS.: see e.g. on 7¹⁹. Finally, parentheses are common in Mark, and (since ancient MSS. were devoid of such typographical expedients as brackets or dashes) are liable, especially if the parentheses are long, to mislead scribes and interpreters: see, for instance, even the brief parenthesis in 2^{15, 16}. Here the Old Test. quotations, reinforcing the first statement of Mark's Gospel, serve to link on the New Dispensation with the Old.

1. The Fourth Evangelist, whose knowledge of Mark is certain and obvious, also opens with 'the beginning' and with the

mission of the Baptist: but to him 'the beginning' is not the Baptist's mission, but the eternal pre-existence of the Word.

the Gospel, more literally *the good news*: and it is in this literal sense only that Mark, who is specially fond of the word, uses it. So, too, when one or other written Gospel was entitled 'the good news according to Mark' or 'according to Matthew,' the good news was still a single thing, the good news about Jesus Christ as told by Mark or Matthew. But very soon it became customary to talk, just we as do, of the 'Gospels,' that is, the different embodiments in writing of the good news, though in strictness the good news was one and only one. It is not likely that the plural use 'Gospels' goes back to the 1st century: but it is quite possible that when the later evangelists wrote there was already a tendency to think of the good news or Gospel as something written, and that may be the reason why Matthew and Luke always omit or modify Mark's phrase 'the Gospel.' See Mk 1^{14, 15}, 3¹⁴, 8³⁵, 10²⁹, 13¹⁰, 14⁹.

of Jesus Christ the Son of God: that is, 'about Jesus (as) Messiah (Christ) and Son of God.' The words are an epitome of St. Mark's Gospel: St. Peter's confession, 'Thou art the Messiah,' is the culmination of the first half of it, and it is more than likely that the Lost Ending (see below, p. 124b) contained a parallel confession of the Divine Sonship, for the indications of the remainder of the Gospel point in the direction of some such climax. The Father proclaims the Sonship in 1¹¹; the evil spirits recognize the Son of God, 3¹¹; once and again, as the story draws to its close, our Lord in His teaching and conversation challenges the same recognition from men—the Son of Man shall come 'in the glory of his Father,' 8³⁸; He whom the husbandmen in the parable put to death is the Son and heir, 12^{6, 7}; the son of David is also Lord of David, 12^{35, 37}; Messiah is Son of the Blessed, 14⁶¹. That Jesus is Son of God is therefore as integral a part of the 'good news' according to Mark as that He is Messiah; and so on *a priori* grounds there is the best reason for supposing the words 'Son of God' in ¹ to be genuine. The evidence for omitting them, indicated in the margin of RV, shrinks, in fact, on examination to very small proportions. Most of the Fathers alleged for omission are simply comparing the openings of the different Gospels, and cite the fewest words that will serve to identify the Gospel meant. And the two important witnesses that

remain, Origen and the codex Sinaiticus, are perhaps not two witnesses but one: the codex is, not improbably, nothing else than a copy on vellum of the Greek papyrus rolls that Origen brought with him from Alexandria to Palestine. Our oldest and best witnesses, including B (Vaticanus) and D (codex Bezae), retain the words: it was no doubt by accident that they dropped out from some Alexandrian MS. of the late 2nd or early 3rd century, and in the case of Sacred Names, which would be abbreviated to a couple of letters apiece, accidental omission was easy enough. Note how nearly this summary of our earliest Gospel corresponds to the symbol, found in many of the earliest Christian sepulchral inscriptions, of a fish; the fish being chosen as consisting in Greek (*ichthys*) of the initial letters of the five words 'Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour.'

2. in **Isaiah the prophet** RV rightly: 'in the Prophets' of AV is an ancient attempt to get rid of the difficulty that of the two quotations which follow only the second is from Isaiah (40³), while the first is from Mal 3¹. Either, then, Mark added the first as an afterthought in the margin, or he drew both from an early collection of *testimonia* (i.e. Old Testament passages bearing on the successive features of the Gospel story) in which the reference to Isaiah had got misplaced; or he may even have made the slip himself. Mark perhaps did not know his Greek Bible as well as either Matthew or Luke: except here, he never cites it outside the record of our Lord's words.

3. **Make ye ready the way of the Lord: Jehovah**, that is to say, comes in the mission of Jesus Christ.

4. **John . . . who baptized.** Rather *John the Baptizer*: Mark, alone among New Testament writers, uses a phrase which goes back behind the familiar 'John the Baptist'—one among many indications of his primitive date and outlook. So also 6^{14, 25}.

baptism of repentance or change of mind (see on 1¹⁵): so of Christian baptism, Ac 2³⁸, 'repent and be baptized.' The repentance is warranted by the preliminary confession of sins (5¹).

unto remission of sins RV: unfortunately obscuring the connexion with the language of the Creed, 'baptism for the remission of sins.' John's baptism, then, shared with Christian baptism the purpose of forgiveness of sins (so, too, Lk 3³): the essential difference was that it supplied no grace for the new life after baptism: see on 8.

5. in the river Jordan: Mark, on the first mention of Jordan, explains for his Roman and Gentile readers that Jordan was a river.

6. **a leathern girdle about his loins:** from the description of Elijah in 2 K 1⁸. The words are omitted by some important MSS., and may have been brought in by scribes from Mt 3⁴, since Matthew is much more given than Mark to adducing illustrations from the Old Testament.

8. **I baptized you** RV: wrongly, for in English this would mean that John had ceased to baptize. Here is one of the cases where the Greek aorist is not equivalent to the English past tense: another is 11, where to translate 'I was well pleased' would be ridiculous. AV better *I have baptized*.

with the Holy Ghost: or, as there is no article here in the Greek, *with Holy Spirit*. The *differentia*, then, of Christian baptism is that it adds the gift of the Spirit. The phrase recurs in Ac 1⁵, 11¹⁶; in Ac 1⁵ it refers to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (and that is presumably why the parallels in Matthew and Luke have here 'with holy Spirit and fire'); in Ac 11¹⁶ St. Peter is reminded of the Lord's words (in Ac 1⁵) by the descent of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius. But why is the gift of the Holy Spirit called 'baptism'? Obviously (as I think) because it normally formed part of Christian baptism, being given after the baptismal immersion by the laying on of apostolic hands (Ac 19^{5, 6}, 8¹⁵⁻¹⁷). In other words, 'baptism with (the) Holy Spirit' is what we call Confirmation, which in apostolic and early times, if baptism was administered by or in the presence of an Apostle or Bishop, followed it immediately, and in any other case as soon as practicable. Baptism with water, and Confirmation, were in fact two essential parts of a single Sacrament.

9. **Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee.** St. Mark's Gospel was, so far as we know, the first attempt at a Life of Christ: it was an answer, that is, to the demand of converts who wanted to know who and what manner of man He was whose teaching they had accepted, whose disciples they now professed themselves to be, into whose society they had been admitted as members. And the answer naturally takes the form of an autobiography: Peter gives the record of his own experiences of discipleship from his call by the Master to the (lost) appearance to him after the Resurrection. Here and there, of course, the story has been filled out, whether by the Apostle or the

Evangelist, from the testimony of other witnesses, especially at the beginning and end of the Gospel. For the preaching of John, Peter's own knowledge (Jn 1^{41, 42}), let alone common report, would have been enough; the events of the Baptism and Temptation Peter had received no doubt from our Lord's own lips (see below, on 10 and 11). So much summary was needed as an introduction to the account of our Lord's public ministry and of His disciple's experience. Anything more was alien to the purpose of the Gospel: and therefore nothing more is given. The Gospels of Mark and John are the records of individual testimony, and so Peter and John confine themselves to the subject-matter of which they had personal knowledge. But the two Gospels that followed Mark's were not written, as we have them, by actual witnesses, and depending on others they naturally extend their historical investigations further back, and in St. Luke's case, with the Acts, further forward as well. That St. Mark's Gospel contains then no record of our Lord's Birth, Childhood, and early life is a *necessary* consequence of its plan and purpose. No argument whatever can be drawn from its silence as to any events concerned with them. Our Lord came 'from Nazareth of Galilee' to commence His public work, and therewith to enter the sphere of Peter's experience: that is all that had to be said.

in the Jordan RV, with margin 'into.' 'In' is correct (so AV): one of the most obvious characteristics of Mark's vernacular, non-literary Greek is the use of the preposition 'into' where classical Greek demanded the preposition 'in' (cf. 1³⁰). Modern Greek has gone beyond Mark and has dropped the latter altogether.

10. *straightway*. The persistent use of this phrase (so, for instance, 1^{12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 42, 43}) is the oddest mannerism in St. Mark's Gospel. One may conjecture that it goes back to St. Peter's vivid way, accompanied perhaps with some dramatic gesture, of telling the Gospel story to his converts: to some extent the other Evangelists replace it by the word 'behold,' which Mark never employs in narrative. Perhaps too something may be meant to be suggested of the strain and pressure of our Lord's work during the days of His Ministry.

he saw the heavens rent asunder and the Spirit . . . That is to say, in Mark the Baptism is related entirely as our Lord's own experience. There is nothing here to suggest that the descent of the

Spirit was seen, or the Voice from heaven heard, by any but our Lord Himself. At the Transfiguration, on the other hand, the Voice was addressed to the three Apostles (9⁷): 'This is . . . hear him,' not 'Thou art . . . in thee . . .'

11. *my beloved Son*. Rather *My Only Son*. Nearly all expositors, apart from the great Dutch scholar Daniel Heinsius in the first half of the 17th century, have gone wrong (as it seems to me) by not paying sufficient attention to the meaning of the word *agapetos* in classical and Septuagint usage. *Agape*, love, is practically a creation of the Christian Church, for though it is sporadically found in the LXX, it does not appear in classical Greek at all. The verb, and the verbal adjective *agapetos*, are both classical, but 'to love,' 'beloved,' is not their proper meaning. *Agapetos* is 'that with which one must be content,' and so technically 'that of which one has no more than one,' and in particular 'an only' son or daughter. So Aristotle in the *Ethics* speaks of the duty of a wealthy man to spend largely on the banquet at the coming of age of an *agapetos* or only son: and in the *Rhetoric*, summarizing the kind of arguments barristers would employ on behalf of their clients, he emphasizes the distinction, in the case of those who have lost an eye, between the man who has another eye left and the man who had lost one already — 'other men have one eye left, and one-eyed men, though they have lost something, have not lost everything: my client is deprived of his *agapetos*,' i.e. his only remaining eye. So also in the LXX: 'thy son, thine only son' of Isaac in Gen 22^{2, 12, 16} is again *agapetos* in the Greek (and no passage of the LXX is more likely than this, in conjunction with Ps 2⁷, to lie behind the thought of those who rendered into Greek the Voice at the Baptism); or again in the Prophets, (Am 8¹⁰; Jer 6²⁶; Zech 12¹⁰), mourning 'for an only son.' The same meaning is natural, 'one only son,' in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (see Mk 12⁶). No doubt this use of *agapetos* quickly gave way, with the large use of *agape* in Christian circles, to the more obvious meaning of an apparent derivative of *agape*, 'beloved.' But there are traces here and there in the Old Latin version, both of the New Testament and of the Old Testament, of the survival of a knowledge of the original meaning of the phrase as 'only son'; and Athanasius appeals to 'those skilled in Greek idioms' and to Homer, when asserting against the Arians

that the meaning 'only Son' is here the true one. Once more Greek Fathers are right against more modern tradition.

13. Satan. Greek-speaking Christians took over from the original Christians of Palestine certain Aramaic words or phrases, especially those of liturgical use, like Amen, Abba = Father (Mk 14³⁶; Rom 8¹⁵), Marana tha, 'Come, Lord Jesus' (1 Cor 16²²; cf. Rev 22²⁰), and personal names of angels and evil spirits, Michael, Gabriel, Satan. Most of these dropped out in time, and Greek equivalents soon took their place. It is one of the archaic features of St. Mark that he retains them to a larger extent than do the other Gospels. Thus he always uses 'Satan' (3^{23, 26}, 4¹⁵, 8³³), never 'the devil' or 'the evil one.' See too on 14³⁶.

ministered: i.e. to His bodily need, as of the holy women in 15⁴¹, and cf. 1⁸¹. Matthew places the ministry of the angels at the end of the forty days, but the parallelism of the clauses here, 'was being tempted . . . was with the beasts . . . were ministering' indicates that Mark meant either during the whole forty days or possibly at the beginning of it—compare the story of Elijah's forty days' fast in 1 K 19^{5 ff}.

14. The Ministry, first half: The Good News of Jesus as Messiah (1¹⁴⁻⁸ 30).

(I) **The Ministry of Power:** Jesus addresses His message to His countrymen at large, teaching with authority and demonstrating His power over sin and disease by casting out evil spirits and healing the sick (1¹⁴⁻³ 12).

Now. So both AV and RV, rightly: for according to the true reading the paragraph does not begin with Mark's almost invariable 'and,' but with the alternative Greek particle, which in Matthew and Luke and in Greek writers generally is that ordinarily used for transition, though Mark only so uses it to note some large new departure in his narrative (7²⁴, 10³², 14¹). Here it emphasizes the commencement of the public ministry.

was delivered up RV: a literal rendering of the Greek. But Mark meant, and his readers would have understood him to mean, 'delivered into prison.' An English reader would not necessarily understand the connotation of the word: *arrested* or *imprisoned* is therefore better (AV 'was put in prison'). Mark does not delay his narrative at this point with further details: in his inconsequential but effective way he gives them later on (6¹⁷⁻²⁹), because there they are wanted to explain the development of popular

beliefs about the character and mission of Jesus

the Gospel of God RV, and if this is correct it means 'the good news from God,' 'sent by God,' and is a point of contact (there are not wanting other such points in Mark) with Pauline phraseology. AV follows another and easier reading, almost as well supported, 'the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.'

the Kingdom of God is at hand. The expectation of 'a good time coming' has been ineradicable in the hearts of men: Hope still lay at the bottom of Pandora's box, according to the Greek myth, when all other gifts and blessings had taken flight from human life: Virgil's Fourth Eclogue testifies to the same hope in the pagan world of the time. Among the Jews especially, since the age of the later Prophets and still more from the date of the Maccabees, there had grown up an eager looking for the 'consolation of Israel' and 'redemption of Jerusalem' (Lk 2^{28, 38}) in a heavenly kingdom established on earth, in which righteousness should be vindicated and the Holy God reign over His holy people. More and more had this hope in religious circles become spiritualized: portions, for instance, of the (composite) book of Enoch approximate closely to some elements of the New Testament idea of the Kingdom—in particular the Kingdom is there conceived as definitely Messianic, that is, as ruled over by God's anointed vicegerent.

Jesus then came to set up this Kingdom of God upon earth, and to be Himself its Head as God's representative. That His followers called Him their King seems to follow from the language of the accounts of the Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday, and of the Trial and Crucifixion: compare too Ac 17⁷, 'another King, even Jesus,' as well as the early Acts of the Martyrs, which supplement the Imperial or Consular dating with 'regnante autem Christo Iesu domino nostro . . .' or the like.

But though the Kingdom had thus come, it was also to come, and Christians are still praying 'Thy Kingdom come,' for it cannot be established in its completeness till all nations are gathered into it and evil finally overthrown, so that God 'shall be all in all' (1 Cor 15^{24, 28}).

repent: literally 'change your mind,' and so always in classical Greek; in later and in Christian Greek with the added sense 'in the direction of repentance,' but perhaps we lose something in English by the obscuring of the original content of the word.

the gospel: that is, the good news of

the coming of the Messianic Kingdom with Jesus the Messiah.

16. **passing along:** AV more idiomatically 'as he . . .' Translate *as he was passing along*.

the sea of Galilee or in John 'the sea of Tiberias': always called 'sea' by the local patriotism of the three Palestinian evangelists, but by Luke 'the lake' (5¹ 'lake of Gennesaret').

Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon: see on 29.

19. **James and John.** Always in Mark in this order (1²⁹, 3¹⁷, 5³⁷, 9², 10^{35, 41}, 13³, 14³³): and it is natural to conclude that James is named first as the elder. Luke, writing in the light of later history, gives on occasions the preference to the historically more important brother (Lk 8⁵¹, 9²⁸; Ac 1¹³): in Mk 1¹⁹, 3¹⁷, 5³⁷ John is 'brother of James,' but in Ac 12² James is 'brother of John.'

the boat . . . the nets. So rendered, the implication in English would be that James and John were in Simon's boat and were mending the common stock of nets. One of the first rules that the beginner in the classical languages is taught, is that in them the possessive pronoun is habitually omitted, while with us it is necessarily expressed. We must therefore translate *in their boat* and with AV (here and in 18) *their nets*. So 'the hands' are regularly used in the Greek for 'his hands,' 'their hands,' 'your hands,' e.g. 6⁵, 7³, 9⁴³.

with the hired servants gives perhaps a slightly wrong impression: 'with his men' is what is meant. In adding this detail, St. Peter did not intend to emphasize, though no doubt he implies, Zebedee's social standing; if it is more than just a pictorial touch, it is meant to suggest that the sons did not abandon their father to deal with the work alone.

21. **they go:** cf. 29 'when they were come out of the synagogue, they came . . .' Mark is specially fond of the plural in recording the movements of Jesus and His disciples, while Matthew and Luke tend to replace it by the singular. Why? Because St. Peter told the story autobiographically, 'we go,' 'when we were come out,' and so on, while Matthew and Luke write not as actors in the events, but as biographers, concentrating attention on the figure of the Master (see Mk 5^{1, 28}, 6^{53, 54}, 8²², 9^{14, 30, 33}, 10^{32, 46}, 11^{1, 12, 16, 20, 27}, 14^{18, 22, 26, 32}). In all these passages Mark's third person plural may be reasonably understood as representing a first person plural of Peter's discourses.

More often than not, the parallels in Matthew and Luke either omit the plural verbs altogether or replace them by a verb in the singular.

he entered into the synagogue and taught. Our Lord, and His Apostles after Him in the first age of the Church, regularly attended the worship of the local synagogue—went to church, as we should say—every Saturday. To show the sort of way in which He might be invited to address the congregation, see Lk 4¹⁶ ff.; Ac 13¹⁵.

22. **as having authority and not as the scribes.** 'Scribes' (i.e. 'legal experts,' 'interpreters') judged as to the meaning of doubtful points in the Law: they quoted the opinions of eminent Rabbis as to what might be lawfully done or what might not. But our Lord said, This is right or wrong; He did not reject the authority of the Law, but He spoke as having authority from God to enunciate and enforce the principles that underlay the Law, and to carry them on into a new expression and a more complete correspondence with the Will of God in the coming Kingdom. 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . But I say unto you . . .'

24. **Jesus of Nazareth.** Literally *the Nazarene*. Mark, writing for Gentile readers, always uses the Greek (and Roman) adjective for 'a man of Nazareth' (10⁴⁷, 14⁶⁷, 16⁶). It is presumably from his Gospel that this form—rather than the alternative form, commoner in the New Testament, 'Nazorean'—became established in Greek and Latin (and so in English) Christian usage.

art thou come to destroy us? In the absence of punctuation in the MSS., and in the absence, characteristic of Mark's Greek, of any particle defining the sense, it is impossible, except from the context, to say whether this clause is meant to be a question (so AV and RV), or (as I rather think) a statement of fact. See a similar case in 16⁶, and the note there. For other groups of three disjointed clauses, beginning with an interrogation, in Mark, cf. 1²⁷, 2⁷, 14⁶⁴.

the Holy One of God. So St. Peter in Jn 6⁶⁹. Both there and here it appears to be equivalent of the Christ or Anointed One. In 3¹¹ the unclean spirits advance to the further acknowledgement of 'the Son of God.'

25. **Hold thy peace.** Literally 'be muzzled': an instance of Mark's effective use of the language of the common people (it recurs in 4³⁹), and much more striking in Greek than in English, since our habit-

ual use of metaphorical language is quite alien from the genius of Greek.

27. **A new teaching ! with authority he commandeth . . .** Luke (4³⁶) apparently, like AV and RV, understood Mark as intending 'with authority' and 'he commandeth' to be taken together. But in face of 1²², 'he taught as having authority,' it seems more natural to take 'with authority' in connexion with the preceding words, 'a new teaching with authority.' The newness of the teaching consisted for its hearers primarily in the fact that it was authoritative in form: its authority was now guaranteed by the submission of the unclean spirits.

28. **into all the region of Galilee round about.** The true rendering seems to lie midway between this, which limits the Greek phrase too much, and AV 'the region round about Galilee,' which certainly extends it too much. Perhaps *the whole Galilean district or neighbourhood*. Cf. 1³⁹, 3^{7,8}.

29. **they came into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.** An awkward phrase, which only becomes really intelligible when we put it back into the mouth of St. Peter: 'we came into our house with James and John.' So in 1⁶ 'he saw me and Andrew my brother.'

31. **took her by the hand.** In some of His cures our Lord is recorded by Mark to have healed by word alone (2¹¹, 3⁵, 10⁵²); in some by touch alone (here and 1⁴¹, 8^{23,25}); in some by both (5⁴¹, 7^{33,34}). Perhaps if the accounts were fuller, we should have found that normally He made use both of the word and the sacramental act. See note on 6⁵.

32. **at even, when the sun did set.** It is characteristic of Mark's redundant style to describe the same thing in two ways. Sometimes an additional shade of meaning may be given in the second clause: thus here it may be suggested that the Sabbath (1²¹) was over, and the most scrupulous might bring out their sick; or in 14³⁰, 'to-day, in this night,' some extra precision is attached to the date. More often the double phrase is nearly or entirely pleonastic: so in the next few verses: 1³⁵ 'in the morning a great while before day,' 'went out and departed,' 1⁴² 'the leprosy departed and he was made clean,' 1⁴⁵ 'to publish it much and to spread abroad the matter.' Naturally Matthew and Luke tend to abbreviate at such points, and to retain only one or other of the double phrases: to some extent the scribes of Mark fell under a similar temptation; see notes on 1⁴⁰, 9³⁸, 12²⁸: and cf. also 2¹⁹.

33. **the whole city was gathered together at the door.** That is to say, a definite occasion is in view: in other words, from 2¹ to 2⁴ is the account of events on one and the same day, perhaps the first Sabbath after the call of the Apostles.

34. **many that were sick . . . many devils.** Mark does not mean to imply that not 'all that were sick' of 3² were healed: though neither does he affirm, as do Matthew and Luke, that all were in fact healed. There is a certain heightening between Mark on the one hand, and Matthew and Luke on the other, of the miraculous element: see below on the story of Jairus's daughter (5³⁹), and on the ministry at Nazareth (6⁵). We can therefore be the more confident that in Mark's Gospel we have the plain unexaggerated record of an eye-witness who tried to relate the facts just as he had experienced them.

because they knew him (1²⁴, 3¹¹). Even the witness of the evil spirits had its value, as arresting attention and challenging to reflection about Jesus. But it was only valid, as the evidence from the miracles was only valid, up to that point: our Lord wanted men to think for themselves, and to believe in Him because of the claim which His whole teaching and character and personality made on them.

RV's marginal addition 'to be Christ' is a good example of the extent to which even the best MSS. succumb to the temptation of supplementing the text of Mark from parallel passages in Matthew and Luke (here from Lk 4⁴¹).

36. **Simon and they that were with him.** Possibly still only the three called with him, Andrew, James, and John: more probably a larger group intermediate between the first four and the 'many disciples' of 2¹⁵.

38. **the next towns (AV and RV).** Rather 'the neighbouring country towns': Mark uses a rare word, literally 'village-cities,' intermediate between ordinary villages and a big town like Capernaum.

came I forth: that is, from Capernaum, cf. 3⁵. Capernaum was our Lord's headquarters, and from it He made missionary excursions through Galilee, returning always to it, 2¹, 3¹⁹, 5²¹ (6³⁰), and probably 7¹: not till 7²⁴ does He definitely move away beyond the Galilean district. Mark does not mean (though Luke so interprets him, 4⁴³) 'came forth from God,' a Johannine phrase (Jn 8⁴², 13³) quite alien alike from the straightforward literalness of Mark's style and from the stage reached by our Lord's

self-disclosure at this part of the Gospel.

39. he went into their synagogues . . . preaching, RV wrongly: AV rightly *he preached* [more literally *was preaching*] in their synagogues. The reading followed by RV is an attempt to regularize the use of the preposition 'into,' which Mark often uses for 'in.' See note on 1⁹ in the Jordan.

40. and kneeling down to him: a characteristically Marcan redundancy (after 'beseeching him'), omitted, whether because it was redundant or because it expressed a rather violent emotion, by some good MSS. of Mark here, and by Matthew and Luke in copying Mk 10¹⁷. We must remember that the Jews did not kneel but stood in prayer (11²⁶).

41. being moved with compassion. Read, with codex Bezae and two Old Latin MSS., *being moved with anger*: for (1) it is inconceivable that any scribe should have substituted 'anger' for 'compassion,' while the converse is intelligible enough; (2) the word mistranslated 'strictly' [margin 'sternly'], 'charged him' in 4³, and 'murmured against her' in 14⁶, means literally 'to snort with anger' (see Souter's *Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, s.v. 'to groan,' 'to express indignant displeasure'); (3) Matthew and Luke, who otherwise follow Mark in this episode rather closely, have nothing parallel either to the verb of 4¹ or to that of 4³, and the motive for omission at both points is doubtless the same, namely the avoidance of anything which clashed with the portrait of Jesus as the second Christian generation tended to picture Him. Compare 3⁵, where Mark's 'with anger' disappears from the other two accounts.

Why, then, was our Lord angry? The answer must probably be found in the leper's words in 4⁰, 'If thou wilt, thou canst . . .' To doubts of His power our Lord was very tender (9^{22, 23}): the leper had no doubt of His power, but was uncertain of His will, to heal. Now to acknowledge His power but doubt His good-will, was in germ the same temper as that of the scribes from Jerusalem, who admitted His power but denied that it came from God. So if Jesus could, but would not, heal, His mission could not come from the all-merciful God; if then the leper regarded Him as a wonder-worker, exercising His power at caprice, our Lord may well have been indignant at such a fundamental misconception.

44. for a testimony unto them. The

same phrase in 6¹¹ and 13⁹, in both of which places AV renders 'for a testimony against them.' The cure of the leper would be a sign to the priests that a new and beneficent power was present in their midst, and if they either neglected the sign, or wilfully referred a good work to an evil origin, would be a 'testimony against them.'

45. into a city RV: margin and AV *into the city*. The reference is certainly to Capernaum: the article is omitted in the Greek, just as we omit it in talking of going 'up to town,' meaning London, or as an Eton boy talks of going 'down town' to Windsor. By a similar idiom 'in [the] house' of 2¹ means simply 'indoors.'

desert places: rather perhaps *the open country*. There was no desert, strictly speaking, on the west side of the lake.

II. 2. he spake the word. We cannot easily distinguish in our language the ordinary Greek word for 'to say' or 'speak,' and the less common word used, here and frequently elsewhere by Mark, which rather indicates informal and familiar converse. 'Talked' is sometimes the best equivalent for it.

the word: that is, 'the message' of the good news. 'To preach the Word,' 'the ministry of the Word' are phrases so ingrained in Christian language that it is difficult to realize that at first it was a special and technical password, so to say, as much so as 'the Way' or 'the Brethren' (cf. 4^{14, 33}).

4. uncovered the roof: that is, mounted by the external stair to the flat house-top (cf. 13¹⁵) and from there made a hole through.

the bed, literally 'pallet' or 'shake-down': Mark, whose Greek is that of the common people, uses a non-literary word, which passed also into vernacular Latin as *grabatus*. It was something that could be easily carried about (6⁵⁵; Jn 5⁸; Ac 5¹⁵).

5. See on 1⁰.

7. one, even God RV: AV *God only* rightly, and so the phrase should be rendered (against both our versions) in 10¹⁸.

8. perceiving in his spirit: equivalent to 'perceiving in himself' (5³⁰), 'spirit' meaning His human spirit, as in 8¹⁴ (and cf. 14³⁸): but neither Matthew nor Luke repeats this use.

9. Whether is easier . . . Nothing is more characteristic of our Lord's method of teaching as recorded by Mark than His habit of propounding questions,

or answering question by question: e.g. 2¹⁹, 3³³, 10¹⁸, 11^{29, 30}, 12³⁵. Not all these questions admitted of immediate answer: their point was to provoke searchings of heart.

10. **the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.** 'The Son of man' is in Mark the normal phrase used by our Lord in reference to Himself from the confession at Caesarea Philippi onwards: before that central moment only here and 2²⁸. It cannot be *simply* equivalent to Messiah, or our Lord could not have asked His disciples 'Whom do ye say that I the Son of man am' in 8^{27, 29}. But still less can it be simply equivalent to 'a son of man,' or the claim to forgive sins as a son of man would have been rightly held to be preposterous. Clearly in this passage it connotes one who though Man has definite authority and mission from God. And if that authority includes the forgiveness of sins in the earthly sphere, then the commission entrusted to Jesus was different in kind, and not merely in degree, from the commission of any prophet. Our Lord, that is to say, is already, in this first stage of His Ministry, challenging the attention of men with the assertion of some quite unique claim. In substance, that means the claim to be God's special representative for the establishment of His Kingdom on earth: that is, to be Messiah. In terms, it takes the form of an insistent demand that those to whom He speaks should face the problem who and what He must be who can claim to forgive sins, and can so far establish His claim that He can cure a paralytic for his faith with a command to rise and walk. If He could do this, then they had in the end two alternatives to choose between, either that His power to heal came from God or that it came from Beelzebub. If it came from God, as He asserted, then the presumption followed that His further claim in the moral sphere was also valid; for God would not have given the power to do mighty works to one who made a claim which if not true was blasphemous. His hearers were not prepared to choose definitely either alternative. But they accepted the fact of the cure, and 'glorified God' (12) for it as for something beyond the range of their experience. They had taken the first step: and perhaps our Lord did not expect more from them on the spur of the moment. It remained to be seen whether they would advance further on the road on which He was leading them.

13. **the sea side:** that is, of course, as throughout Mark, the 'sea of Galilee.'

14. **Levi the son of Alphæus.** Not mentioned again in Mark, and therefore apparently not identified by Mark (or by Lk 5²⁷), as he is in the parallel story in Mt 9⁹, with the Matthew who occurs in the list of the Twelve (3¹⁸). On the other hand, as this Levi is the only disciple whose call is mentioned by name besides the four chief Apostles, it is reasonable to conjecture that he too became one of the Twelve, and he was presumably brother of 'James the son of Alphæus.' See further on the list of the Twelve (3¹⁶⁻¹⁹).

at the place of toll RV, 'at the receipt of custom' AV. Better perhaps *in the custom-house*. Capernaum was on the Great Road from Mesopotamia to Egypt, so that much merchandise would pass through it.

15. **as he sat at meat.** Our Lord did not disdain social intercourse, even when, as on this occasion, the company was large and mixed: cf. Mk 14⁵ = Jn 12²; Lk 7³⁶, 11^{27, 38}, 14^{1, 7, 12}.

publicans and sinners. 'Publicans' (our rendering is derived from the Latin *publicani*) were civil servants in the employ of the government: but what is meant by 'sinners'? We must exclude the technical sense of 'Gentiles'—which is certainly the meaning in 14⁴¹ (cf. 10³³), as in Gal 2¹⁵—if only because, had our Lord eaten with Gentiles from the beginning of His Ministry, St. Peter could not have held the language of Ac 10²⁸. We must exclude also the other technical sense of Lk 7²⁷, which there is nothing at all in the phrase or the context to suggest here. Probably it covers any who did not come up to the Pharisaic standard of observance of the Law. Its modern counterpart might be 'non-churchgoers.'

for there were many, and they followed him. 'Many publicans' or 'many disciples'? Undoubtedly the latter: it is the first time that Mark has used the word 'disciples,' and he means to call attention to the fact that 'Simon and his companions' of 1³⁶ have now grown into a body of 'disciples'—'learners' at the feet of a 'master' or Rabbi—and that they were beginning to go about with Jesus. The words are an explanatory parenthesis quite after Mark's manner.

16. **He eateth RV; margin with AV 'How is it that he eateth?'** In fact, we have here one of Mark's vulgarisms, the use of the indirect for the direct interrogative, and we ought to translate simply *Why eateth He?* The same use recurs in 9¹¹ and 9²⁸; in both cases RV text

makes the clause a statement, AV with RVm rightly a question. It has to be recognized that Mark did not write classical or literary Greek, and it is useless to try and translate him as though he did. This particular usage recurs in other Greek Christian writers of a non-literary type, such as Barnabas and Hermas.

17. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners: rather *not to call righteous men but sinful men*: My ministry is directed to just such people as you think outsiders, rather than to those who are confident that, because they have scrupulously observed all the external details of the Law, they have attained righteousness. 'As touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless' (Phil 3⁶).

18. were fasting RV rightly: it was a fast-day, that is to say, perhaps only one of the weekly fasts (Lk 18¹²), but we cannot tell. they came: not John's disciples, nor those of the Pharisees, but 'people came.' Mark is fond of this impersonal plural: see on 3²¹.

19. the sons of the bride-chamber: as we should say, 'the groomsmen.'

20. in that day RV rightly. It is more than likely that the *Pascha*, that is, the annual commemoration of the Resurrection with a fast immediately preceding it, was when Mark wrote already in regular use in the Christian communities. Tertullian definitely connects the Paschal fast with the Gospel saying: 'those days they hold to be marked out for fasts "in which the bridegroom was taken away."' Probably the earliest custom of this fast confined it to a single day preceding the Easter festival; and this would account for the singular in Mark. If this verse was spoken by our Lord in this connexion and on this occasion, it is the earliest anticipation of the Passion. We cannot dogmatize on such a matter: but there is no other indication that at this stage of the Ministry the End was definitely before His mind. It is possible therefore that the qualification of ¹⁹ by ²⁰ is due to St. Peter, perhaps on the basis of other later words of Christ.

21, 22. The connexion of thought with ¹⁹ appears to be that the Kingdom, of which our Lord's mission was to announce the coming, must have its own principles and its own rules, so entirely was it to supersede the existing Jewish polity. In one sense Christianity was a development, in another it was a revolution. Our Lord's teaching contained both elements: the kingdom of heaven is like the householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old. In Matthew's Gospel we have

emphasis on the fulfilment of the old in the new: in Mark's record of Peter's preaching to Gentile Christians at Rome we have the stress on the incompatibility of Judaism and Christianity, on the bursting of the ancient bottles by the seething of the new wine.

21. that which should fill it up: literally 'the fulness,' a word only used by Mark here and of the fragments that filled the baskets in 6⁴³ and 8²⁰. In all three cases 'complement' expresses the exact sense.

22. they put: if the preceding clause is bracketed as a parenthesis, no insertion such as 'they put' is necessary.

23. to pluck the ears of corn: it was therefore towards harvest-time, April to June. As there is no reason to doubt that the order of events in Mark is in substance chronological, we have here a first spring, in 6³⁹ 'upon the green grass' (cf. Jn 6⁴ 'the passover was at hand') a second spring, and at the final passover a third spring: it follows that according to Mark the Ministry extended over some two years. With this result the three passovers in Jn (2¹³, 6⁴, 12¹) tally exactly. The Gospel of Luke, taken by itself, might suggest, and in ancient times perhaps did suggest, a Ministry of only one year (Lk 9⁵¹, 4¹⁹): but the more precise evidence of Mark and John seems decisive.

24. why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? The Mosaic Law, more liberal than some modern enactments *in pari materia*, allowed the passer-by to take toll as he walked of ripe grapes or ears of standing corn (Dt 23^{24, 25}). But the rule of Sabbath rest overrode even the necessities of harvest-time, and reaping on the Sabbath was forbidden (Ex 34²¹). Now, argued the Pharisaic interpreters—on the system of 'setting a hedge to the Law'—plucking ears of corn is a sort of reaping, and is therefore unlawful on the Sabbath.

25. Our Lord in answer cites a case where a rule of the Law as to the shewbread, confining the use of it to the priests (Lev 24⁹), was broken for sufficient cause by David (1 S 21^{5, 6}): and He goes on to get behind the rule to the principle underlying it. Even so fundamental a rule as that of the Sabbath was not an end in itself, but was intended to secure a proper proportion of rest from labour, and leisure for things other than and beyond labour. It was for man's good: and if the good of man was really furthered by violating it, then a lesser law was broken in order to keep a higher. Both in the case of His disciples and in the

case of David, the higher law was that of man's necessary bodily needs. See further illustrations of this in 3², 7¹⁰⁻¹².

26. when Abiathar was high priest. According to our Old Testament text (1 S 21¹) not Abiathar but Ahimelech his father was high priest at the time. It may be a case of a variant in the Old Testament tradition: it may be a pure slip of memory on the part of the evangelist (cf. Mk 1²). That Matthew and Luke agree in omitting the note of time is not in the least likely to be due to their detection of the supposed mistake: it is habitual with both of them to leave out everything, including details of time and place, that seemed superfluous.

which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests. Probably not part of our Lord's words, but a parenthesis inserted after Mark's manner to supply to his Roman readers the information necessary to enable them to see the point of the analogy.

28. so that the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath. 'So that' RV: AV better 'Therefore': better still perhaps *Thus*. If the institution of the Sabbath was given for man's good, then the Man whom God had sent to be the instrument of setting up His visible kingdom upon earth and establishing His reign of righteousness, man's highest good, must needs have authority over the means and methods by which that good is to be attained. Note that in all our Lord's references to the Decalogue (7²³, 10¹⁹, 12²⁹⁻³¹, and parallels in Matthew and Luke) the Fourth Commandment is never even by implication cited or alluded to. It is, in fact, set aside for Christians.

even of the sabbath. If this is the right rendering, the idea is that the Sabbath is the most fundamental element of all the Old Testament legislation. But if we translate 'of the Sabbath also,' we may rather refer back to the previous mention of the 'Son of Man' and of His 'authority to remit sins' (2¹⁰).

III. 2. And they watched him. Taking this with 6, it looks as though the whole episode was arranged by the Pharisees, whose prejudices had already on two occasions been aroused against our Lord (2^{16, 24}), as a test case, in order that if He publicly violated their rules of what might lawfully be done on the Sabbath, they might proceed to consider the taking of definite measures against Him. The distinction drawn by the Rabbis appears to have been that on the Sabbath relief might only be given to a sufferer in case of danger to life: where

no prejudicial consequences would follow on delay, the cure must be postponed. As in 2²⁵ our Lord takes the matter back to the fundamental purposes of the Sabbath. Was the doing of a good act inconsistent with those purposes or no?

4. to do good or to do harm? To save a life or to kill? It is over-subtle to see in the double form of these questions a reference to the evil intent which the Pharisees had in their minds against our Lord: the antithesis is rather between commission and omission—not to do a good act when you can is in effect to do ill; not to save life when the opportunity offers is really to kill.

5. at the hardening of their heart RV: AV 'hardness,' with the marginal alternative *blindness*. The corresponding verb occurs also in 6⁵², 8¹⁷, in both cases of the inability of the Apostles to grasp the significance of miraculous deeds of our Lord, and both our versions render on each occasion 'hardened.' But 'hardness of heart' is quite out of place in regard to the attitude of the disciples. They were 'slow of heart': they showed no quickness of spiritual apprehension: they learnt only line by line, and little by little: they were not responsive, they were unintelligent and stupid—Mark's Gospel especially emphasizes this defect of the Apostles—but that is a different thing from moral 'hardness,' the result of wilful shutting out of the truth. Jerome, the greatest of all translators of the Bible, rightly gives *cacitatelem*, 'blindness.' See J. A. Robinson's conclusive note in his *Commentary on Ephesians*, 4¹⁸. Here, then, what grieves our Lord is the stupidity of any interpretation of the Divine Law which results in the discouragement of good actions, as though the Author of all good could possibly have meant to forbid the doing of good.

6. It must of course be remembered that even St. Peter was not a first-hand authority for the proceedings of our Lord's opponents in the same sense as he was for our Lord's own sayings and doings. He could only judge from hearsay and by results: and he may perhaps in this instance, with the close of the Gospel story in view, have over-emphasized the hostile intention of the opposition to our Lord. It is clear, however, that we have come to the point when the religious leaders of the people in Galilee definitely reject the appeal and the claim of Jesus. It is the first overt sign of the failure of His mission. The Pharisees, good men in the main, who as a school of thought

had done great service to the cause of religion among the Jews by maintaining the sacred traditions of Israel against the infiltration of a paganizing culture, and by spiritualizing at the same time the Jew's hopes and expectations of the future, had experienced the common fate of so many religious movements when the original glow has died away into a monotonous repetition of shibboleths which have no longer any spiritual reality. It is fair to balance the impression of them which the Gospels leave on us by the qualifying testimony of the Acts and St. Paul. They were throughout much nearer to the Christian point of view than were the Sadducees. But they had in our Lord's time quite lost the sense of proportion: and the sense of proportion is for theologians of all times and all countries the most valuable thing, and the thing most easily lost. The 'mint and anise and cummin' of the observance of the smallest details of the Law, and of their own interpretations of the Law, had come to mean more to them than the things for which the whole Old Testament stood, 'judgement and mercy and faith.' So in spite of the large measure of agreement between their religious ideas and those which were embodied in the teaching of our Lord, they reject His message. To them the Sabbath—the observance of which had of course been one of the tests of a faithful Jew in the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes—was not only itself an *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*, but had come to be fenced about with a multitude of explanatory rules, all of which acquired similar sanctity with the original institution: and because our Lord seemed to them to profane the Sabbath, they ally themselves with the other Jewish party in Galilee (there were practically no Sadducees outside Jerusalem), and held a common meeting with them (the same noun as in 15¹) to compass measures for putting an end to His work (see 186b).

straightway with the Herodians took counsel RV. Quite impossible as English: no doubt it is the order of the Greek, but no two languages, not even Greek and Latin, have the same rules for the order of words: render therefore with AV *took counsel with the Herodians*.

Herodians: only mentioned in the New Testament here and 12¹³ (=Mt 22¹⁶), both times in conjunction with the Pharisees. *Herodiani*, a formation like *christiani*, 'partisans of Herod,' that is, of the dynasty of Herod the Great; of whose sons Herod Antipas still ruled

Galilee and Herod Philip Ituræa and Trachonitis (Lk 3¹)—that is, except Judæa, which was under direct Roman rule after A.D. 6, the whole of Jewish Palestine. The Pharisees, a party independent of the government, joined forces with the government party in order that the secular power might be called in to deal with Jesus. Herod might be more willing than a Roman governor to imprison or put to death a recalcitrant Jew whose activities the religious leaders wished to suppress.

7. he withdrew, from the opposition which was being organized against Him in Capernaum, to the lake-side somewhere away from the town (cf. Mt 10²³).

a great multitude from Galilee followed: and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon RV. 'Followed' (with the stop after it) should be omitted: the true text of Mark enumerates in a single group the constituent parts of the 'great multitude.' Obviously a not inconsiderable period has elapsed since the commencement of the Ministry, to allow time for the spread of our Lord's fame to these districts outside, some of them a long way from, Galilee. Except Idumæa, all the districts named were actually visited later on by our Lord: Tyre (7²⁴), Tyre and Sidon (7³¹), Judæa and beyond Jordan (10¹), Jerusalem (10³², 11¹).

11. whenever they beheld him RV: AV better *when they saw him*, for the Greek particle here used, though it properly means 'whenever,' in Marcan usage ordinarily means 'when.' In fourteen cases out of twenty repeated action is quite excluded (good examples are 9⁹, 13¹⁴, 14²⁶), and RV itself translates 'when': for 11¹⁹, which really falls into the same category, see *ad loc.*: in most of the remaining five cases, 'when' suits as well as or better than 'whenever.' So here: though more than one occurrence is implied, there is no sort of suggestion of the idea 'as often as.'

11. Thou art the Son of God. As the introductory section of the Gospel contained at its close the Witness of the Father to the Sonship of Jesus, so this first section of the Ministry ends with the witness of the powers of evil. It remained only that man should come to the realization of the same truth: Mark's Gospel is the description of the slow processes by which the Apostles arrived at it. But it was not our Lord's purpose that men should be, so to say, dragged into it by the example of unclean spirits. That witness was to remain unpublished.

fell down before him. Here and in 5⁶ the attitude of prostration on the part of the spirits, the acknowledgement of the presence of a superior power, corresponds to the confession 'Son of God.'

III. 13-VIII. 30. The Ministry of Jesus, second section (see on 1¹⁴): the separation of a small company of disciples to be the special companions of Jesus and His assistants in His missionary work: the result of their training is the confession of His Messiahship.

Our Lord's appeal to His people as a whole had failed, at least in so far that their religious leaders had seen its implications and had rejected it, though the multitude lent Him still a willing ear. But the multitude, while they acknowledged Him as a prophet, still showed no signs of rising to a completer recognition. And therefore our Lord finds Himself compelled, while still continuing His popular mission, and indeed extending it through His new associates, to choose from among His disciples a small number of those whom He judged most fit to receive a more intensive training, and most capable of responding to it and of rising to a true apprehension of His message and Himself.

13. the mountain RV, and it is true that the definite article is present in Greek. But for all that AV *a mountain* is a better rendering, for it gives the right sense. Mark in fact does not mean a particular mountain: 'the mountain' here is not the same as 'the mountain' of 5¹¹ or 6⁴⁶ on the other side of the lake: he just means 'the hill-country,' 'the hills,' as opposed to the lake-side of 3⁷.

calleth unto him whom he himself would: and they went unto him. And he appointed twelve. Mark does not mean that Jesus made a preliminary choice of a number of disciples, and then reduced them further to twelve: with his usual fondness for redundancy of expression, he says the same thing in two ways, adding on the second occasion the exact number.

he himself RV: AV *He*. As in 3¹¹, we have to do with a Greek word which RV renders according to its classical use, AV according to English idiom. The truth is that in Mark's degenerate Greek many words have lost something of their full meaning, and this among them: generally 'he' is the only possible rendering (1⁸, 5⁴⁰, 6⁴⁷, 8²⁹, 14⁴³), and in the remaining cases, here and 4³⁸, 6⁴⁵, it is the better rendering. The closest equivalent would be our use of the capital letter to denote 'the Master,' 'He.' In

this verse its place at the end of the Greek sentence shows that it cannot be as emphatic as 'he himself.'

16-19. The list of the Twelve is given in four books of the New Testament: Mk 3¹⁶; Mt 10²; Lk 6¹⁴; Ac 1¹³. Naturally the lists given in Luke and Acts are (apart from the substitution of Matthias for Judas) identical. And for eleven out of the twelve names all our lists tally: what is unexpected and disconcerting is the large measure of variation about the twelfth. Where the two Lucan lists read 'Judas (son or brother) of James,' Mark has Thaddæus with a variant Lebbæus, and in Matthew the authorities are divided between Lebbæus, Thaddæus, and 'Lebbæus who was surnamed Thaddæus.' The third Matthæan reading is obviously a later combination of the two earlier readings 'Lebbæus' and 'Thaddæus': we are left therefore in both Matthew and Mark with these two variants. Three further points are to be noted which may help us to a decision. (1) Mk 14¹⁰ 'Judas Iscariot the one of the twelve' may perhaps mean (see note *ad loc.*) to distinguish the traitor from the Judas who was not of the Twelve. (2) Mk 2¹⁴ suggests (see *ad loc.*) that 'Levi the son of Alphæus' would be one of the Twelve, yet not identical with Matthew. (3) Early Christian tradition spoke of Thaddæus (in connection with the story of Abgar of Edessa, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, i, 13) not as one of the Twelve, but as one of the Seventy. Now, if we could identify Levi with Lebbæus (Origen, *contra Celsum*, i, 62, speaks of 'Lebes' the publican, and seems to make the identification in question), we might solve most of the difficulties by reading in Mark 'James the son of Alphæus and Lebbæus,' Levi the son of Alphæus being thus named among the Twelve immediately after his (presumably elder) brother James. The alternative seems to be the accidental omission in Mark (or in an early copy of Mark from which all our extant MSS. derive) of one name: and in fact the lately discovered 5th century MS. of the Gospels known as W does omit both the variants Lebbæus and Thaddæus. In that case the original may have run, 'James [and Levi] the son of Alphæus.'

16. and Simon he surnamed Peter. Jn 1⁴² connects the name Cephas (the original Aramaic form of Petros, 'the stone') with the call of Simon, Mt 16¹⁸ apparently with the confession 'Thou art the Christ' (in 10² he only says 'Simon, he who is called Peter'): but Mark definitely associates the new name with the

appointment of St. Peter as first among the Twelve, for he always uses 'Simon' up to this point, and always uses 'Peter' afterwards. The one exception, 14³⁷ 'he saith to Peter, Simon, sleepest thou?' is no real exception, for our Lord is never recorded as addressing the Apostle by any but his original name (Mt 16¹⁷, 17²⁵; Lk 22³¹; Jn 21^{15, 16, 17}), save in Lk 22³⁴.

18. **Simon the Cananaean** (RV rightly, both in Mark and Matthew): that is 'the zealot,' as Lk 6¹⁵ translates it. He had belonged to the party of the 'zealots,' or nationalists at all costs, like the Fascisti of Italy.

21. **his friends**, but AVm 'his kinsmen': the one too vague, the other too definite; the Greek is equivalent to the schoolboy phrase 'his people.'

for they said, **He is beside himself**. Who 'said'? Not his family: it is another of Mark's impersonal plurals (see 2¹⁸), and here the distinction is all-important: the common talk of Capernaum reaches the ears of the family at Nazareth, and they hurry down to look into matters on the spot. Good examples of this use are 2¹⁸, 3³², 5³⁵, 6¹⁴ (see note there), 10² (see note), 14¹ (see note), 14¹². It is especially common in the form 'they were saying,' and the best way of rendering the phrase is often to turn it into an English passive, as indeed Luke not infrequently does in the Greek.

22. **the scribes which came down from Jerusalem**. Probably the first step of the local scribes and Pharisees when they determined to take measures against our Lord (3⁶) was to send for support to headquarters at Jerusalem (cf. 7¹¹). The emissaries from Jerusalem at once proceed to bring things, theologically speaking, to a head. The facts, they found, were undeniable: incurable diseases had been cured, evil spirits had been cast out: a new power was at work, and either its source was good—and, God being the only source of good, Jesus was therefore a prophet sent from God—or its source was evil. They did not shrink from the alternative.

Beelzebub . . . the prince of the devils. All Greek and all early Latin authorities give Beelzebub: our versions derive their 'Beelzebub' from the Vulgate, and Jerome altered the original form to 'Beelzebub' because he referred the name, no doubt rightly, to 2 K 1^{2, 5}, where the Hebrew has Baal-zebub, 'God of flies.' Whether the change to -zebub meant a change in meaning is at best doubtful.

23. **in parables**. not in the strict sense of 'comparison' or 'illustrative

story,' as 4², etc., but as we should say 'in figurative language,' as 7¹⁷.

27. Jesus had invaded the dominion of the 'strong man' and despoiled him of the men whom he had enslaved. In doing this, He had shown Himself stronger than the strong, and master of Satan.

28. **blasphemies**. The Greek word means properly 'slanders' and is so used in 7²²: but in the next verse and in 2⁷, 14⁶⁴, it is used in the technical Jewish sense that it bears with us, of speaking evil not against men, but against God. Here it is not so easy to say: Lk 12¹⁰ contrasts 'blasphemy against the Holy Ghost' with 'speaking a word against the Son of Man,' and if 'against the Son of Man' is the original form of the saying rather than Mark's 'to the sons of men,' then 'blasphemies' against Him would naturally mean 'slanders,' and the word must be used with a different connotation in the two verses.

29. **blaspheme against the Holy Spirit** is to attribute what you know in your heart and conscience to be good deeds to any other source than the prompting of the Spirit of the Holy God. To say that good is evil and evil good, when you know that it is not, is the one unforgivable sin. To deny Christ, to call Him a fanatic or a self-deceiver or a lunatic, all these things will be forgiven to those who are expressing their honest convictions; to deny the presence of moral goodness when you have been trained, as the Law trained the Jew—and *a fortiori* as the Christian dispensation has trained the Christian—to know what it is, is a far worse thing. Persecutors do not necessarily incur this censure: but too many of them, Christian as well as Jewish and Pagan, may have done so.

hath never forgiveness: more literally 'hath not forgiveness for ever.' Important authorities, Greek and Latin, omit the words 'for ever,' and they may have been originally a marginal gloss on the difficult phrase that follows.

guilty of an eternal sin RV: AV 'in danger of eternal damnation.' The first word, thus variously rendered in our versions, meant in classical Greek 'liable to,' though sometimes, as time went on, it came to be equivalent to 'guilty': Mark only uses it elsewhere in 14⁶⁴ 'liable to death,' i.e. guilty of the charge laid against him, a charge to which the death-penalty was attached. The RV phrase has too much finality about it: but it is not easy to suggest a better; perhaps 'under the burden of': Matthew and Luke found the same difficulty as we

do, and both omit. 'Eternal sin': the underlying thought may be 'a sin of the world to come,' i.e. a sin beyond the range of the Son of Man's 'authority on earth to forgive sins' (2¹⁰).

31. And there came his mother and his brethren. It is over-subtle to suppose that the interval between ²¹ and ³¹ is meant to cover the interval between leaving Nazareth and arriving at Capernaum. Rather, the allusion to the popular idea that He was 'beside Himself' leads Mark at once to the graver assertion about Him that He 'had an unclean spirit': and after speaking of that, he reverts to the visit of His family.

33. Who is my mother and my brethren? There is no reason at all to represent the Mother of Jesus as inimical on Mark's showing to His mission. She heard the common report about Him, and with a mother's anxiety she thought that over-work was the cause, and came, escorted by His 'brethren' (see on 6³), to take Him, by the pressure of a parent's authority, home to rest. But His work had to be done at all costs, and not even a mother may interfere with the call that comes to a man for his work in life. And in the new society of the disciples, they who have left all for Christ's sake and the Gospel's will find not only other human relationships but 'mothers' as well (10³⁰).

IV. 1. sat in the sea: it is not surprising that neither Matthew nor Luke retain this naive description of Mark's, and it would perhaps be permissible to render 'embarked in a boat and sat there on the sea.'

2. in parables. The parables in our Lord's teaching as recorded by Mark are lessons to be learnt from some familiar event in the life of men in the world around. The parables are normally intended to emphasize one point, and one only: the accessories are necessary to the story if it is to be life-like, but at best are subordinate in the application. Thus in the parable of the Sower the essential idea is that the seed is all good, but that for its development everything depends on the ground on which it falls: possibly our Lord points to some sower within view, to birds at work, or to stones and weeds in different corners of the field that is being sown, but these are just illustrative details. The lesson is that the Gospel is offered equally to all within whose reach it comes, but that all depends on the temper in which it is received. God cannot save men against their will.

3. the sower RV: AV with English idiom *a sower*. Greek, having no in-

definite article, is bound to use the definite article for a representative of a class.

4-8. some . . . other . . . other . . . others RV rightly, if ungracefully. As told both in Matthew, who has four plurals, and Luke, who has four singulars, the parable gives a little bit the impression that the fruitful seed bore only a small proportion to the rest. Any such impression is absent from the text of Mark, who has three singulars of the categories of unfruitful seed, and a plural, subdivided into three classes, of the fruitful seed, and there is therefore in his story no suggestion of disproportion between fruitful and unfruitful seed.

8 (and 20). thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold RV, probably rightly, taking the Greek word used with the respective numerals as the preposition 'in' = 'at the rate of.' AV, with the Vulgate, taking it as the neuter of 'one,' renders 'some thirty and some sixty . . .'

10. they that were about him with the twelve. The Twelve are already a separate group, but only gradually become the dominating or even exclusive company round Jesus: here we have a transitional state of things.

11. is given the mystery: Matthew (true text) 'is it given to know the mystery,' Luke 'is it given to know the mysteries.' 'The mystery' (here only in the Gospels) is the secret reserved for the initiated, and the 'mystery of the Kingdom' is the secret purpose of God from the beginning to found in Jesus a new Kingdom which should transform and supersede the Old Covenant; and that secret is now shared with those who are initiated into fellowship with Jesus, but hidden still from 'them that are without.' The word was regularly used in the Greek of our Lord's day: the 'mystery-religions' are those of which the votaries were admitted by a rite of initiation to a new knowledge, associated as a rule with a doctrine of redemption and salvation. In Christian Greek it came to be appropriated, in the plural, to the sacraments, whether because the outward rites had an inward and hidden meaning, or because the rites themselves were hidden from all but the faithful: but this use of the word is later than the New Testament.

unto them that are without (cf. note on 2^{21, 22}: both Matthew and Luke soften the phrase) 'all things are done in parables.' To those not initiated into the central secret, the full message is not delivered. They are given teaching 'in parables,' that is, teaching which it is not beyond

their power, if they are willing to take the trouble, to interpret and assimilate: but if they do not respond to that, the further stages must remain sealed to them.

12. that seeing they may see, and not perceive . . . lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them. A difficult saying, and to some a rock of stumbling, so that it is suggested that it is a comment, and an unintelligent and mistaken comment, of the evangelist's. For such a suggestion there is no ground save the *a priori* ground of reluctance to admit that the saying is our Lord's: and though in the last resort 'the spiritual man' must 'judge all things,' our first duty is to take the record as it stands—the Gospels are after all the only source of our knowledge of our Lord's teaching—and see whether we cannot proceed some way at least towards understanding it. (1) The words are a quotation from Is 6⁹: and (apart from the introductory verses of the Gospel) all Old Testament citations in Mark are made by our Lord Himself (7⁶, 10⁶, 12¹⁰, 28²⁸, 29²⁹, 36³⁶, 14²⁷). (2) 'That' (= 'in order that'), introducing the citation, may fairly be taken to mean 'in order that the prophecy may be fulfilled.' (3) The parallelism of 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear' with ¹² 'hearing they may hear, and not understand,' is so close that the two phrases must obviously be understood in relation to one another—the prophecy is adduced as a commentary on the saying. Our Lord's message, in order to fructify, requires a fruitful ground: it will fall barren unless there are willing ears to receive it, and the parable itself implies that in numerous cases the word will find unresponsive hearts.

Our Lord of course cannot mean, and there is no reason why a careful exegesis should make Him out to mean, that God intended or desired that the Jewish people should reject the appeal of Jesus. But they had, in fact, proved in the main unresponsive. Their leaders in Galilee had plotted His undoing, and those from Jerusalem had involved themselves in the one irremissible sin. The multitude were willing to take His benefits, His present wonderful cures, and any prospect of His future leadership of a political upheaval, but they had not shown themselves, apart from a small minority of followers, willing to give anything in return. They must have the chance of hearing God's message: so only could the great dividing-line be drawn between faith and unbelief: but by this time our Lord has the sense of failure already beginning to

cast its shadow over Him, and He feels that though they may see outwardly they will not in fact perceive, and though they may hear outwardly they will not make the effort to understand. After all, had not the Prophets foretold it all? Therefore somehow or another even this 'great refusal' on the part of Israel must have its place in God's eternal purpose. Chapters 10 and 11 of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans are the best comment on this verse and its problem, and in them assuredly the Apostle had 'the mind of Christ.'

14. the word, and again in 17.²⁰ See above on 2².

20. thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. The Fathers explain the different numbers as different classes, in order of excellence, in the Christian body. In early times the most usual interpretation was to take 'thirty' of the mass of Christians, 'sixty' of those who for the Gospel's sake renounced marriage, and 'a hundred' of the martyrs. That is to crystallize the distinctions too much: there are three numbers signifying different degrees of responsiveness to the Gospel as there are three types of failure, but they are not to be too closely pressed.

21. the bushel, that is, the pan or measure containing a bushel—or rather, since the *modius* (the Latin word is transliterated in the Greek) is much smaller than a bushel, a 'peck' or couple of gallons.

22. nothing hid save that it should be manifested. The ultimate end of the 'mystery of the Kingdom of God,' which our Lord had so far imparted to His disciples only, was that it should be made known to all. It was not meant only for a chosen few: all were to be invited to initiation into this 'mystery,' and in so far as they refused, or did not show enough interest to respond actively to the invitation, the Gospel of the Kingdom was a failure. Our Lord does not seem ever in terms to have indicated the supersession of the Jewish Church by a Gentile Church, but He used language which undoubtedly points in that direction: and in view of His growing consciousness of His rejection by the chosen people, there seems no reason at all to think that the evangelists have ascribed to Him language which He did not in substance actually employ, acquiring definiteness as the story of the Ministry develops (cf. 2²¹, 7¹⁹, 12⁹).

24. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you: a proverbial saying used by our Lord with a more direct

and limited application in Mt 7², but extended to a new meaning here by the addition 'and more shall be given unto you.' It is those who listen to what they hear and apprehend it who will be introduced to higher knowledge: the measure of their reception is the measure of further and further gifts. But those who do not employ the gifts they have will lose the capacity to do so, just as an organ of the body becomes atrophied by disuse. The Jew in whom God's education by the Law and Prophets and the history of Israel had provoked no thirst for a higher knowledge lost all the advantage so far given him.

26-29. A parable peculiar to Mark: Luke omits it entirely, Matthew replaces it by the parable of the Good Seed and the Tares (13²⁴⁻³⁰).

The point of the two short parables which now follow in Mark, the Seed growing secretly and the grain of Mustard, is to describe two complementary characteristics of the fruitful seed, the multiplication of which was the climax of the parable of the Sower—the first its secret growth in its early stages, followed by a steady and relentless advance to its perfection; the other the contrast of its tiny beginnings with the splendour of its maturity when every rival is dwarfed by the side of it. Whatever dressing minor details of a parable may have received in the recollections of St. Peter or in the setting down on paper by the evangelist, these ideas are the very point of the two similitudes, and therefore it does not seem easy to deny that our Lord looked forward to the triumphant spread of His Church upon earth.

27. night and day. So Lk 2³⁷, and so always St. Paul. The natural order is 'day and night': but as the Jews (and possibly the early Greeks) reckoned the beginning of the twenty-four hours' day from sunset, the order 'night and day' was less unnatural to them than it would be to us.

29. is ripe. The marginal rendering in RV 'alloweth' is the only meaning of which the Greek word is properly capable.

30-32. Luke has this parable in another setting (13^{18, 19}) and derived it from another source: Matthew combines the other source with Mark's version. The only important variation is that while Mark says the mustard plant becomes greater than all 'herbs,' the other source, less correctly, said that 'it became a tree.'

33. as they were able to hear it. Again Mark emphasizes the scope and

purpose of parabolic teaching: it is elementary, in that one point can be taken at a time and its meaning digested; but its interpretation makes some demand on the intelligence and goodwill of the hearer, and therefore it is a test of capacity for further instruction.

34. he expounded all things. That is, 'he interpreted': 'giving preference over the multitudes to those who were eagerly desirous of his wisdom' (Origen, quoted by Swete).

35. unto the other side: the east side of the lake, outside Galilee, where the country was wilder and, especially at the northern end opposite Capernaum, less thickly inhabited—more suitable therefore for rest and quiet (cf. 6^{31, 32}).

36. they take him with them. Again the story in Mark is told from the point of view of Jesus' companions. See on 1²¹.

38. Master. The Greek word, 'Teacher,' is the literal translation of the Aramaic 'Rabbi,' which was doubtless the title by which the 'disciples' habitually addressed their 'Master.' So in Mark 'Rabbi' (9⁵, 11²¹, 14⁴⁵), its Greek equivalent here and 10³⁵, 13¹, and (by our Lord of Himself) 14¹⁴. But neither Matthew nor Luke ever uses either the Aramaic or Greek word in direct address from disciples to our Lord—the only exception is significant (Mt 26⁴⁹), by Judas Iscariot—for to the second Christian generation so common a form of address seemed inadequate from disciples to their Lord. The 4th Gospel habitually uses Rabbi, whether with or without the Greek interpretation: another sign, not indeed of an earlier date, but of the preservation in it of some more primitive traits than in Matthew and Luke.

carest thou not that we perish? St. Peter faithfully recollects, and Mark repeats, the naive remonstrances of the disciples where our Lord's action or words seemed to them unreasonable (cf. 5³¹, 6³⁷). By later writers like Matthew and Luke, to whom the Apostles had come to be, as Apostles, above criticism, all such language is dropped or modified.

40, 41. have ye not yet faith? . . . Who then is this? Our Lord's mighty works were, at least in part, challenges to faith (cf. 8^{17, 21}): who must he be, who could so command the elements or feed the multitudes? And the Apostles on this occasion propound the problem to themselves. That was the first stage: but they were still far from a definite grasp of even so much of the answer as is reached in St. Peter's confession (8²⁸).

V. 1. into the county of the Gera-

senes, RV rightly. AV has 'Gadarenes' in Mark and Luke, 'Gergesenes' in Matthew (Lk 8²⁶; Mt 8²⁸): RV 'Gadarenes' in Matthew, 'Gerasenes' in Mark and Luke, with marginal variants in Luke 'Gergesenes' and 'Gadarenes.' Both Gerasa and Gadara are well-known towns of the 'Decapolis' (for which see on ²⁰), but Gadara is six miles south-east from the south end of the lake, Gerasa thirty miles in the same direction. Gerasa at least is therefore out of the question as the scene of the event, yet it is almost certainly the true reading in Mark and Luke (it is given in both cases by the MSS. B D and the Old Latins): Matthew, probably from acquaintance with Palestinian geography, substitutes the much nearer town Gadara. Origen (and following him Jerome), with knowledge of all three readings, decides definitely for 'Gergesenes,' stating that Gergesa was 'an ancient city by the lake now called Tiberias, by which is a cliff overhanging the lake, from which they show that the swine were cast down by the devils.' The reading Gergesa then originated from a suggestion of local patriotism, in the days when the sacred sites of the Gospels first began to be matter of discussion, perhaps about A.D. 200, and, being supported by the great authority of Origen, made its way into texts influenced by him, such as codex Sinaiticus. It may not improbably be a true correction of an original error. Gerasa and Gergesa are so similar that either Peter or Mark may easily have made the confusion, especially as Gerasa was a town so large and important (its ruins are at this moment about to be explored) that its name would be familiar.

2-20. All possible difficulties seem concentrated in this story of the demoniac. In every respect it stands by itself. Its setting is weird and solitary. It is unique in its phraseology (see notes on 'Son of the Most High God,' ¹⁹ 'the Lord'), unique in the command to the man healed to proclaim his cure to all and sundry, unique in the number 'a legion' attributed to the evil spirits, unique above all in the strange episode of the herd of swine. No critic can presume to solve all the difficulties: certain considerations can be suggested, certain solutions can be put aside.

In the first place, then, the story in its main outlines must be accepted: it is not historical criticism, but subjective and arbitrary method, to take what we like in the Gospel record and reject what upsets our prepossessions. There was a

demoniac 'possessed' in an unusual degree; there was a remarkable cure at our Lord's mere word: there was an access of sudden terror in a large herd of swine resulting in a wild rush down into the lake. So much at least seems sober fact.

In the second place, the question whether the background of the story is Jewish or heathen has a real bearing on the problem. The 'Decapolis,' as its very name suggests, was a group of some ten Greek city-foundations, and the demoniac belonged to the Decapolis (²⁰). Swine were of course an abomination to the Jews, as now to Mohammedans, and the presence of so large a herd of them would be inconceivable in any fully Jewish district, and unlikely anywhere where Jews were predominant. The phrases 'the Most High God' and 'the Lord' are both normal in Jewish language, but the fact remains that neither is used elsewhere in Mark. The command to proclaim the cure, in contrast to the habitual insistence in other cases on silence, is more easily explained if the man's associations were wholly alien to the sphere of our Lord's Ministry. The balance of evidence, then, points strongly to Gentile surroundings.

No one who has heard a missionary from Africa, equipped with all the presuppositions of European culture, testify to the reality of the presence and strength of the powers of evil when African heathenism is brought into contact with the message of Christ, can deal quite lightly with the possibility of a concentration of the 'legion' of 'unclean spirits,' if this was really the occasion when our Lord first came in contact with the vast empire of heathenism that ringed the country of the chosen people.

There remains of course the difficulty of the destruction of the swine: and it is a difficulty. That the herd was seized with a common instinct of terror and perished in consequence seems certain. It is another illustration of our changed attitude to the infallibility of the Bible record that we should like to think that Mark is in error in connecting their destruction with anything said or willed by our Lord. Perhaps that is the true solution. We have not much direct evidence of our Lord's attitude to the animal creation. Yet his references to beasts and birds and flowers are full of sympathy: not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father, and we cannot imagine Him asking with St. Paul, 'Doth God care for oxen?' He may indeed have shared with His fellow-countrymen an instinctive dislike of the pig as a symbol of uncleanness—though

even that is difficult to think for us who realize that Christians may not call any meats common (Ac 10¹⁴⁻¹⁵), and our Lord Himself 'cleansed all meats' (Mk 7¹⁹)—and He did not shrink from the cursing of the fig-tree. But at least we may note that He only 'suffered' the entry of the 'unclean spirits' into the unclean animals: and it may be, in view of 5³⁰, that the effort of putting out His power into the supreme struggle with evil forces for the possession of the demoniac had exhausted His human spirit for the moment, so that He could not but 'suffer' them. We are perhaps on surer ground in believing that the loss of the herd weighed as nothing in comparison with the rescue of one single human being.

6. worshipped him: of the outward act, just as with the Roman soldiers in 15¹⁹; the Greek word is used only in these two places in Mark.

7. Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God: as in 3¹¹, but with the addition of the name Jesus, and of the adjective 'Most High' to God. 'Most High' as a title for God is common in the Old Testament, but is found only rarely in the New Testament—outside Luke and Acts, only in Heb 7¹. In Ac 16¹⁷ it is used, as here, by one possessed with a spirit: 'these men are servants of the Most High God,' and the phrase occurs on pagan inscriptions. Mark never puts it in the mouth of a Jew: contrast, e.g. 14⁶¹ 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' Thus it seems here to be an indication of heathen language.

torment me not: cf. 1²⁴ 'Thou art come to destroy us.'

9. Legion: from the Latin *legio*, which was not only current in transliterated form in Greek, as here, but even in Aramaic as well. We have only to remind ourselves how many of our own military terms are of French origin: Imperial Rome and France set the model of organized standing armies for the ancient and the modern world. A legion consisted at full strength of 6,000 men, and so corresponded in numbers rather to a brigade than to a regiment.

10. he besought him much that he would not send them out of the country. This and the preceding verse are a welter of confusion between singular and plural, but the parallel in Lk 8³¹ shows that the plural 'them' was what he read in Mark, and it is clearly the spirits who did not want to be expelled from their district. They had to give up the man to our Lord's power, but they were eager to retain some territorial influence, were

it only over the animal creation. That at least is the implication of the story as Mark recorded it for us.

13. about two thousand. Mark is fond of numbers: St. Peter as he spoke to his converts visualized his experiences, and the numbers, here and elsewhere, are in keeping with the other details which are characteristic of Mark's Gospel. Matthew and Luke (save where the numbers enhance the wonder of our Lord's miracles, as in the Feeding of the multitude) habitually omit numbers, especially where they are large (cf. Mk 6³⁷, 14⁵: note that in these two instances John retains them). Matthew and Luke write as historians, and the rhetorical training of the time was adverse to such precision in historical writing. In this case, too, they may have thought the figure exaggerated: and in fact St. Peter's estimate of the multitude in 6⁴⁴ is larger by a thousand than the estimate in the parallel account of what seems to be the same miracle (see note on 8¹) in 8⁹.

17. they began to beseech him to depart from their borders, RV (AV 'coasts,' and so too 7³⁴, 10¹: 'coasts' is no doubt now misleading, but 'borders' is hardly less so: in the plural, the only New Testament use, it means 'district' or 'territory,' like the Latin 'fines': see on 7³¹). We can hardly wonder: to them the cure of a mere maniac was of less importance than the security of their property. And our Lord at once consented: if they were heathen, His mission was not primarily to them. Even the demoniac, perhaps just because he was not a Jew, is not allowed to accompany Him, but is bidden to spread the news of his cure, to be in fact a sort of missionary, in his own heathen district—another indication that our Lord's ultimate vision reached now beyond His immediate work among His own people.

19. the Lord: not found in Mark (apart from Old Testament quotations) either of God, save 13²⁰, where the Greek is, however, without the article, or of Christ, save 11³, where see note. Here it certainly means God: but the unusual phrase cannot be disconnected from the other unusual features of this first occasion of contact on our Lord's part with the heathen world.

20. in the Decapolis: that is, in the Greek settlements, city-foundations of the times of the Greek Seleucid kings of Syria, for the most part east of Jordan, which fell under Jewish rule in the era of the Jewish conquests, and at the break-up of the dominions of Herod the Great

fell to the share of his son Herod Philip: Philip ruled from his father's death in 4 B.C. till A.D. 34. See on 3⁶.

22. one of the rulers of the *synagogue*, *Jairus* by name. In Lk 13¹⁴ we read of 'the ruler of the synagogue,' in Ac 13¹⁵ of 'the rulers of the synagogue': the number doubtless depended on the size and importance of the place and the congregation, just as our churches and parishes differ in their staff from one another. The ruler's name is given, we may suppose, because he belonged to that synagogue which was attended by our Lord and His Apostles when in Capernaum.

23. My little daughter. The diminutive is peculiar to Mark (again in 7²⁵), and was no doubt regarded by Matthew and Luke as non-literary, and below the dignity of history. Mark is fond of such formations: 'little girl' in 5^{41, 42}, 6^{22, 28}, 'little sandals' in 6⁹, 'little dogs' and 'little morsels' in 7^{27, 28}, 'little fishes' in 8⁷, 'little ear' in 14⁴⁷. Most of these words are late Greek and colloquial: Luke retains no one of them, Matthew sometimes retains, sometimes changes. Note that we owe to Mark all the four miracles of physical healing which our Lord is recorded to have worked on women: Peter's wife's mother, Jairus's daughter, the woman with hæmorrhage, and the Syro-phœnician woman's daughter.

made whole RV, with margin 'saved,' AV 'be healed.' The Greek verb and nouns which very early came to be technical in Christian Greek for 'save,' 'saviour,' and 'salvation' meant originally 'save from death,' 'preserver,' and 'deliverance,' and in the medical writers 'recover,' 'recovery' of illness. In John (save only on the lips of the disciples, 11¹² of Lazarus, 'if he has fallen asleep, he will recover'), in the Pauline Epistles, and largely in the Lucan books, we have the metaphorical sense—though no doubt that is derived from the other sense, i.e. 'preserved in the day of the Lord's judgement': in the Synoptic Gospels, and sporadically in Acts (4^{12, 14}, 27^{20, 31}), the literal sense, but of all New Testament books most definitely in Mark. Once only, 10²⁶ 'Who then can be saved?' is the Pauline sense demanded, and as it is hardly probable that the disciples would at so early a date have been employing the language of 'salvation,' it is possible that that is a case of the influence on Mark of Pauline terms. But normally in Mark the verb (he does not use either of the nouns) means 'to deliver,' or in the miracles of healing 'to cure': so certainly here and in 5^{29, 34}, 6⁵⁶, 10⁵⁹, 13²⁰.

29. plague RV, with marginal note 'Gr. scourge.' Mark alone in the New Testament uses the word absolutely of disease (3¹⁰, 5^{29, 34}): Luke once, but in combination with the ordinary word for sickness (7²¹). Possibly it is one of Mark's Latinisms, as a literal rendering of *flagellum*.

30. that the power proceeding from him had gone forth RV: a pedantic rendering, from which common sense or instinct saved AV, *that virtue had gone out of him*. What Mark meant by his rather awkward phrase was presumably 'the issue of force from him'; but the Greek past participle enabled him to imply that the thing had happened and was not happening still.

31. See note on 4³⁸. Here Matthew omits, and Luke modifies, the remonstrance of the disciples.

36. not heeding the word spoken RV, with margin *overhearing*. The latter is of course right, for our Lord did 'heed the word spoken' and answered it: and clearly Lk 8⁵⁰ so understood Mark. It may be that the Greek verb means in the LXX 'to take no heed of,' but Mark was not in the least a student of the LXX, quotes it on his own account only once (1^{3, 3}), and then makes a blunder in his reference. It is much more to the point that the two first meanings given to the verb in Liddell and Scott are 'to hear accidentally,' 'to overhear,' with accusative of the thing, and genitive of the person, overheard. Aristophanes, Plato, and Lucian are good enough authorities, and the sense is just what is wanted. The servants do not bawl out their news, but give it semi-privately to their master, and our Lord 'overhears the message' as it is being delivered.

37, 38. he suffered no man to follow with him, save . . . And they come to the house: note that in Mark's account the multitude is dismissed, not when they come to the house (as Lk 8⁶¹), but before a start is made for the house.

37. Peter and James and John. Here first these three alone: perhaps they were acquainted with Jairus. Even among the Twelve a few are chosen out for closer intimacy (9², 13³, 14⁸³).

39. the child is not dead, but sleepest. The Greek word here used for sleep is not that used in Jn 11¹¹⁻¹⁴: the latter can be used, and is used both in classical and Christian Greek, of the sleep of death, and from it is derived *cæmeterium*, 'cemetery'; the former means natural sleep, and that only (cf. Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary* s.v.). There is

nothing in Mark's story to show that the girl was dead (though apparently both Luke and Matthew did so interpret it), and if he had meant that she was actually dead he would surely have made his meaning clear. If we could read Mark's narrative uninfluenced by prepossessions drawn from our knowledge of Matthew and Luke, we should naturally conclude that what was taken by those who sent the message to be death our Lord knew to be not death but coma.

VI. 1. Our Lord leaves the shore of the lake to teach among the villages, and first in His own home Nazareth (1⁹), in the hill country some twenty-five miles distant from Capernaum. Only here and in 2¹⁵ are the disciples said to be 'following' our Lord, and we ought probably to take the word quite literally: later on the Twelve form one company with our Lord, but here a larger number, perhaps a much larger number, is straggling after Him at intervals.

2. As at Capernaum (1²²), in the Decapolis (7³⁷), and at Jerusalem (11¹⁸), the result of Jesus' teaching and miracles was a general feeling of 'amazement' ('astonished' of AV and RV is not in our modern use of it a strong enough word): everywhere else than at Nazareth this amazement implied at least respect, if not more, but on the stage of His own earlier life it only issued in disparaging comments on His upbringing and His surroundings. He had lived as an artisan by manual labour: His brothers could be counted by name, and doubtless still made their livelihood in the same or a similar way. The words of wisdom, the deeds of power, with which common report credited Him, seemed impressive enough: but instead of feeling any pride that a fellow-townsmen had made so great a mark in the larger centres of population round them, they felt that they knew too much about His origins to regard Him as anything more than what they had known Him all along to be.

3. the carpenter: so the pagan philosopher Celsus in the 2nd century mocked at Jesus as a carpenter, and the pagan orator Libanius in the 4th asked 'What is the carpenter's son doing just now?' But God 'chose the weak things of the world.' It is true that manual labour was not regarded among the Jews as a thing derogatory in itself (cf. St. Paul's case, Ac 18³); but a teacher of religion should 'have little business, and be busied in the Law,' and Jesus had worked regularly at His trade.

the son of Mary: obviously Joseph was dead.

brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon. 'Brother' in what sense? (1) In the same sense that He was 'son of Mary,' i.e. that James and the rest were sons of Joseph and Mary, and younger brothers of our Lord? (2) In the same sense that He is called son of Joseph in Matthew and Luke, i.e. that they were sons of Joseph and a former wife, and elder 'putative' brothers of our Lord? (3) In the sense that brother is loosely used for cousin, i.e. that they were really blood-relations of our Lord, being sons of another Mary, sister to the Blessed Virgin and wife of Alphaeus (identified with Clopas), and therefore His first cousins? This third view was an invention of St. Jerome's, and a very ingenious one: but it was never heard of before him. (4) In the sense that the 'brethren' were putative cousins of our Lord on Joseph's side, being sons of 'Mary the mother of James and Joses' (Mk 15⁴⁰), and her husband Clopas (Jn 19²⁵)? The 2nd-century writer Hegesippus (as cited by Eus., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii, 11; 32, §§ 3, 4) tells us that Clopas was brother of Joseph and that the Symeon who was chosen as a relation of our Lord's to be bishop of Jerusalem after the death of James was his son. This theory, propounded by Dom John Chapman, is even more ingenious than St. Jerome's, for it combines in a very simple way a good many historical data. But neither the James and Joses of Mk 15⁴⁰, nor Symeon the bishop, are called 'brothers' of the Lord, nor are we any nearer to a sufficient ground for cousins being known as brothers. On the whole problem see the note appended to the commentary on the Epistle of James. The two first views can both claim support in early tradition, but neither of them in tradition so early as to be decisive on that ground alone. This passage in St. Mark contributes nothing either way, save the impression suggested by 4: see note there.

James is 'brother of the Lord' in Gal 1¹⁹: Judas is 'brother of James' in Jude 1; compare the story of his grandsons being brought before Domitian as members of the royal house of David, which Eusebius (*H.E.*, iii, 20) derived from Hegesippus—even Domitian could not regard the horny-handed countrymen hailed before him as potential rivals. Of Joses (Joseph) and Simon we know nothing.

4. among his own kin. According to Jn 7³⁻⁵ neither did his brethren believe

on him,' though James at least was a believer at the time of the Resurrection (1 Cor 15⁷), and apparently the others also (Ac 1²⁴). If our Lord was younger than His brothers (see on 8), we can more easily understand their early attitude (cf. 1 S 16⁶⁻¹³, 17²⁸).

5. he could do there no mighty work AV and RV rightly. When Mark relates the inability of the disciples to cast out the dumb spirit (9^{17, 18}), he uses a different and stronger word, rightly rendered 'were not able' in RV. Here the word is the ordinary Greek for 'to be able,' which in Mark has got weakened down to an auxiliary like our 'can' and 'could.' It was not a physical inability to work cures, but a moral inability to cure without faith on the part of the recipient. So 9³⁸ 'could easily speak ill of me.'

5. laid his hands: cf. 5²³, 7³², where our Lord is begged to 'lay his hand' or 'hands' for healing on Jairus's daughter and on the man who was deaf and dumb. It was the regular outward sign of benediction in the Old Testament, and the regular outward sign of every sacramental rite in the early Church (see Gore, *Church and Ministry*, note G, edition of 1919, 341 ff.), of course with the accompaniment of prayer.

6b-13. he went round about the villages teaching: alone for the last time in Galilee, for the Twelve are now sent in pairs to begin the work for which He had appointed them (3^{14, 15}). They had been with Him, they return to Him (6³⁰), and they were, it seems, continuously with Him from 8¹ onwards to the close of the Ministry: but here He sends them out 'on their own,' so to say, to develop the work of His mission to their Galilæan fellow-countrymen, and to gain an experience which would be a training for wider journeys in the future.

8, 9. They were to take poverty as their pride in as literal a sense as that in which St. Francis, after the example of the Master, sent out the first Franciscans as missionaries: without food or receptacle for food, without even copper coins for money, without more than one *chiton* (contrast the use of the plural in the case of Caiaphas; see note on 14⁶³), with nothing but wooden sandals for foot-gear—Roman readers would easily have understood *sandalia* as excluding boots or shoes—and carrying nothing but a walking-stick.

10. house, and ¹¹ place. Mark's report of our Lord's charge to the Twelve is strictly germane to the mission to the villages of Galilee. Both the other

Synoptists give a more general scope to their report, and introduce 'cities.'

10. unto them: that is, 'against them,' as in 13⁹: see on 1⁴⁴.

12. repent: as our Lord had preached repentance (1¹⁵).

13. anointed with oil: the only place in the Gospels (save in Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan, 10³⁴) where the use of oil for the sick is mentioned, but compare, of course, Jas 5^{14, 15}, which gives doubtless a close parallel to the method of the Twelve in their acts of healing.

14. king Herod: see note on 'Herodians,' 3⁶. This Herod, the only one of his name mentioned in Mark, was Herod Antipas, who on the partition of the dominions of his father Herod the Great after the latter's death in 4 B.C. had been allotted the lordship of Galilee with the title of 'tetrarch' (cf. Lk 3¹), that is, literally, 'ruler of a fourth part' of the Herodian kingdom. Mark only uses of him the title 'king,' Luke only 'tetrarch,' Matthew both the one and the other: and perhaps local usage, reflected in Peter's story, and doubtless Herod himself (cf. 6²³), preferred the more honorific title. But the Roman government would certainly not have recognized it: it was by special grant from the Emperor Caligula in A.D. 37 that Herod Agrippa I (the Herod of Ac 12) enjoyed the title; and when Herod Antipas thereupon asked that he too might be made 'king,' he not only failed in his object, but was deposed and banished.

Herod's seat of government was at Tiberias on the lake of Gennesaret, some way south of Capernaum. Our Lord's work and growing reputation at the latter place may probably enough have reached his ears: but Mark's introduction of his name at this particular point may be presumed to mean that it was the beginnings of an organized movement in the mission of the Twelve which aroused the attention and perhaps the alarm of Herod. The evangelist's curiously 'objective' record gives us the facts in proper succession, but leaves us to find out the connexion between them. It can hardly be accidental that after this mention of Herod's knowledge about our Lord, the scene of the Ministry begins to shift more and more outside the domain of Galilee. Neither the eastern shore of the lake (6³²), nor Bethsaida (6⁴⁵, 8²²), nor Tyre (7²⁴), nor Decapolis (7³¹), nor Casarea Philippi (8²⁷), was within the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas.

he said: the true reading is that given

in RVm *they said*, with a few, but those the best, Greek and Latin authorities; and this is clearly what Luke (9⁷) found before him in Mark's text. Mark first notes three alternative popular explanations: John the Baptizer *redivivus*, or Elijah *redivivus*, or a new prophet of the type of the older prophets: and then Herod's choice between them.

16-29. Herod's identification of Jesus with John, whom he had against his conscience, as later on Pilate in the case of our Lord, condemned to death, leads to the belated narrative of his relations with John. Nothing was told us in 1¹⁴ save the bare fact of John's arrest, lest attention should be diverted from the central theme of the Gospel. Here, as it were by an afterthought, the story is given in full, in order to account for Herod's ideas about Christ. And it is of course possible that the actual execution of John had not preceded by any long interval the point at which Mark's story has now arrived.

17. Herodias his brother Philip's wife. Herod Philip the tetrarch (Lk 3¹) married later on the *daughter* of Herodias: but the brother whose wife Herodias was is nowhere called Philip save in this passage: Lk 3¹⁹ certainly, and Mt 14³ probably, omit the name. It is simplest to suppose that Mark or his informant confused Herodias's husband and son-in-law.

20. observed AV: rather *preserved*, as in effect RV.

much perplexed RV rightly: Mark is very fond of using the neuter plural 'many things' adverbially, and the verb 'perplexed,' hitherto known only in three MSS., all of one group, is now reinforced by the two newly discovered Greek uncial MSS. W and Θ, representing quite a different type of text.

heard him gladly: the phrase in our modern English use is too emphatic; rather *liked to listen to him* (cf. on 12³⁷).

21. birthday, or perhaps more probably *accession-day*: *dies natalis* was so used of the anniversary of the accession of an emperor or of the consecration of a bishop or pope. The guests fall into the three classes, high civil officials, high military officials, and unofficial persons of importance.

22. the daughter of Herodias. Our authorities are hopelessly mixed as to the words used to describe the relationship of this girl: and no doubt Mark or Peter may have blundered, for they would have felt very little interest in the relationships and intermarriages of the Herodian family.

From other sources we know that Herodias had by her real husband a daughter named Salome.

25. on a charger: on a dish, as though it were one of the courses at the banquet.

27. a soldier of his guard RV: 'an executioner' AV. Mark transliterates a Latin word *speculator*, which, starting from the more general meaning, came to be technically used in the restricted sense of AV: compare e.g. the Acts of St. Cyprian, *cæpit spiculatorem sustinere*.

30-34. The Return of the Apostles, and the retreat across the lake.

30. the apostles: here only in Mark, and presumably in the literal sense 'those who had been sent forth as missionaries,' the corresponding verb 'to send forth' having been used in 6⁷ and 3¹⁴. Elsewhere Mark only uses, from 3¹⁴ onwards, 'the Twelve': on 'the Twelve' and 'the disciples' see note on 9³⁶.

31. ye yourselves: that is, just yourselves and nobody else.

rest awhile: our Lord's consecration for us all, recorded by Mark alone, of holiday after work.

coming and going: see note on 14²¹.

they had no leisure so much as to eat, exactly as 3²⁰. Mark, recording the experiences of a disciple, includes this very human touch, which the other Synoptists no doubt regarded as below the dignity of history.

32. in the boat (the boat or ship which they kept in regular use), and therefore to the other side of the lake: see on 4⁸⁵.

33. Capernaum was close to the north end of the lake; and from the direction the boat was taking, it seemed that it would be possible to hurry round even on foot and anticipate the boat on its arrival. It may be assumed that the conditions were not favourable for the boat to make a quick passage.

34. came forth: rather *came out* (AV) of the boat, as ².

as sheep not having a shepherd: cf. Ezek 34² ff.

35-44. The miraculous Feeding of the Five Thousand.

35. when the day was now far spent . . . the day is now far spent: literally, 'the hour is a big one,' Vulgate *hora multa*—i.e. reckoning from sunrise to sunset it was the ninth or tenth hour.

37. The naive question 'are we to go and spend £7 or £8 in buying up loaves?' is characteristically omitted (compare the treatment of the questions in 4³⁸, 5³¹) by the other Synoptists: Jn 6⁵⁻¹³ follows Mark much more closely in some of the

details. For the value of a 'pennyworth' see on 12¹⁶.

39, 40. by companies, in ranks: Mark repeats each word 'companies companies,' 'ranks ranks' to produce the effect he wants; it is not in the least necessary to look to a Semitic origin for this idiom, since we find a similar phrase to describe a precisely similar situation in another Greek document from Christian Rome, *Hermas, Sim.*, viii, 2, § 8 *tagmata tagmata*. No English rendering can reproduce the picturesqueness of Peter's visualization of the scene. Five thousand—even if the number was exaggerated: see on 8⁹—might well seem a number impossible to control: but our Lord was no visionary enthusiast who left such things to take care of themselves. Not confusion but order was always according to His mind: and He directed the disciples to sort out and seat the crowd 'by companies' or *symposia*, that is, literally, the 'parties' of friends who met to have a common feast or *symposium*. So orderly was the arrangement that when the crowd were seated, by hundreds and by fifties, they presented the appearance of the 'beds' in a neatly laid out garden, for that is the proper meaning of the word translated 'ranks.' St. Paul's directions in 1 Cor 14²⁶⁻³² are an admirable commentary, in the ecclesiastical sphere, upon this passage.

39. the green grass: see note on 2³³.

41, 42. And he took the . . . loaves . . . and looking up to heaven he blessed and brake . . . and gave to the disciples . . . and they did all eat. The language is Eucharistic, as comparison with 14²² shows clearly enough: but the resemblance or anticipation is still closer if we adopt there the reading which assimilates 22 to 23 (see *ad loc.*) 'he took a loaf, and when he had blessed it he brake and gave to them: and they did all eat of it,' for in that case there is so far no word at all used at the Last Supper which is not already used here. The groundwork of the action was all familiar: the *differentia* which at the Last Supper marked off the rite to its new meaning lay just in the words 'This is my Body.' The miracle looks on to the Eucharist: the Eucharist was a weekly repetition in the spiritual sphere of the miracle.

41. the disciples RV: *his disciples* AV, probably rightly. It is one of the archaic traits which distinguish St. Mark's Gospel that it speaks normally of 'his disciples,' only very rarely of 'the disciples.' At the time of the Ministry there were disciples of the Baptist, disciples

of the Pharisees, and so on: the disciples of Jesus were not yet 'the disciples.'

43. basketfuls: literally 'the complement of twelve baskets': see on 2²¹.

45-VIII. 26. For the whole of these two chapters there is no real parallel in Luke. If, as seems probable, Luke only came across Mark's Gospel after he had sketched the first draft of his own, the simplest explanation is that he had not room for the whole of Mark's matter.

VI. 45-56. The Return again to the west side: the Walking on the Water.

45. unto the other side to Bethsaida. Strictly speaking, Bethsaida being on the east bank of Jordan, where it enters the lake, was on the same side as the scene of the Feeding; and the Old Syriac version, the translator being probably acquainted with the topography, omits the phrase 'to the other side.' But the Greek does not necessarily mean more than 'across' by water from the north-eastern to the northern shore.

46. the mountain: see on 3¹³.

48. distressed in rowing, RV: better than AV 'toiling,' but not as strong as Mark's word 'tortured'—another instance of metaphorical use which classical Greek would hardly have admitted. We might perhaps in English say 'strained.'

'the fourth watch of the night,' i.e. at 3 a.m.: see note on 13³⁵.

51. Matthew (14²⁸⁻³¹) intercalates here the episode of Peter's joining our Lord on the water, and, whatever may be thought of it on other grounds, no sort of argument can be founded on its absence from Mark's narrative, for that would be quite of a piece with Peter's general self-suppression in this Gospel; cf. for instance the references to Peter in Mt 17²⁴⁻²⁷; Lk 22^{31, 32}; Jn 13²⁴, none of which have any parallel in Mark.

51, 52. Compare the earlier story of the stilling of the storm in 4³⁹⁻⁴¹. Then when 'the wind ceased' (4³⁹) they 'feared with great fear,' now they had no longer fear, but were still 'beyond measure amazed,' though they ought to have grasped the implications of the miraculous feeding of the multitude: they ought to have understood that their Master had from God a power over natural things that no other had, but their spiritual sight was 'dulled' or 'blinded,' Vulgate *obcæcatum*. Not 'hardened': see on 3⁵.

53. Gennesaret. Here only in Mark, and not of the lake, which he calls 'the sea of Galilee' (1¹⁶, 7³¹), but of the plain, south of Capernaum, which gave the lake its alternative name. The 'wind being contrary' (48), they had to make for a

quite other landing-place than they had intended: the stilling of the storm, while it ensured their safety, did not obviate the natural consequences of their being driven out of their course right into the middle of the lake.

55. on their beds : see note on 2⁴.

56. in the market-places RV: if this reading is right, Mark must just mean 'open places,' for strictly speaking the Latin *forum* or Greek *agora* (the word here used) definitely implies a 'city'; the alternative reading, followed by AV, 'in the streets' would be very attractive, if it were not so easy as to look like a correction—perhaps borrowed from Ac 5¹⁸.

touched the border of his garment: cf. 5^{27, 30}.

were made whole: literally 'were saved,' the word being regularly used by Mark of bodily health: see on 5^{23, 13} 20.

VII. 1-23. The Tradition of the Elders: Tradition and Scripture: Inward and Outward Defilement. The section consists of three episodes or discussions, loosely bound together and not necessarily, indeed not probably, belonging all to one occasion. Between them they represent the final stage of our Lord's Galilæan teaching, and the final breach between His conceptions and those of the Pharisees and scribes. While the earlier causes of friction had arisen out of His miracles and, so far as Scripture and tradition went, mainly out of the one subject of the Sabbath, we are now taken to face wider problems of ethics. As in 3²², it is scribes from headquarters at Jerusalem who raise the more fundamental issues.

1-6. The tradition of the elders—or, as we might better represent it to ourselves, the tradition of 'the Fathers,' which is what in this connexion the word *presbyter* means in Jewish and early Christian language—hedged round the precepts of the Law on ceremonial cleanness, as contained in the book of Leviticus, by rules which were meant no doubt primarily to ensure purity after contact with the heathen such as was inevitable in the everyday life of a district like Galilee. These meticulous washings were not wrong in themselves, any more than the customs of polite society are nowadays. Christ did not mean to encourage us to sit down to table with dirty hands: He would not necessarily have denied that 'cleanness is next to godliness': but He did imply that the cultured classes in Palestine at that day, or in the Roman Empire of the early Christian centuries, or among ourselves in the 20th century, might and

did pay disproportionate attention to such external matters and rate them higher than the weightier matters of the Law, judgement and mercy and faith.

2. defiled, literally, with the margin of AV, RV, 'common': a technical Jewish term, as in the story of St. Peter's vision (Ac 10^{14, 15}), but as such unintelligible to Roman readers, and so explained here parenthetically to mean in this connexion 'unwashed.'

3. all the Jews except they wash . . . eat not. Mark's account does not square with what comes to us from Rabbinic sources: compare on 11. But Mark wrote more than a century before the Rabbinic material was put on paper: he was a Jew himself and, though of course an unfavourable witness, he shows at the most critical part of the story, the account of the Passion, no tendency to press his case unfairly: see for instance note on 14⁶⁸⁻⁶⁹. Except on the hypothesis that evangelists are less trustworthy than other people, there seems no ground for rejecting his witness here.

diligently RV: a rendering perhaps chosen to cover either of the two Greek readings: AV 'oft' follows the inferior reading, but not even the Pharisees can have required anyone to wash their hands several times before dinner. The true reading appears to mean literally 'with the fist,' which is not at first sight intelligible: but a passage in the *Lausiac History*—a compilation of stories about the great ascetics of the 4th century, put together by Palladius, the friend and biographer of St. Chrysostom—supplies us with the key. A certain bishop after a journey under a broiling sun began to wash his hands and feet—then comes the word used by St. Mark—in ice-cold water, and was rebuked by a fellow-traveller, Melania, the Roman patrician lady and one-time friend of St. Jerome, who told him that as a true ascetic she never washed more than 'the extremities of her hands'; that is, since strictly speaking the word 'hand' in Greek includes the forearm, in our phraseology 'her hands,' not 'her fingers.' The contrast must therefore be with washing up to the elbows.

4. except they wash themselves . . . 'washings of cups,' with margin 'baptize,' 'baptizings.' Nothing illustrates better the primitive atmosphere of Mark's Gospel than this use of the Greek word which became consecrated to the sacrament of initiation—and which was transliterated into Latin, and from Latin into English and the Romance languages—in a profane or non-technical sense (cf. too 10³⁸).

Small wonder that the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS. substituted 'sprinkling' for 'baptizing'—though there their courage stopped, and they left 'baptisms of cups' alone; it is more wonderful that the mass of MSS. preserved the text faithfully. It assures us that, outside Alexandria at any rate, recension in the sense of conscious and systematic introduction of new readings played practically no part in the transmission of the Gospel text.

from the market-place, i.e. from the *agora* or forum (see on 6⁵⁶); 'the full *agora*' was in Greek a periphrasis for the morning hours, and the meaning here is therefore 'when they come home from business for the midday meal.'

5. Why walk not thy disciples . . . ?

Neither Matthew nor Luke ever uses the verb save in the literal sense: Mark here employs it in the metaphorical sense common in the Epistles, perhaps an indication of his indebtedness to St. Paul.

6-13. Conflict of duties: the sense of proportion. Our Lord challenges the elevation of the 'tradition of the elders'—or in modern language 'Catholic custom'—to the position of a supreme and binding authority. He does not say that it is wrong in itself, or that it has no validity in its own sphere: He does say that it may conflict with a higher law, and that to follow it then is to disobey God. He takes an extreme instance, where one of the Ten Commandments, the simplest primary code of ethics, was 'got round' in the interest of ecclesiastical finance.

7. teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men RV, by no means improving on AV: literally 'teaching as teachings commands of men.' The evangelist certainly wants to put in juxtaposition the two related Greek words, 'commands' of men and 'the commandment' of God.

9. Full well: rather perhaps *Finely*, *Admirably*.

11. 'Corban, that is to say, Given to God': on the principle that as God's service takes precedence of any service to man, gifts to His service are ear-marked as inalienable to any other service. The Rabbinic tradition, as reduced to writing about A.D. 200, is very much nearer to our Lord's teaching than what is here presented to us.* But Mark is the earlier witness (see on 3³), and while it is possible that Rabbis of different localities may have differed in some features of their teaching, it is also possible that the Rabbis receded from a position that successive generations of Jewish Christians

may well have chosen as a favourite ground of attack. Our Lord means more than merely to show what false exegesis can do with the plain letter of Scripture. He implies clearly that natural duties and responsibilities have the first claim: the man who stints himself to give his children a good education is doing his duty better than the man who stints his children's education in order to subscribe largely to church or chapel, even though the subscription is called 'Peter's pence' or by any equivalent name.

14-23. Outward and inward defilement. Our Lord puts in a nutshell, in one of the 'short sharp sayings' in which Justin Martyr describes His method as consisting, the ground of His belittling of the criticism passed by the scribes upon His disciples. His mission was not primarily concerned with the outward behaviour of men, but with a change of heart: if that came about, all else would follow in due course. A man cannot 'be defiled': in the full sense of the word, he can only defile himself. What He meant by that He explains to His disciples, for, as in 6⁵² and 8²¹, they still could not 'understand.'

16. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear RVm, AV: in all probability the words are genuine, as in 4^{9, 23}, and were omitted by one group of authorities in assimilation to the parallel in Mt 15¹¹. As in 4⁹, the words come in between teaching to the multitude and its explanation to the disciples. Only those who listened and wanted to understand were capable of further and higher knowledge.

17. the parable (3²³): see on 4¹⁰.

19. This he said, making all meats clean. For the construction of this verse, as for 1¹⁻⁴, we must have recourse to the Greek Fathers: the true interpretation was lost till it was recovered, not so long ago, from Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and Chrysostom. Grammatically the words go with 'he saith' of 18: it is just an extreme example of Mark's use of parenthesis. The interpretation, whether it is Peter's or Mark's, is a true one: the principle our Lord laid down did imply the ultimate abolition of the Mosaic distinctions between meats clean and unclean, though certainly the disciples did not at the time realize that, nor did Peter as late as the conversion of Cornelius. The marked emphasis in this Gospel on the want of intelligence shown by the disciples must certainly be taken to include blindness on their part to the scope of our Lord's teaching about the ultimate inconsistency of Christianity with the Law,

* But cf. Mt 15¹ n., 164b-165b.—ED.

the new wine with the old bottles. It is possible of course that, when the pregnant meaning of the principles enunciated by Christ had been fully grasped, some elucidating emphasis was added by apostle or evangelist to the expression of them: just as the enumeration of the things that do defile in 22 (see note there) looks as if it may have been expanded under the influence of Pauline vocabulary. But that is all, at the most: the main substance is genuine and original. Our Lord's words were handed down with scrupulous fidelity; very rarely is there any reason to suppose they have been even interpreted, more rarely still that they have been modified. It is well worth while to note how much less change Matthew and Luke, in copying Mark, make in his record of Christ's words than they do in his narrative. That does not exclude improvements in the Greek form: since He spoke in Aramaic, the Greek rendering had no final authority.

21, 22. The list is full of difficulties: but so much at any rate is clear, that we have a group of plural concrete nouns, then a group roughly equal in number of singular abstract nouns, each half of the list apparently ending with a general and comprehensive term. And the plural group is a paraphrase of the second half of the Decalogue, introduced by the 'evil thoughts' which underlie the different evil acts then specified. Further, all our authorities for the text here agree in omitting (in this part of the list) the Ninth Commandment, and agree in duplicating 'fornications' and 'adulteries' for the Seventh Commandment: and the older authorities appear to give the Commandments in the order Seventh, Eighth, Sixth. Compare the similar but even more complicated variations found in the other summary of the Decalogue in 10¹⁹.

wickednesses: rather perhaps *evil deeds* generally.

deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness RV: and so AV with 'blasphemy' in place of 'railing.' These words as a whole suggest the language of the Epistles (St. Paul and 1 Peter) rather than of the Gospels: it may be that Peter (or Mark) is translating the Jewish Decalogue into terms more intelligible and more applicable to Gentile hearers or readers: cf. Gal 5³⁰, Rom 1^{29, 30}, etc.

deceit and lasciviousness are hardly strong enough renderings: it is more like *treachery* and *debauchery*.

an evil eye. Neither Mt 20¹⁸ 'is thine eye evil because I am good?' nor any of

the Old Testament passages which show that 'an evil eye' meant a temper of jealousy, 'looking askance' on another, are adequate parallels. Mark refers, and his Roman readers would have had no difficulty about the reference, to the widespread superstition of the evil eye. St. Paul (Gal 3¹) uses the language metaphorically, no doubt: but Plutarch, when he speaks of 'those who are said to have the eye that can cast spells,' or a modern Italian when he talks of the *jettatura*, are to be taken quite literally. To cast 'the evil eye' over anyone meant something more malignant than mere jealousy.

railing should rather be *slander*, 'speaking evil of others,' that is 'blasphemy' in its original sense: see on 3³⁸. Matthew retains this word only out of the second half of the list; doubtless in the sense of 'blasphemies' as corresponding to the first half of the Decalogue.

foolishness RV, AV, sounds to us an anticlimax for the final term; better *senselessness*: it seems to sum up the list of vicious qualities as coming under the general heading 'want of moral perception,' 'an insensate state of mind.'

VII. 24-X. 52. The Ministry outside the borders of Galilee: Tyre, Decapolis, Bethsaida, Cæsarea Philippi, Peræa, Jericho (to Jerusalem).

VII. 24. And: rather *Now*: Mark uses here the particle of transition which he employs only to denote some important new departure in his narrative: see note on 1¹⁴. He wants to call attention to the moment when Christ first abandoned Galilee and the lake of Galilee as the scene of His Ministry. Capernaum occurs only once again (9³³), and Mark has just before that mentioned (9³⁰) that this last visit to Galilee was being made, so to say, incognito. Perhaps the immediate cause of this journey northwards was to remove Himself quickly from Herod's jurisdiction: when He arrived at Tyre He hoped to escape notice (7³⁴), and it is worth remark that 7²⁴⁻³⁷ is the solitary occasion on which He makes a journey without (so far as Mark's story tells us) the company of disciples.

and Sidon: omit with RVm. The words have come in from Mt 15²¹, who there combines in one the two notices Mk 7^{24, 31}.

26. a Greek: context and New Testament usage make it quite certain that the meaning is, with RVm, a *Gentile*. The woman was by race and of course by language a Syrophenician, in religion a heathen. Our Lord had not gone to non-Jewish districts to preach or teach

(teaching is not again mentioned till 10¹): but His reputation had spread as far back as 3⁸ beyond Palestine, and where He found faith, even among the heathen, He would not refuse to meet it with works of healing (cf. 5²⁻³, 7³¹⁻³⁷).

27. the dogs. Always a term of reproach in the New Testament, and indeed in Eastern writers generally: and though the diminutive form used here and in the parallel in Matthew (not elsewhere in the New Testament) may do something to take the edge off the comparison, yet Mark uses diminutives too regularly (see on 5²³) for us to lay very much stress on this. Our Lord tried to deter the woman: her 'venture of faith' was that even such a comparison did not deter her.

28. *Yea*: should be omitted on good Greek, Latin, and Syriac authority; it is never found elsewhere in Mark, but is common in Matthew and has come in here from the parallel in Mt 15²⁷.

Lord: rather *Sir*. The three later Gospels habitually put the word into the mouth of disciples addressing Jesus, and no doubt they mean by it 'Lord': Luke and John also use 'the Lord' habitually in narrative. But Mark, our earliest Gospel, never uses 'the Lord' in narrative, and never uses the vocative except here. It is not likely that Mark means to attribute to a Gentile anything more than the customary title of respect to a superior, and we should render 'Sir' as both AV and RV do in Jn 4⁴⁹.

29. go thy way. The cure is wrought in answer to the mother's faith; at a distance, without either word or touch, possibly because the recipient was not one of the Chosen People.

30. laid upon the bed: that is, not yet strong enough to walk about (cf. 5⁴³, 9²⁶), but resting peacefully.

31. through Sidon. Since Sidon was some way north of Tyre, our Lord was taking a circuitous route, the motive being probably to give a wide berth to the territory of Antipas. He crossed the Jordan north of the lake and came round to the lake of Galilee on its eastern or even south-eastern shore in the territory of Decapolis (see on 5²⁰).

through the midst of the borders RV: rather *of the district*: see on 5¹⁷.

32. had an impediment in his speech: literally 'barely able to speak.' The word is extraordinarily rare, though found twice in the LXX: but since in Is 35^{5, 6} it occurs with the 'blind,' the 'deaf,' and the 'lame,' and in a papyrus of century 2 A.D. (see Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary* s.v.) with the 'deaf' and the 'toothless,' since

further it is represented in ³⁷ by the 'speechless,' the conclusion seems clear that it is only a late Greek equivalent to 'dumb.'

33, 34. Note how in the later miracles described by St. Mark (cf. especially 8²³⁻²⁵) there is what we may almost call reluctance and even difficulty on the part of our Lord. Certain it is that, as the Ministry draws to its close, miracles become less and less an outstanding feature of His work. Their significance belongs rather to the earliest stage of the Ministry: they challenge men's attention, they mark Him out as Lord and Healer of the body as well of the soul (in Matthew and Luke they are also the sign that the 'acceptable day' of prophecy has come to pass), but they are not His greatest or His ultimate work. Therefore these later miracles tend to be done as far as possible privately (cf. ³⁶, 8^{23, 26}) and almost with effort. 'He sighed' in ³⁴, and again in 8¹², should rather be 'he groaned,' as in Rom 8^{23, 26}: compare the even stronger word of Jn 11^{32, 33}.

Ephphatha: as in 5⁴¹ the actual Aramaic word with which our Lord accomplished the miracle impressed itself on the memory of the hearers: brief and decisive, as in 4³⁹, Jn 11⁴².

37. the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. But there is one category of healing in question, not two: the Greek has only one article for the two words 'deaf' and 'dumb,' and is really equivalent to 'the deaf and dumb to hear and speak.'

VIII. 1-10. The second Feeding of the Multitude. The difficulties in accepting this narrative as independent of the Feeding already recorded in 6³⁴⁻⁴⁴ are serious. (1) While all four Gospels record the first Feeding, Matthew alone supports Mark in the second. If this consideration stood alone, it would not count for very much: for the 4th Gospel takes over no other miracle from Mark, and the 3rd has nothing corresponding to Mark from a much earlier point (6⁴⁵) to a rather later point (8²⁶): but it does not stand alone. (2) The real gravamen is that the accounts of the two miracles are suspiciously like one another, whether in the setting or in the details. If we had met them anywhere but in a Gospel, we should say at once that they were different descriptions of the same event. The variations in the numbers, whether of the loaves, or of the baskets, or of the multitude, are just what we should expect to find between the recollections of two different eye-witnesses. (3) When we

compare the two Feedings verse by verse, we find that the former narrative is full of the dramatic touches that characterize the body of the Gospel—the initiative of the disciples (6³⁵), their criticism of the course proposed by Christ (37), the vivid picture of the grouping of the multitude (39, 40)—while the one we are considering is relatively bare and jejune. (4) 'In those days,' the phrase in 8¹ which introduces the story, almost suggests the advent of intrusive material, so unlike is it to the ordinary run of Mark's narrative: it is used in 1⁹, but there it brings Jesus Himself for the first time on the scene. We are forced to conclude that Mark has mistakenly taken two independent accounts of the same miracle for accounts of two independent miracles, the first being doubtless from Peter, the other from some unknown eye-witness. It does not follow that the second is valueless: the smaller estimate of the numbers present is likely to be nearer the truth, for most of us overestimate in such matters: see on 5¹³.

But out of this conclusion a second problem arises: if this second Feeding is a doublet of the first, derived by Mark from a source other than Peter, does the intrusive or non-Petrine matter extend further backward or further forward in Mark's narrative? Note that each account of Feeding is followed by the recrossing of the lake to the western side, Gennesaret of 6⁵³ corresponding to Magedan or Magdal or Dalmanutha (whichever is the right reading) of 8¹⁰: note also that the intention had originally been to cross not to the western side but to the northern end to Bethsaida (6⁴⁵); and may we not suppose that the arrival at Bethsaida in 8²² was the accomplishment of the original intention? If so, we are back in the Petrine narrative by this point; and we can hardly dissociate the arrival at Bethsaida from the voyage to Bethsaida (8¹³⁻²¹): indeed the introduction of the disciples in 14 without subject expressed is thoroughly Petrine. At the most, then, the non-Petrine source can claim only the two verses 8^{11, 12} of matter that *follows* the second Feeding: of matter that *precedes* it we shall, if our hypothesis has any foundation, be glad to separate by the least possible interval the intention to go to Bethsaida, expressed in Peter's account at 6⁴⁵, from its fulfilment. From 6⁵³ to 7²³ our Lord is on the west side of the lake: at 8¹¹⁻¹³ He leaves the western shore for Bethsaida. The natural deduction is that the intrusive matter is what reaches from 7²⁴ to 8¹⁰

(or possibly 12). It was pointed out on 7²⁴ that there is nothing, from 24 to 37, to show that Christ was accompanied to Tyre and Decapolis by the disciples: nothing, we may now put it, to connect those verses with St. Peter. Tentatively, therefore, it is suggested that from 7²⁴ to 8¹⁰ (or 12) St. Mark has incorporated into the stock of the Petrine recital a group of reminiscences belonging to more or less the same period, derived from some non-Petrine source. Whether his new source or sources were oral or written we cannot say for certain. But the existence of written records in the first Christian generation is nowadays much too lightly assumed: we must bear in mind both the inborn preference of men for oral testimony, and the deep-seated expectation among Christians of the speedy End. If the material came to Mark in written form at all, it was probably put on paper just for the purpose of being used in his Gospel.

2. they continue with me now three days. More probably we should punctuate 'it is now three days: they are attending on me and have nothing to eat.'

5, 8. seven loaves, seven baskets. The number 'seven' is always a little bit suspect wherever there is any trace of variation in the tradition (cf. Mk 10³⁰ 'a hundredfold' = Lk 18³⁰ 'sevenfold'), and one is therefore led to give the preference to the 'five' of 6³⁸.

6, 7. having given thanks, having blessed. Both words are used (though in inverse order) in the Eucharistic narrative of Mt 26^{26, 27} and the ordinary texts of Mk 14^{22, 23}: only the former in St. Paul (1 Cor 11²⁴), only the latter in Mk 6⁴¹ and perhaps in the true text of Mk 14^{22, 23}.

9, 10. he sent them away . . . he entered into the boat with his disciples: rather, with the best authorities Greek and Latin, 'he entered himself into the boat with his disciples.' Comparing 6⁴⁵, it looks as though Mark wished to emphasize a point which helped to distinguish what were in his view two different miracles, namely that in the one case our Lord sent the disciples on while He Himself stayed behind to dismiss the crowd, while in the other He first dismissed the crowd and then embarked, He and His disciples together. As far as it goes, the discrepancy perhaps suggests that Mark's informant here was not one of the Twelve.

10. Dalmanutha. The authorities in Mark are divided between this form and Magedan and Magdala: in Matthew (15³⁹) the earlier authorities have Magedan, the later Magdala. Presumably, whichever name is right, the district

meant is equivalent to the Gennesaret of Mk 6⁵³, and on the west of the lake.

11, 12. The demand for a Sign. Matthew records such a demand on two occasions (12³⁸ ff. and 16¹ ff.): Luke on one (11²⁹ ff.). It is clear that the passage in Luke is parallel to the former passage in Matthew, and that on that occasion a sign was promised, the sign of Jonah; while the present passage of Mark corresponds to the second passage in Matthew, though Matthew to avoid inconsistency with his earlier passage has introduced the sign of Jonah in 16⁴ as well. But the demand for a sign was so natural and so constantly in the background that our Lord may quite probably have refused it on the occasion when it was formally demanded, and yet have referred again later on to the demand on His own initiative—exactly as Luke represents it—and told His hearers that they should indeed have the 'sign of Jonah.'

12. sighed deeply: see on 7⁵⁴.

there shall no sign be given: literally 'if a sign shall be given,' a genuine Hebraism for a solemn form of negative.

14-21. The disciples are 'anxious for the morrow.' They had started, perhaps hurriedly and under pressure, and had not got with them more than a single loaf to be shared between the thirteen. They discussed among themselves this lack of bread: and our Lord remonstrates with them for worrying about it, so soon after they had experienced His power to provide food from God for a multitude so much larger than they were. Once and again (6⁵²) He makes His appeal, the appeal to be answered at last at Cæsarea Philippi, 'Do ye not yet understand who and what your Master is?'

There are two points of difficulty in these verses. (1) The development of the episode, otherwise quite straightforward, is interrupted by an intrusive reference to the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod in 15. 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees' was a Saying of our Lord which is found independently in Lk 12¹: in this setting in Mark it seems best to treat it as purely parenthetical; the discussion about the loaves reminds the evangelist of the Saying about leaven. A modern writer would have put it in a note at the foot of the page. (2) If the account of the Feeding in 8 is only a doublet of the account in 6, then the reference in 20 must necessarily be an addition of the evangelist's: we have to admit that, acting on an erroneous belief that there were two miracles and not one, he has tampered with our Lord's words.

None of us likes having to make such an admission: but we must be honest, and 'follow the argument where it leads,' or how can we expect to be listened to when we press the many reasons for our conviction in the general faithfulness of the record?

22. Bethsaida: see on 6⁴⁵. Not mentioned again in Mark: but Mt 11²¹ = Lk 10¹³ shows that it was one of the chief scenes of our Lord's 'mighty works.' It was in the tetrarchy of Philip, who had given it as its full name Bethsaida Julias, after Augustus's daughter Julia: but it was only just across the Jordan, and therefore close to Galilee and the tetrarchy of Antipas.

22-26. The Healing of the Blind Man: so curiously close are some of the details of the miracle to those of 7³²⁻³³ that it has been suggested that, like the two accounts of the Feeding, they are variant forms of the same story. Such an explanation is in this case not *necessary*; at any rate, the lifelike picture and marked individualism claim this story as part of the Petrine narrative. Nowhere else do we find a miracle described in two stages.

24. I see men, for I behold them as trees walking. If this reading is right, the word translated 'behold' must, on the analogy of 9⁴, 13³⁶, 14⁶², 16⁷, mean something like 'have a vision of' them. But the reading represented by AV, which omits 'for I behold,' is simpler and seems more like Mark's style: if so, the fuller reading was an early attempt at explanation. Perhaps we should suppose that the man had had just enough vision left to enable him to avoid walking into trees: now he sees similar, if smaller, erect objects and sees them moving.

24, 25. After the ordinary verb 'to see,' three forms of the same verb compounded with different prepositions are used in the Greek, which we cannot represent in any corresponding way in English; 'to look up,' 'to look through,' that is 'to see clearly,' and 'to look at' everything, that is 'to command the whole range of vision.'

26. Do not even enter into the village. The earliest authorities are divided between this reading and 'do not tell it even in the village.' The difficulty arose from Mark's habitual use of the preposition 'into' for 'in' (see on 1^{10, 30}): he wrote doubtless 'do not tell it even into the village.'

27-30. The Great Confession of Jesus as Messiah by St. Peter, the consummation and close of the first half of the Ministry. At last our Lord is able to

reap the fruit of the earlier stage of His education of the Twelve: at last their leader and spokesman is able to make the first venture of faith in the recognition of their Master for part at least of what He was, namely the Messiah or Anointed One, whom God had sent in answer to the ever-increasing expectation of the devout among the Jews, to establish His Kingdom in righteousness. It was not all: the proem of Mk 1¹ bids us regard the Gospel as the good news of Jesus not only as Christ but as Son of God: but it is the first stage and the necessary condition of the second.

27. **Cæsarea Philippi:** the ancient Paneas, rebuilt by the tetrarch Philip in honour of the emperor Cæsar Augustus and distinguished from other Cæsareas, especially from Herod the Great's foundation on the coast of Palestine, by the added name of the tetrarch. It lay twenty-five miles to the north of the lake of Galilee, up the Jordan valley, and close to the south-western slope of Mount Hermon. From 8²² to 9³⁰ the scene is laid throughout in Philip's tetrarchy.

28. Repeated from 6^{14, 15}.

30. **he charged them that they should tell no man of him;** exactly as He had charged the unclean spirits in 3^{11, 12} (see note there) after their confession of His divine Sonship. The verb is the same here: it is literally 'rebuked,' and implies at least a severe check on any eagerness they might be showing to spread the great news among the people that the Prophet of Nazareth was indeed no less than the longed-for Messiah. But the time for extensive mission was over, and was to be replaced by an always more intensive education of the Twelve. In the period that remained they were to keep close to Him and to learn what Messiahship meant and involved. Not Galilee but Jerusalem was now the goal.

VIII. 31—The end of the Gospel: second half of the Gospel: Jesus is not only Messiah but Son of God.

VIII. 31-X. 31. Third Section of the Ministry: the further and deeper training of the Twelve in the Christian ideal of sacrifice and service. The higher the call, the more complete must be the renunciation; the Master would set the example, His servants must follow it.

Three times in the space of two chapters, here and in 9^{31, 10^{33, 34}}, our Lord with increasing clearness imparts to His disciples what the future has in store for Him. He whom they have just confessed to be God's Anointed will have no easy victory over the forces that with-

stand the establishment of God's Kingdom. Not as Jewish fancy painted the incoming of Messiah's reign in power: that would come indeed, but only after He had suffered many things and been rejected by His people. He would be victorious: but His death was the condition precedent of His victory.

must suffer: wherever the word is used in this connexion, as in 9¹¹ (13^{7, 10}), Lk 17^{25, 24^{7, 26}}; Ac 17³, the meaning is that the Scriptures 'must' so be fulfilled. That is definitely expressed in Lk 22^{37, 24⁴⁴}; Jn 20⁹; Ac 1¹⁶, in all which cases the same word 'it must be' occurs with a distinct reference to 'the scripture' or 'the things written.'

be killed: so in all three passages and their parallels in Matthew and Luke, save that on the third occasion Matthew (20¹⁹) substitutes 'crucify.' If this prophecy had not been spoken by our Lord but had been put into His mouth by His disciples *ex post facto*, we should inevitably have found the word 'crucified.'

after three days. That is the regular Marcan phrase, only varied by him in 14⁵⁸ 'at an interval of three days' and 15²⁹ 'in three days': and quite similarly he writes in 9² 'after six days' and 14¹ 'after two days.' Our other earliest authority, St. Paul, has (1 Cor 15⁴) 'on the third day'; and that was the phrase which became normal in the Creed and is predominant in the New Testament, especially in the Lucan writings. But Matthew has 'after three days' in 27⁶³: and, in other connexions than the Resurrection, Luke writes similarly in Acts. What interval of time do these two phrases imply, and is it the same or a different interval? Now the unanimity of Christian tradition is really a quite sufficient answer: see in Mark's own Gospel the clear notes of time at 15⁴² (Friday afternoon), 16¹ (Sabbath), 16³ (Sunday morning): but it may be worth while to refer to Field's conclusive argument (*Notes on the Translation of the New Testament*, 11-13). The ancients, both Jews and Greeks, counted in both the first day and the last when reckoning up any interval, just as the French still do in using 'quinze jours' for our 'fortnight.' Therefore 'on the third day' is equivalent to our 'day after to-morrow.' Thus Porphyry writes that 'anyone who comes to stay with you at the close of a day, and starts early on the third day, is said to leave on the third day, though the intervening day was the only day he completed': and in the New Testament we have Lk 13³²; Ac 27^{18, 19}. If we go

on to ask whether 'after three days' means the same thing or no, we do not indeed find the same parallels from Gentile writers, but we have demonstrative proof in the LXX that it does: so Gen 42^{17, 18} 'he put them all together into ward three days, and said to them on the third day . . .', 2 Ch 10^{5, 12} 'Come again unto me after three days. . . . Come to me again the third day.' Even the still stronger phraseology of Mt 12⁴⁰ 'three days and three nights' means really no more; and there is again an appropriate parallel in the Old Testament, Est 4^{16, 5¹}, 'neither eat nor drink three days, night or day, I also and my maidens will fast in like manner . . . on the third day Esther put on her royal apparel.' The Gospels, then, convey by their divergence of phrase no divergence of meaning, but all imply the interval between a late hour on Friday and an early hour on Sunday.

In view of the triple repetition of the phrase (cf. 9³¹, 10³⁴), in view further of the charge brought against Jesus at His trial and crucifixion (14⁵⁶, 15²⁹), it is difficult to refuse the conclusion that our Lord had actually used definite language about the exact interval between His death and His rising again.

32. and he spake the saying (that saying AV) openly. Probably the phrase is meant to lead up to and explain Peter's action in rebuking Christ. Naturally the saying, 'spoken openly,' without periphrasis and apparently without previous preparation, came as a shock to those who had at last made their first great venture of faith in the recognition of Jesus as Messiah. The whole journey to Jerusalem was directed to attune their minds gradually to the new conception of Messiahship. But at this first stage Peter broke out in indignant remonstrance against the novel idea that the Master, whom he had just confessed to be God's Anointed, could fall on such evil days. The episode is recorded precisely because of the public rebuke that followed: like all else in the Gospels that reflects on the Apostles in general or on Peter in particular, like the story of Peter's overzealousness and his subsequent denial, it is the Petrine Gospel that is our ultimate authority for it. Peter had learnt the lesson, inculcated so repeatedly in chapters 8^{31-10⁴⁶}, of true Christian humility. The chief Apostle lays bare the record of his failures as well as of his faith in a way that no other Christian writer would have been likely to do in regard to him.

33. 'turned about,' as in 5³⁰: an emphatic compound, not found in the other

Synoptists, like another compound verb 'looked all round,' which is found six times in Mk, once in Lk, never in Mt (see on 10²³). 'seeing his disciples': apparently it is meant that the rebuke was a public one, before the whole group, and, as the next words seem to imply, accompanied with an emphatic gesture of the hand, 'get away.' Elsewhere in the Gospel 'behind me' is always of 'coming after' Christ: here only of 'going away.' More and more clearly from this point onwards the Twelve are taken up into our Lord's company, as companions rather than followers: see on 9³⁸, 10³²; but that could not be if they represented the spirit of Satan, tempting the Lord away from the path which lay before Him (cf. Mt 4¹⁰).

34-38. A comment on Peter's remonstrance, instructing not the Twelve only but all who would be Christ's followers, that they too must walk in the same path and share in their measure the heavy load which lay on Him. They must 'deny themselves,'³⁴—but not deny Christ,³⁵ as Peter was to do, 14^{30, 31}: they must even 'bear the cross'—as a condemned criminal did on the way to his crucifixion (cf. 15^{20, 21}; Jn 19¹⁷). 'The cross' has become so familiar a phrase to us that it is not easy to picture to ourselves its effect when it first fell on the ears of the disciples. Even in the 'open' prediction of His passion our Lord had spared them that word: it is first in metaphor that He begins to foreshadow the completeness of His own 'denying of himself.'

35. his life: *psyche* always in Mark means physical 'life' (save where he is reporting Old Testament language used by our Lord, 12³⁰, 14³⁴): see 3⁴, 10⁴⁵. The RVm 'or soul,' and AV text in 30³⁷, are therefore wrong: we must translate 'life' throughout the three verses.

38. of me and of my words: two of our oldest MSS., one Greek and one Latin, omit the noun, giving only 'ashamed of me and mine,' and that reading corresponds so closely to the emphasis in Mark's Gospel on the unity of our Lord and His followers (see e.g. 9³⁸, 10³⁹) that it may well be right.

in this adulterous and sinful generation (the phrase is omitted by Luke in order to give the principle a more universal application): it is easy to understand why 'this generation' was called 'faithless' (Mk 9¹⁹; Mt 17¹⁷ = Lk 9⁴¹) or 'evil' (Mt 12³⁹ = Lk 11²⁹; Mt 16⁴) or 'perverse' (Mt 17¹⁷) or 'crooked' (Ac 2⁴⁰), but why 'adulterous'? Presumably in the sense in which in the prophets Israel is

regarded as a virgin espoused to God, who yet forsakes her true and only husband—e.g. Hos 2^a ff., where as 'her fornication' is mentioned as well as 'her adultery,' we should perhaps understand 'sinful' in Mark in the technical sense which it bears in Lk 7³⁷.

38, IX. 1. The first reference in Mark to the Return of Christ in glory and therewith the imminence of the Coming of the Kingdom. It followed from the Confession of Jesus as Messiah, that He would come as Judge, for that was an essential part of the conception of the Messianic office. But Jesus had just broken to His disciples the knowledge that what lay before Messiah was in the first place rejection and a violent death: and the resurrection that was to follow His death 'after three days' was indeed the assurance of His power over death, but only a presage of His final victory and the final establishment of the Kingdom of God. For that purpose He would come again 'in the glory of his Father' (see on 9²). Naturally, then, it is only now that the Second Coming is first mentioned in the Gospel. But nothing is said in detail: such teaching was not part of our Lord's public Ministry, and is only imparted in the last days of our Lord's life and only to His specially intimate companions among the Twelve: see on 13^a ff. Here we are only told that within the lifetime of some of His hearers there would be a 'coming of the Kingdom in power': see on 13²⁶.

IX. 2-8. Five days after the great Confession and consequent prediction of Messiah's coming death and resurrection, a vision is granted to the three Apostles who were taken into our Lord's closest intimacy (5³⁷, 14³³) which carries them at once to a further stage of knowledge of His true nature. He whom Peter had recognized to be Messiah, who had just told them that Messiah would come 'in the glory of His Father,' He, they learn, was not only Son of Man but Son of God. The Father, who had borne that witness to Jesus Himself at the Baptism (1¹¹), now bears the same witness to the three Apostles (9⁷). What the Baptism was to the Ministry as a whole, that the Transfiguration was to the second and concluding part of it.*

a high mountain: traditionally identified with Mount Tabor, but by modern scholars, it may almost be said unanimously, with the much loftier Mount Hermon, which rises to a height of 9,000

* On the Transfiguration cf. Mt 17¹⁻¹³, notes, p. 170b.—Ed.

feet, to the north-east of Cæsarea Philippi in the direction of Damascus.

apart by themselves: perhaps rather *privately and alone*. More and more the work of the Lord is done on a smaller and smaller circle. If the foundations were to carry the great building of redeemed humanity, they must be dug deep and out of sight. Note not only how the public Ministry contracts itself, but further how the word 'privately' means first with 'his own disciples' (4³⁴), then with the Twelve (6^{31, 83}), and now with only three of the Twelve: cf. too 13³.

he was transfigured. The Greek word is strictly *transformed* (so rendered in Rom 12² and by RV in 2 Cor 3¹⁸), in the older sense of 'form' in which it denotes the underlying essence of a thing: cf. 'being in the form of God' (Phil 2⁶). If here it does not quite mean that (and Luke changes the word), it does imply that the change was more than superficial, and that something of the divine glory was manifested in Christ. And when the Latin translators rendered it by 'transfiguratus est' (or 'commutata est figura eius'), they did not necessarily mean to express a change in outward 'figure' only, for the earliest Latin version rendered Phil 2⁶ 'in figura dei'; and so when Tertullian interpreted 'hoc est corpus meum' as 'figura corporis,' 'figure' in the sense of symbol only was exactly what he did not mean.

4. Elijah with Moses: an odd way of collocating the two names (both Matthew and Luke substitute 'Moses and Elijah'), due, perhaps, to the fact that Elijah was much in their thoughts at the time (8²⁸, 9¹¹). The natural order is given in 5.

5. Rabbi (10⁵¹, 11²¹, 14⁴⁵): see note on 4³⁸. It is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles (RVm 'booths'). Perhaps it was the time of the autumn 'feast of tabernacles,' and perhaps Peter meant that a week of rest and of converse with the visitants would be 'good for them'—better than any journey into peril of death. But the comment that follows in 6, 'not knowing what to answer,' suggests that he simply said what was uppermost in his mind at the moment.

one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. He puts indeed Messiah first, but he implies that He is only *primus inter pares*, one in kind with, if higher in degree than, the representatives of Law and Prophecy. But the Voice from heaven repeats the witness of the Baptism; Jesus is not only God's Anointed but God's only Son, and now that He has come, He sums up and supersedes all

earlier stages; the Law and the Prophets have had their day, He alone is to be heard. For the rendering 'only Son' instead of 'beloved Son' see on 1¹¹.

9-13. As it stands, this paragraph consists of two verses that are straightforward enough, followed by three that are unintelligible. Luke omits the whole: Matthew omits only so much as he could not understand, but the question about the meaning of 'rising from the dead' in 10, and the question about the scriptural authority for the suffering of the Son of Man in 12, both disappear. Now sense and coherence are at once restored to the passage, if we may assume that the second question has got transposed to a wrong place, and that it should be brought back to its natural place in immediate sequence to the other question. 'They kept that saying, discussing with one another what was this "rising from the dead," and where did Scripture say about the Son of Man that he must suffer many things and be rejected.' In other words, the fresh reference to the Resurrection reminds them of the first reference to it only five days before, when it had been connected with the suffering of the Son of Man and His rejection, and scriptural authority had been claimed for it all (8³¹). So read, all is straightforward: and it is quite easy to suppose that words inserted between two short columns of a papyrus roll (the writing was always across, not down, the roll) intended to be inserted in the column to the left, at 10, were, when the roll was recopied, erroneously inserted by the scribe in the column to the right, at 12. If this explanation is correct, it would seem to follow that the error already existed in the copy of Mark that lay before Matthew.

10. they kept the saying, questioning among themselves RV. But the Greek preposition does not mean 'among,' and the word rendered 'questioning' means always 'discussing' or 'disputing' with someone else (1²⁷, 8¹¹, 9^{14, 16}, 12²⁸). Either then 'themselves' is used in the sense of 'one another' (so AV), as also in 11³¹; or 'with themselves' must be taken not with the verb that follows but with the verb that precedes, 'kept the saying to themselves.'

11. The scribes say that Elijah must first come RV. Here, and in 28, RV has blundered badly by refusing to recognize that Mark uses the indirect for the direct interrogative—incorrectly no doubt, but Mark's Greek is not correct. AV rightly saw that the sense can only be *Why say the scribes . . . ?* 'Why could

not we cast him out?' See above on 2¹⁶.

12. be set at nought RV, AV. Rather *be counted for nought*, equivalent to 'be rejected' of 8³¹: the Greek lexicographer Suidas explains the verb to mean 'I count for nothing,' and that is certainly sometimes the sense required in the New Testament, e.g. Lk 18⁹; 1 Cor 6⁴.

14-29. The healing of the lad possessed with a dumb spirit: the inability of the disciples to cure him.

15. all the multitude . . . were greatly amazed. Not an adequate rendering: the verb, whether used in the simple or, as here and 14³³, 16^{5, 6}, in the stronger compound form, is a favourite one in Mark and implies always an element of awe or consternation. It may well be that when the Lord descended from the mount of the Transfiguration, something of the glory of that moment rested still on His countenance, as on that of Moses when he descended from Sinai (Ex 34^{29, 30}; 2 Cor 3⁷). But whereas under the Old Covenant the glory on the face of Moses had something terrifying about it, so that Aaron and the elders of Israel 'feared to come nigh him,' the radiance on the face of the Son of Man awed them indeed, but also drew them to Him, for 'they ran to him and greeted him,' or (according to the alternative reading of codex Bezae and the Old Latin) 'they rejoiced and greeted him.'

16. And he asked them, What question ye with them? That is, apparently, asked the crowd what they and their local scribes (14) were discussing with the disciples: note how regularly our Lord is represented in Mark as finding out what had happened by the ordinary method of questioning (cf. 21. 33). There is nothing in the story to suggest that these scribes were attacking the disciples: we are no longer in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, or in contact with scribes from Jerusalem: it is simply that the crowd and their natural leaders were discussing with the remaining disciples the case of the lad and the possibility of a cure. The father had brought him and had been accompanied by his friends and, as we should put it, by the clergy of the parish.

18. dasheth him down RV, with margin 'rendeth him': AV conversely 'teareth' with margin 'dasheth him.' The appropriate sense is undoubtedly that of RV text and AVm, 'throws him to the ground' (cf. 5²²), and it corresponds to the reading of codex Bezae and the Old Latins: but the reading of the critical texts, though it differs only by one

letter, can only mean 'tears him,' or more literally still 'breaks him.' Precisely the same difficulty meets us in a passage in the *Shepherd* of Hermas, *Mand.*, xi, 3, and there, as here, the sense wanted is 'overthrow,' and there, as here, the Latin versions give the sense we want. Mark and Hermas both wrote in Rome, and both used Greek of the same vernacular type.

pineth away RV, AV. The Greek word is the same as that used in 1 K 13⁴ where Jeroboam 'stretched out his arm . . . and lo his arm became rigid . . . and he could not draw it in.' Render here *is rigid*, as in an epileptic fit. It was one of the symptoms of his seizures: and no patient 'pines away' in the course of a seizure.

19. O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? Against whom is this passionate outburst of our Lord's directed? Clearly He feels that something is in violent contrast with the tense majesty of the experience on the mount. And it seems difficult to find this in anything else than in the culminating point of the story just told, the failure of the nine disciples He had left behind to effect the cure. They had expected to effect it⁽²⁸⁾ and they ought to have been able to effect it: and if they could not, it was due to their want of faith and prayer, for our Lord sets no limits to the power of prayer with faith⁽²⁹⁾: cf. 11^{23, 24}.

22, 23. if thou canst do anything: in contrast to the leper's exclamation in 1⁴⁰, 'if thou wilt, thou canst,' see note there. Here our Lord in reply repeats the father's phrase, but in the Greek the article is prefixed, making the meaning clear 'That phrase of yours "if thou canst"': exactly as we should make it clear in modern English by the use of inverted commas. But something is, perhaps inevitably, lost in any English rendering, for we cannot easily reproduce the similarity of the words 'canst' and 'possible,' in the Greek: 'if thou canst do! all things can be done by him that believeth.' Neither the power to act nor the will to act was wanting to our Lord: but something more was needed, and that was faith on the father's part in our Lord's will and power to heal (cf. 6^{5, 6}).

24. the child RV, AV; and it is quite true that Mark here uses a diminutive. But he is fond of diminutives, and in fact never uses this particular word 'lad' or 'boy' except in the diminutive: and since in this case the father had spoken in 17 of bringing his 'son,' and said in 21 that he had suffered 'from his childhood,'

it is obvious that he was no longer a child, and we must render accordingly *lad*, just as both our versions do in Jn 6⁹ for a still more diminutive form of the same Greek word.

25. saw that a multitude came running together: rather *saw that a crowd was hurrying up*. By the analogy of the two miracles last recorded (7³³, 8²³), we may presume that our Lord had retired with the father and the lad away from the crowd (cf. 15), and that when He saw them following and gathering speed, He hastened to effect the cure before their arrival.

26. as one dead: so in 7³⁰ the girl from whom the devil had gone out does not walk about at once, but was found 'lying down on her bed.' In both cases Matthew (15²⁸, 17¹⁸) substitutes 'was healed from that hour.' Mark alone of the Synoptists (cf., however, Jn 9^{6, 7}) records our Lord's curing by stages, and alone of the evangelists allows room for recovery by stages and for the slow regaining of strength by natural means (cf. 5⁴³).

28. we could not cast it out RV. On this mistranslation see above on 11: render with AV *why could not we cast it out?*

29. this kind can come out: 'come out' is here really the passive of 'cast out'—the Greek language disliked passives, and the classical writers regularly used the active verb 'to fall out' as the passive of 'to cast out'—and 'kind' is the word which Latin and English transliterate as 'genus,' so that the meaning is 'this kind of creature can only be cast out by prayer' (cf. 43, 45).

save by prayer RV rightly, with the best authorities (cf. 11²⁴ and note on 10 above). The mass of MSS., both here and in 1 Cor 7⁵, insert 'and fasting,' because 'prayer and fasting' so naturally go together (Lk 2³⁷; Ac 14²³). Exactly in the same way 'prayer' itself has been inserted, against the run of the context, after 'watching' in 13³³, see note there. In all such cases the shorter reading of the older authorities is to be preferred.

30-50. The last journey through Galilee and last visit to Capernaum: a journey undertaken privately and perhaps hurriedly, and unaccompanied by any public teaching. As before, what lies behind the record is the danger of interference by the government of Herod Antipas, if public ministry were resumed in his dominions. Jerusalem and the Passover were the place and time that our Lord now set before Himself: the intervening weeks or months were spent 'in the regions of Judæa

and Transjordanian' (10¹, 3⁸), both of them outside the jurisdiction of Antipas. It is possible that visits to Jerusalem for the Feasts of Tabernacles (Jn 7¹⁴) and Dedication (Jn 10²²) should be fitted into this period: Mark's brief summary, if it does not suggest them, does not exclude them. It was perhaps in explanation of His movements that He repeated the prophecy of the Passion (3¹), and this time with an added implication of its near approach by the use of the present tense 'is being delivered up': but once more the prophecy was unintelligible to them.

33. What were ye reasoning in the way? . . . they had disputed with one another in the way RV. This change of verb is a subtle refinement of which Mark was quite unconscious: the two Greek words are closely related, one being common in Acts, the other in the Synoptic Gospels. The probability is that Mark means precisely the same thing by the two verbs, using one for the imperfect, the other when he needs to express a pluperfect. 'Disputed' of AV hardly carried then the tinge of acrimony which it bears now, any more than the 'Disputa' of Raphael's fresco. Render *discussed*.

in the way RV: 'by the way' AV. Better on the road: the word is now systematically used in Mark to emphasize the itinerant character of this last section of the Ministry (8²⁷, 9³⁴, 10¹⁷, 32, 52).

34. who was the greatest (Gr. 'greater')? No such question could have vexed their minds when they were first drawn to follow Jesus. But now they had confessed Him to be Messiah, God's Vicegerent in the coming Kingdom, and He had spoken to them of His glory and promised that some then living should see the Kingdom after it had come in power. It does not seem illegitimate to suppose (see on 10³⁶ *sqq.*) that the competition in 'greatness' which they were discussing was a competition as to which of them could render the greatest services in the establishment of the Kingdom. Their very venture of faith became a snare to them: they 'sought great things for themselves' (Jer 45⁵)—not an ignoble ambition, but they had still to learn by what way the Christ would come into His Kingdom, and that Christian greatness was to consist in renunciation of all that the world values and in the service of those whom the world rates of least account.

35. called the twelve. It was the Twelve therefore who had been discussing who was the greater, and the disciples

with whom our Lord was travelling (3¹, 3⁸) must have been practically identical with the Twelve. Exactly the same deduction follows from 10²³, 28, 32, 10³⁵, 41, 11¹¹, 14, 14¹², 17. At least during the last journey to Jerusalem, from 9³⁰ onwards (if not earlier), our Lord is accompanied only by a tiny group of followers—few enough to gather in one house (7¹⁷, 9³³, 10¹⁰)—whom the evangelist appears to call indifferently 'the disciples' or 'the Twelve.'

36, 37. a little child, little children RV: 'a child,' 'children' AV. See above on 24.

taking him in his arms: see on 10¹⁶.

37-42. It seems inevitable to connect 37 and 42 very closely together: *whosoever shall receive one of such children . . . whosoever shall cause to stumble one of these little ones that believe . . .* If so, the intervening verses (38-41) must be regarded as parenthetical; an illustrative episode is introduced by the evangelist, and the main thread of teaching is then resumed. Cf. for a somewhat similar case in narrative 3²¹⁻³¹.

38. John: the only occasion in Mark where John is named alone, and significant of his surname as 'a son of thunder' (3¹⁷). Cf. Lk 9⁵⁴.

we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followed not us RV. But probably Mark wrote 'and he followeth not us, and we forbade him,' while Luke 9⁴⁰ transferred 'he followeth not' to a more logical place as the reason for their forbidding him, and many of the best MSS. assimilated Mark to Luke. A more significant change is that while Luke writes 'followeth not with us,' Mark had written 'followeth not us.' To St. Peter the Lord and the Twelve are one group, journeying together (see on 8³⁸): never again are they said to 'follow' Him, save on one occasion, and that for a brief moment of crisis (10³²: see note there).

39. Forbid him not. Our Lord lays down the principle which His Church should follow in regard to those who act in His Name, even though they do not belong to the outward fellowship of His society. They are not against us, and therefore they are really on our side, and we must not try to hinder their work for Him.

be able quickly to speak evil of me RV: AV *can lightly speak evil of me*, which is better English and better sense, but 'lightly' should perhaps rather be 'easily.' For Mark's weakened use of the verb 'to be able' as an auxiliary see on 6⁵.

41. because ye are Christ's: because you belong to Him whom you have now recognized to be Messiah. Clearly a time is in contemplation when the Twelve will be preaching the faith of Christ. That our Lord from Caesarea Philippi onwards is insistently predicting His own death, it is impossible not to recognize if we pin any faith to Mark's record; that He regarded that death as imminent and bound up with the journey on which they had already started, follows not only from the definite language of 10^{32, 33}, but from the present tense used in 9³¹, 'the Son of Man is being delivered up'; that there would be an interval between His death and resurrection and His return in glory had been implied in 8³⁸, 9¹, and during that interval what was to be happening? In what was He educating the Twelve in those large portions of these chapters where they were His only audience (9³¹⁻⁶⁰, 10²³⁻⁴⁵) but in the spirit in which they were to exercise rule in the community of His followers, as ministers and servants of the least among those who should believe? This training of the Twelve to represent Him after His death implies the existence in some sense of a community, implies therefore the answer to the question whether our Lord contemplated a church; just as later on in the Ministry He filled out the indications of His earlier teaching (see on 2²¹) when He clearly contemplated the replacement of the Old Israel by another and the commission of God's Vineyard to other husbandmen (12⁹). But it is at the same time true that He gave a wholly new meaning to organization and leadership and rule, for the greatest in His New Israel were to be *servi servorum Dei*.

42-48. The teaching is still primarily addressed to the Twelve, but for the moment the plural is replaced by the singular. The connecting idea through these verses is 'causing to stumble'—'scandalize' is the transliterated equivalent (derived by us of course through the Latin) of the Greek word—first in relation to others, the 'scandalizing' of the little ones that believe ('on me' should be omitted with RVm), and then in relation to a man's own self, the renunciation of whatever causes him to come short of what he was called to be.

43, 45. to go (into hell) . . . to be cast (into hell): 'to go'—rather *to go off*—and 'to be cast' are equivalent terms: see note on 29.

hell: in the Greek 'gehenna' ('ge' in Hebrew is 'valley,' cf. on 14³²), the valley of Hinnom, a ravine which ran down

southwards on the west of Jerusalem, meeting ultimately the valley of Kidron which came down from the east side. It was the place where refuse was thrown out, and, we may presume, burnt to consume and purify: for only so can we give intelligible meaning to the words that follow. The phrase attached to Gehenna in 48, the undying worm and the unquenchable fire, comes direct from the LXX of Is 66²⁴: but 'Gehenna' and 'unquenchable fire' are in 43 obviously intended as equivalents, and though no doubt every Jew knew what Gehenna meant literally, it had come to be used in Jewish language as a symbol of the place of future punishment, and our versions are no doubt right in rendering it 'hell.' Certainly our Lord uses it here as the opposite state to 'life' and 'the kingdom of God.' More He does not tell us directly. We can be sure that no soul which turns, whenever and wherever, to God will fail of welcome: we cannot be sure that the will may not become so obstinately hardened against God that it is no longer able to turn to Him, and no man can be saved against his will, any more than anyone could be cured by our Lord without concurrence of his own faith. Whether we may gather from 49 that 'the fire' is remedial as well as destructive, is a grave and difficult problem.

49. For every one shall be salted with fire, RV. That is apparently the true reading, though it not unnaturally puzzled both the scribes of Mark and the evangelist Matthew who omits the phrase. A very early reader or scribe of Mark must have jotted down in the margin the parallel from Lev 2¹³ 'every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' The gloss was then either treated as the original reading, ousting the text, or (as in AV) combined with the text so as to make a double clause. The words 'with fire' appear necessary in order to justify the connexion, implied by 'for,' with the preceding verse. The fire then has a function to fulfil, related in some way to the function of salt. Now the function of salt is that it makes palatable and it preserves. Therefore (it would seem to follow) the function of fire is not only to destroy but to preserve. And the sense in which it helps to preserve is by consuming what is bad in a man, so that what is good alone remains. May we not think that Mal 3^{2, 3} was not far from our Lord's mind when He used these words? There fire, at the Coming of the Lord and Messenger of the Covenant, refines and purifies, and purifies primarily the sons of Levi.

50. In this verse two things seem to be clear: salt at the beginning takes up 'salted' of 49, and be at peace one with another refers us back to the dispute with which the whole section opened in 34. If we may further believe St. Matthew (5¹³) to be pointing the way correctly to the interpretation of 'salt,' we shall understand the verse to mean that the Twelve are to be as salt to the community of Christ's followers, and that unless they are this they are nothing. They have indeed a high prerogative; but their greatness is in the moral and spiritual sphere, and fundamentally different from anything the world calls by that name.

X. 1-32. Ministry in Judæa and Peræa. A question on divorce; a blessing of little children: the appeal to a rich man: the problem of riches.

1. borders of Judæa and beyond Jordan. Not 'borders' in the sense of edge or fringe: see on 5¹⁷, 7³¹. 'beyond Jordan': as in 3⁸ Mark means 'the parts beyond Jordan' (i.e. Transjordan: he does not use the word Peræa), and apparently treats it as a sort of indeclinable noun, 'the regions of Judæa and of Peræa.'

multitudes. Matthew frequently and Luke regularly use the plural, Mark never elsewhere, and there is quite sufficient authority for reading the singular here.

again . . . again. Mark is extraordinarily fond of this word, but rarely uses it in the full sense of 'a second time.' Sometimes it means 'back,' sometimes, as here, 'once more,' sometimes it is hardly more, at the beginning of a paragraph, than a particle of transition, 'next.'

he taught. Mark records far less of our Lord's teaching than Matthew or Luke: but he notes the fact of His teaching more frequently than either of them. Thus not only here, but in 2¹³, 4^{1, 2, 3}, 6³⁴ (cf. 11¹⁷, 12³⁵), Mark writes 'he taught,' where the other Synoptists omit the word.

2. there came unto him Pharisees, and RV and in effect AV: but the words are not genuine, and have been brought in from the parallel in Matthew. In Mark it is just an impersonal plural according to his favourite usage, 'they asked him,' 'he was asked.' No doubt both Matthew and the scribes of Mark who followed Matthew were influenced, in making the insertion, by the word 'tempting,' which is so often used in connexion with Pharisees, e.g. 8¹¹, 12¹⁵. But the word does not necessarily mean more than 'testing him.' To the multitude in these parts our Lord was a stranger, though doubtless they had heard much of Him; and they just wished to try His capacity as a Rabbi

by submitting to Him a knotty problem, where there was divergence between the teaching of the Law (Dt 24¹) and the teaching of the Prophets (Mal 2¹⁶). Divorce was terribly easy at the time: among the Jews one school of the Rabbis taught practically that the husband might divorce his wife if he got tired of her; among Gentiles, though the tradition of republican Rome had strictly upheld the sanctity of the marriage tie, under the Empire divorces became gradually so common that even the Christian emperors confined their efforts to limiting the number of grounds which entitled the innocent partner to claim a dissolution of the marriage tie. It may be, too, that our Lord was known by repute as a teacher whose ethical standard was as stern as His manner of life was simple.

Our Lord begins, as so often in Mark's Gospel, with a question of His own, in order to make clear what was at the back of their minds: Moses in fact had allowed divorce of the wife by the husband. But our Lord's own answer is plain and direct: the ordinance of Moses was a concession to a people whose 'hardness of heart' rendered impossible the enforcement of the true ideal of marriage, but it was a declension from the primal law, for 'from the beginning of creation God made male and female' (so the true text of Mark: Matthew as so often has assimilated the words to the text of the Old Testament [Gen 1²⁷], and scribes have again assimilated Mark to Matthew). From the first, then, God had joined man and woman, and what God had joined let not man separate.

10-12. To the question from the crowd our Lord is content to lay down in answer the governing principle. He does it in quite absolute terms: but He leaves it to them to make the application. To the question of His own disciples, however, His answer fills up anything that was wanting: they are to know that to Him marriage is indissoluble, and the sexes for this purpose on an equal level. Under Jewish law no woman could divorce her husband (though it was possible under Roman law), and so innate was the instinct against it that no passage in the New Testament except this defines the inability of the man and the woman to dissolve the marriage tie in precisely parallel terms.

In substance, however, St. Luke and St. Paul both reproduce the teaching of the indissolubility of marriage: Lk 16¹⁸ 'every one that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery,

and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery'; 1 Cor 7^{10, 11}, with appeal to our Lord's teaching 'unto the married I give charge (rather not I, but the Lord) that the wife depart not from the husband—but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and let not the husband put away his wife.' Whatever explanation therefore we give of the exception allowed in St. Matthew's version (5³², 19⁹)—it looks as though the First Evangelist, like the Deuteronomist, was considering the standard that seemed possible for those for whom he wrote—it seems on critical and historical grounds a quite irrefragable conclusion that our Lord absolutely excluded divorce from the Christian code. It is of course a very different problem what the action of the State ought to be in countries where the Christian code is not accepted by the citizens at large. But the duty of the Church towards its own members appears to be clear; much clearer than, for instance, its duty in regard to marriages within particular degrees of affinity, where we have no such definite guidance.*

13-16. The Blessing of Children: cf. 9³⁶, and it has been suggested that, like the two stories of feeding the multitude, these two stories about a child or children taken up in our Lord's arms are again variant accounts of a single episode. But the point in regard to the accounts of the feeding was precisely that the occasions were so similar, whereas here there is a quite definite difference. It is another question whether the two accounts of blessing children have not suffered some confusion with one another in the evangelist's mind: for if they are compared, the curious result follows that 9³⁷ is more appropriate to the second occasion and 10¹⁵ to the first. When the Twelve had been coveting positions of greatness above one another, it seems more in point to speak of the duty of receiving the Kingdom of God in a childlike spirit, than to speak of receiving the children: and conversely, when the disciples had done their best to prevent access of the children to Christ, the duty of receiving such children in His Name looks to be the more natural comment.

16. took them in his arms (so also in 9³⁶), or possibly, if our Lord was seated, 'put his arms round them.' The other Synoptists both omit the detail, as well as His indignation against the disciples

* For a fuller discussion of the problem cf. notes on Mt 19¹⁻¹², and *Sacraments in the New Testament*, p. 401b.—Ed.

(14) and His blessing of the children: small wonder that our Church has selected the passage from St. Mark as the Gospel for the Baptismal office. Nothing perhaps in the Gospels reveals our Lord's uniqueness as a religious teacher more than this simple and vivid story. It is by a true instinct that this action of our Lord's is claimed as implying His sanction for infant baptism: it should not be forgotten that the 'laying his hands upon them' corresponds to what was from the first the complement of the rite of actual baptism: see on 1⁸. There are still disciples who would rebuke the bringing of unconscious infants to Him: but these are no more to be debarred from membership of His flock than the children of Jews under the Old Covenant.

17-22. One morning, as our Lord was starting on the day's journey—*on the road* (see on 9³³) rather than into the way of AV, RV—there ran one to him, and kneeled to him. That he was a young man is Matthew's interpretation (19²³), and is perhaps only deduced from Mark's phrase (20) 'from my youth,' a phrase which in fact rather suggests that he was no longer quite young. But at any rate he had the enthusiasm of youth, for he kneeled down in public to our Lord, as Mark alone tells us, and addressed Him enthusiastically as *Good Master*. The adjective 'good' is not common in the LXX with a personal reference, but in the later Psalms, e.g. Ps 118 (117), it is used of God; and our Lord, as so often, answers question by question, cross-examining him, so to say, on his use of terms: what did he mean by addressing Jesus with an epithet that was used of God? It may not be fanciful to think that our Lord had His own disciples in mind, whom He was now trying to make realize that He had in truth a right to the term 'good,' because of His Sonship of the One who alone was in the full sense 'good.'

19. The list of the Commandments as here given in Mark raises even more difficulties than the earlier list in 7²²: for here the words are obviously given as a direct citation from the Old Testament. But the ground can be cleared a good deal when we have compared Mark's list with those of Matthew (19^{18, 19}) and Luke (18²⁰), for scribes of Mark have been assimilating as usual to the other texts. In the first place do not defraud, as not in terms corresponding to the Old Testament (Ex 20¹³⁻¹⁶; Dt 5¹⁷⁻²⁰) is dropped by both Matthew and Luke and by a strong group of good MSS., including codex Vaticanus,

in Mark: but it is quite certainly genuine, as will appear further on. In the second place Matthew (just as in Mt 15¹⁹ = Mk 7^{21, 22}) has altered the order of Mark for the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Commandments into agreement with the ordinary text (Greek and Hebrew) of the Old Testament, and again many of the best MSS. have transplanted this order into Mark; Luke, too, has apparently adapted his order to the LXX text of B in Deuteronomy, which transposes the Seventh and Sixth Commandments, and again another and larger group of MSS. reproduce this in Mark. The true text of Mark is more likely to be found in authorities which disagree with both Matthew and Luke, especially if the text they offer suggests the genesis of the other variants: and codex Bezae (D), the Latin codex Bobiensis (h), and St. Irenæus give the three first commands as 'Do not commit adultery, do not commit fornication, do not steal.' Now in the list of 7²¹ the one point on which all MSS. agree is that both 'adulteries' and 'fornications' are named. It seems certain that the first item here was 'Do not commit adultery'; the second was either 'Do not commit fornication' or 'Do not kill' (the Greek words for these two being very similar), but more probably the former. If 'do not kill' had no place in the list, that was perhaps because murder was the sin least likely to be in question.

do not defraud. It is probable that as 'adulteries' under the Seventh Commandment are reinforced by 'fornications,' so 'theft' under the Eighth is reinforced by 'fraud.' Dr. Field, in his admirable comment on the word (*Notes on the Translation of the New Testament*, 34), cites the Greek writers Plutarch and Stobæus as using it in connexion with stealing. In the absence of banks, a man forced to leave home for any length of time deposited his money or valuables with some friend: to deny that you had received the deposit, and so defraud your friend, was a negative form of stealing, and no doubt more common, certainly in the case of the well-to-do, than literal theft. Pliny the Younger, in the description he sent to the Emperor Trajan of Christian rites, says that they included a solemn oath 'not to commit theft, robbery, adultery, not to break faith, not to deny the receipt of a deposit when called upon to return it' *ne depositum appellati abnegarent* (cf. Cypr., *ep.* 52, § 1), and *abnegare* is the rendering, in the oldest Latin versions, of the Greek word here used by Mark. In the penitential discipline

of the early Western Church idolatry, murder, unchastity, and fraud were, as we learn from Tertullian, the four sins regarded as irremissible, that is, beyond the right of the Church on earth to forgive by restoration to communion. And this is the only direct authority in the Gospels on which the reference to 'fraud' can ultimately be based. It seems therefore probable that our Lord, in regard to both the Seventh and the Eighth Commandments, 'set a hedge' to the Law by expanding the single word of the Old Testament into two: fornication and fraud were forms in which temptation was more likely to affect His questioner than adultery and theft.

21. Just as Mark, alone of the three Synoptists, tells us that the man 'ran and kneeled down to him' on the road, so he alone records that our Lord 'looked fixedly on him (cf. 8²⁵) and loved him.' Possibly with Dr. Field *ad loc.* we should translate 'kissed him,' for the Rabbis are said to have kissed their disciples when pleased with them, and the translator of Origen on Mt 19²¹ renders St. Mark's word 'dilexit eum uel osculatus est eum.' Our Lord saw in the man great possibilities, and loved him for them, and gave him the same call that He had given to Simon and Andrew, to James and John, and to Levi (1^{17, 18, 20, 214}). They had 'left all and followed him' (10²⁸), and they would receive in return that 'life eternal' to which the man aspired (10³⁰): but he could not brace himself to answer the call, for his wealth was more to him even than his aspirations.

22. his countenance fell (which is nearer to the Greek word than AV 'he was sad'), and he went away sorrowful RV. A similar combination of the two elements in this description of the man's depression is found in the LXX of Dan 2¹² (Swete).

he was one that had (AV better *he had*) great possessions. But the word 'possessions' has come in from Matthew (19²²), who perhaps wrote as a dweller in the country, to whom stock and chattels were the typical form of property. Mark wrote 'much wealth' or 'riches,' and the same word is taken up and repeated in our Lord's comment as given in the next verse.

23-31. The temptations of wealth, and the promise to those who in spite of its temptations renounce for Christ's sake and the Gospel's everything that they have.

23. looked round: a favourite word of Mark, whether in introducing special

sayings of our Lord (3^{5, 34}, and here) or more generally 5³², 9⁸, 11¹¹; never in the other Gospels save Lk 6¹⁰=Mk 3⁵. Here we must no doubt supply 'on the disciples.' See also on 8³³.

24. were amazed RV, 'were astonished' AV. Rather were *dumbfounded*: see on 9¹⁵.

Our Lord having stated the general truth in ²³ repeats part of it in ²⁴, part of it again in ²⁵. Our English versions indeed, by inserting the words 'for them that trust in riches,' make ²⁴ in effect a repetition of ²³: but our best authorities, Greek and Latin, omit the words, and they were certainly an interpretative gloss. Just as in the teaching on Divorce (10⁹), so here our Lord's statement is absolute: just as with the treatment in Matthew of His teaching on Divorce, so here scribes did their best to whittle down His teaching about riches and limit the wide range of its application. Alike in ²³ and ²⁵, as well as in Matthew and Luke, our Lord's saying concerns 'the rich' without qualification. But in Mark the prefatory address, 'Children,' does suggest that He was still saddened by the failure of His appeal in ²¹. It was a tremendous call that He had made, and He knew that it was not easy to respond to it.

Doubtless it was this strong language of our Lord about property which moved the first Christians of Jerusalem to have 'all things common' (Ac 2⁴⁴). That experiment was soon dropped: and we have no reason to suppose that it was repeated even in the earliest days of the Roman Church for which Mark wrote. Nevertheless no attempt is made by the evangelist to whittle down His words. Here is decisive testimony to the scrupulous faithfulness of the written record of Christ's teaching.

25. a camel to go through a needle's eye: obviously a proverbial and paradoxical expression for something so difficult as to be practically impossible.

26. saying unto him RV text. But the other reading, *among themselves*, RVm and AV, is the only one that conforms to Mark's usage (cf. 1²⁷, 4⁴¹, 8¹⁸, 9³⁴, 11³¹).

who can be saved? Here for the first time in a definitely spiritual sense, as identical with 'enter into the Kingdom of God.' See on 5²³.

29. house: not in the material sense of the building, but in the sense of 'household' or 'home,' as 12⁴⁰, 13^{34, 35}.

or mother or father RV, 'or father or mother or wife' AV. But in ³⁰, where the enumeration otherwise corresponds

exactly with ²⁹, there is (1) no mention of 'father,' and perhaps it should be omitted here with codex Bezae and the best Old Latin MSS.; and (2) no mention of 'wife,' and 'wife' is not found in the true text of ²⁹ in Mark any more than in the true text of the parallel of Matthew. Our Lord does not call on any man to leave his wife (cf. 10⁷): but no doubt most of the Apostles and early Christian missionaries in general had made the sacrifice already by remaining unmarried.

30. a hundredfold: so Mark without variant, and so most MSS. of Matthew (19²⁹): but in Matthew a few good authorities read 'manifold,' while in Luke it is a question between 'manifold' and 'sevenfold.' Both Matthew and Luke dislike large numbers, and feared that Mark's number 'a hundredfold' would seem exaggerated. But the thought is that, just as all followers of Christ were 'brethren,' so all would find 'mothers' in every Christian matron, and 'children' in every Christian family, and 'homes' in every Christian household.

with persecutions: there will be wonderful compensations for those who have renounced all for Christ's sake, even in this life, in the common love and fellowship of Christians; but our Lord has no purely rose-coloured prospect to hold out to His followers, for besides the common love there will also be common sufferings, and for these the compensation is laid up 'in the age to come.'

31. One of our Lord's pithy Sayings, doubtless often repeated, as in Mt 20¹⁶; Lk 13³⁰: not inappropriate here, and it may be that it was present to our Lord's thoughts that one of those who had left all to follow Him would yet betray Him.

X. 32-XIII. 37. The Ascent to Jerusalem; the Last Stage of the Ministry, and Preparation for the Passion.

32. And they were in the way: rather *Now they were on the road*. The connecting particle is that only used by Mark at the beginning of a paragraph where some new section of the Gospel is introduced: 1¹⁴, 7²⁴, here, and 14¹. No break is marked at the actual entry into Jerusalem (11¹): the break is marked here (32-34), giving the keynote of the approach of the climax of the Gospel story, just as the last two chapters were introduced by 8³¹.

going before . . . followed. These two verbs are correlative to one another, as in 11⁹: AV must certainly be right in seeing that the contrast in the verse can only be between two parties, Jesus who was going ahead, and the disciples

who were following at a distance: that those who so followed were the Twelve is proved, if proof were needed, by the words in the immediate sequel, he took again the twelve—that is, took them up again into company with Him. Why, then, on this one occasion was our Lord walking alone, but that the shadow of the approaching Passion, of which, as soon as His disciples rejoin Him, He speaks with more detailed emphasis than before, lay heavy on His soul? All difficulties in the verse and context are at once removed, if we may venture to change the verb that intervenes between 'going before' and 'followed' from the plural to the singular, and read not 'they were amazed' but 'he was amazed,' or rather, since 'amazed' in our modern English use of the word is quite inadequate to represent the Greek, 'he was overcome with consternation.' A stronger compound of the same verb is used of the Agony in Gethsemane (14³³): it is a foretaste of that moment.

33, 34. More clearly, and with increasing sharpness of definition, by comparison with 8³¹, 9³¹, the picture of the coming end unfolds itself to His mind: this present visit to Jerusalem will be the occasion; the Jewish authorities will proceed to the last extremity of a sentence of death against Him, and will hand Him over for its execution to the heathen government; no insult will be spared Him, mocking (15^{20, 31}), spitting (14⁶⁵), scourging (15¹⁶), before He is put to death. Even now the term 'crucifixion' is avoided: see note on 8³¹.

35-45.* The request of James and John for chief places in the coming Kingdom. On the first occasion of the prediction of the Passion Peter made open and adverse comment (8³²); on the second the disciples still did not understand, but made no comment (9³²); but now some of them at least grasped the fact that the coming of Messiah in glory, to faith in which they had by Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi committed themselves, would involve suffering, apparent failure, death itself, before the final manifestation of the Kingdom of God with power. The two brothers, together with Peter our Lord's nearest disciples, were prepared to stick close to Him to the end, to share in His fate whatever that might be, because they had now risen to the certainty that it would only be a transient preliminary to His triumph. But in return for being the first to proclaim their confidence in the ultimate victory and their willingness to share in all that might precede it, they

* Cf. notes on Mt 20²⁰⁻²⁸, pp. 177b-178b.—ED.

wanted their reward—the assignment of a privileged position in the day of His glory in return for their venture of faith in the days of His humiliation. The remaining Apostles were indignant with them, and we are tempted to sympathize with their indignation, and to look no further. But our Lord, though He refused the request and told the brothers at what sort of privilege His true followers must aim, did not simply blame them. He probed their faith in Him with a searching question; and when they answered that they could share the 'cup' and the 'baptism' which were His immediate lot, He said at once that they were right. So intimate was the union between Master and disciples that they could in some way take their part in the conditions of His work and 'fill up what was lacking in the tribulations of the Christ' (Col 1²⁴). But those who drank deeply enough of His spirit to do that would not look to hierarchical privileges, here or hereafter, as their reward, but to ministry and service as *servi servorum Dei*.

38. the cup . . . the baptism. Some interpreters have seen in these words a reflex influence of ideas derived by the evangelist from the two great sacraments; but any such thought is foreign to the context. The 'cup' is, quite obviously, as in Christ's prayer in Gethsemane (see on 14³⁶), the 'cup' of the Lord's wrath, a metaphor common in the Old Testament. The 'baptism' is not so simple, but it has an exact parallel in Lk 12⁵⁰. Mk 7⁴ (which see) shows that the evangelist could use 'baptisms,' 'baptize themselves,' in a literal sense, where later writers would certainly have avoided the words because of their association with the Christian sacrament. But in classical and post-classical Greek the verb, which is not uncommon, especially in the passive, appears regularly to have something of an unfavourable sense about it, whether (1) literal, 'drenched,' 'getting into deep water,' 'drowned,' or of ships 'sunk,' or (2) metaphorical, 'overwhelmed' in sleep, in anger, in grief, in debt: see the new edition of L.S. In these cases no doubt a noun gives precision to the sort of 'baptism' meant. But Josephus can write 'baptized' the city, when he just means 'flooded' the city with immigrants. There is no real difficulty, then, in understanding Mark to mean here 'I have an immersion to be immersed with,' i.e. 'I have deep waters to pass through.'

39. Ye shall indeed drink of the cup. It is not uncommon nowadays to inter-

pret these words as meaning that not only James (Ac 12³) but also John would be a martyr, and that therefore the son of Zebedee was distinct from John of Ephesus, author of the 4th Gospel. But that issue must be decided on other arguments: here the 'drinking of the cup' may be rather the continual dying to the world for Christ than actual death.

40. but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared: perhaps rather *save to those for whom it hath been prepared*. But the two Greek words 'but' and 'for whom' could be read, with other breathings and accents, as one word 'for others,' and so the oldest Latin MSS. with St. Augustine understood it, 'alios paratum est': Jerome restored the true interpretation in the Vulgate.

45. and to give his life a ransom for many. There lay the difference between the Son of Man and other men. They could share His work of ministry and self-sacrifice, His endurance even to death. They could give their lives; He alone gave His life as a 'ransom for many.' There is no ground for questioning, with Dr. Rashdall (*The Idea of Atonement*, 29), the authenticity of this Saying. It recurs in substance in 14²⁴ 'my blood of the covenant which is being shed for many,' though (1) the word 'ransom' is not used there, (2) the prepositions, in the phrase rendered 'for many' on both occasions in our versions, are not the same, that used in 14²⁴ being strictly 'on behalf of,' that used here 'in place of.' (1) 'Ransom' means 'redemption,' which is indeed the rendering given to the cognate Greek word in Lk 2³⁸ 'looking for the redemption of Israel.' But 'ransom' has with us acquired, in the history of the controversies about the Atonement, a connotation from which 'redemption,' though meaning the same thing, is free. (2) Perhaps even more difficulty than over 'ransom,' has been felt over the phrase 'in place of,' 'instead of,' but again the difficulty has been mainly caused by the unethical 'Substitution' theories that have been built up upon it since the 16th century. But the preposition is the strict corollary of the thought of 'redemption': and though we do well to guard against any interpretation which forgets that Christ's work is also in us and with us, yet that is not all: the religious instinct of Christians has never doubted that Christ is our Redeemer as well as our Example, that in a true sense we 'were bought at a price' (1 Cor 6²⁰), and that the price was the blood of Christ. And that was no invention of St. Paul or of

Christians before St. Paul: the whole of the Passion story in St. Mark, if it has any historical value at all, shows how entirely our Lord's thought was based on the Old Testament Scriptures, and on His Death as the true expression and satisfaction of all the implications of the Law and the Prophets.

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament, especially the sin-offering of Lev 4, indicates the idea of a price paid to effect the restoration of the covenant relation: more definitely the thought of Is 53 suggests that the life of the innocent sufferer poured out unto death for the transgression of the people is something in virtue of which those for whom He suffers are ransomed and free. But it may be suggested that closer than anything else to our Lord's thoughts at this time was the significance of the coming Feast at which He was to suffer. Pass-over was the annual reminder to Israel that it had been saved from the house of bondage: and the symbol of that great redemption was the sacrifice of the lamb without blemish whose blood upon the door-posts had caused the Lord to pass over the Israelites 'when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses' (Ex 12²⁷). So Christ was 'the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world.'

X. 46-XI. 11. Sunday in Holy Week (Palm Sunday).

46-52. The healing of blind Bartimæus. From the express mention of the name we may guess that he was probably known afterwards to Mark in the church of Jerusalem: and as the episode a little interrupts the context, it is perhaps an insertion of Mark's own from details supplied by Bartimæus himself. The story seems throughout to be told, more so perhaps than any other miracle recorded in Mark, from the point of view of the man healed.

46. they come to Jericho: that is, as always, our Lord and His immediate disciples: see note on 1²¹. The 'great multitude' which accompanies Him and them on His exit will have been mainly Galileans on their way to the feast (for it was usual, in order to avoid passing through Samaria, to take the route by the Jordan valley and Jericho), partly also inhabitants of Jericho or its neighbourhood, drawn by His fame as a teacher and prophet. It would seem that they escorted Him all the way to Jerusalem, fifteen miles, and were in fact identical with the crowd which accompanied Him on the triumphal entry (11⁸ ff.). Indeed

the mention of them here is perhaps intended to explain the numbers present on that occasion. There is no break in the story at 11¹, so that the journey was apparently accomplished in a single day.

47. of Nazareth. Literally 'the Nazarene': see on 1²⁴. Son of David: see on 11¹⁰.

52. made thee whole: margin 'saved thee.' See on 5²³.

in the way: that is, on the road to Jerusalem, among the crowd that followed Jesus there.

XI. 1. unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany. Luke has all three place-names: Matthew omits Bethany. There is strong authority in Mark for the omission of Bethphage. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to account for the presence, without variant as it seems, of so obscure a village as Bethphage in both Matthew and Luke, unless they had both found it in Mark: and we can only suppose that in a very early Greek MS. of Mark a line 'Bethphage and' was accidentally passed over because the scribe's eye wandered on to the next line also beginning with 'Beth'.

Bethany, 'a village at the second milestone from Aelia' [= Jerusalem], as Eusebius-Jerome tell us in the *Onomasticon*. The Mount of Olives was 'a Sabbath day's journey' (Ac 1¹³)—rather more than half a mile—from Jerusalem. Bethphage too, we happen to know, was also at the limit of the 'Sabbatic' zone. Therefore Bethphage was on the Mount of Olives, much nearer Jerusalem than Bethany was, and our Lord came to Bethany first. Not improbably He rested there, after the long walk from Jericho, for the midday meal: Bethany (11^{11, 12, 19, 14}) was His home for the next few days, and the opportunity was presumably taken on this occasion to arrange for quarters for Himself and the Twelve. From Bethany He sent messengers to fetch from 'the village opposite,' no doubt Bethphage, an animal to serve Him for riding during the last part of the journey. The immediate reason may have been fatigue: but the unusual phrase 'The Lord hath need of it' (see on 3³) suggests also that He desired to make a formal and solemn entry into the Holy City. Matthew and John connect the circumstances with the prophecy of Zech 9⁹, John adding expressly that the connexion did not occur to the disciples at the time (12¹⁶): but the acclamation of the multitude as they accompanied Him would be in harmony with the thought of the prophecy.

two of his disciples: Matthew and

Luke, following the later usage, both write 'the' for 'his,' but in the days of the Ministry there were other 'disciples': see on 6⁴¹. Note that the disciples are sent in pairs: cf. 6⁷, 14¹³.

2. whereon never man yet sat (rather, in English idiom, *had sat*): many authorities in Mark give 'has sat,' in which case the words are part of our Lord's injunction to the two disciples. For the thought compare the tomb 'where never man had yet lain' (Lk 23⁵³): and the Law required in certain cases the slaughter of a calf that 'had not borne a yoke' (Nu 19²; Dt 21³).

3-6. anyone . . . he . . . certain of them . . . they. These variations between singular and plural become a little less puzzling if (with Tischendorf and Swete, but against AV, RV, and Westcott-Hort) we put a comma only after 'hath need of him' and treat the rest of 3 as part of the message the disciples were to deliver: 'the Lord needs the colt, and will at once send it back again here,' i.e. to Bethphage. 'Back' (= 'again,' RVm), which is certainly the genuine reading, suits this interpretation best. It is natural to suppose that, like the 'goodman of the house' in 14¹⁴, the owners of the colt were well enough acquainted with Jesus to comply unhesitatingly with any request from Him: but why does the message come not, as there, from 'the Master' but from 'the Lord'? 'The Lord' is found in the narrative of Luke, John, and the Last Twelve Verses of Mark; and in Jn 13¹³ the titles 'Master' and 'Lord' rank as equivalent. But nowhere else in Mark is the phrase used of Christ (in 5¹⁹ it is certainly equivalent to 'God'): why is it exceptionally so used here? We can only answer that the whole attitude of our Lord in the last days at Jerusalem does appear to be intended to accentuate His challenge to the Jewish authorities as one invested with authority higher than theirs. Therefore it was not unfitting that on the occasion of His public entry into the city He should speak a new language and formulate in new terms His unique dignity.

4. in the open street RV: 'in a place where two ways met' AV. Both meanings are possible. A Glossary gives the Latin equivalent as *compitum*, 'crossways': and that sense perhaps explains why the word was used in Greek papyri of Roman times for a rectangular block of buildings bounded by streets. But Pollux the lexicographer seems to understand it as a big street, like the Homeric

aguia, and codex Bezae has the word in Ac 19²³, where it can only mean 'ran out into the street.' Render therefore here *on the highway*.

7. cast on him their garments: because the colt, not having been broken in for use, had no saddle.

he sat upon him. Luke 'set Jesus thereon,' and perhaps in both Mark and Matthew the plural should be read, with the codex Sinaiticus, in the active sense 'caused him to sit' upon the colt, for that answers somewhat better to the context. Our Lord was being treated as one of royal dignity: compare with the next verse (the references are from Swete) 2 K 9¹³, where the external sign of the acceptance of Jehu's call to be king is that 'they hastened and took every man his garment and put it under him,' and 1 Mac 13⁵¹, where Judas Maccabæus makes a triumphal entry into the citadel of Jerusalem 'with praise and palm branches . . . and with hymns and with songs.'

9. they that went before and they that followed. There is nothing in the story to suggest that this implies two crowds, one that had come from Jericho with Jesus and another that came out from Jerusalem to meet Him. It is simply that the crowd naturally divided itself, as in any royal procession, into two, some in front and some behind, so that He should be in the centre.

Hosanna, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: or perhaps we should rather render it *Blessed in the name of the Lord is he that cometh*. The *Benedictus qui venit* is a direct citation of Ps 118²⁶, given by Mark according to the Greek of the LXX: 'Hosanna' (only here and in the parallels in Matthew and John) is another instance of Mark's employment of native words, and comes from the preceding verse of the same Psalm, where the LXX renders 'O Lord save (us),' though 'Be propitious' appears to be the original meaning of the Hebrew: but see on 10. Note that the verses almost immediately preceding, 22 and 23, are cited by our Lord in 12^{10,11}. The Psalm was liturgically used at the two great Jewish feasts, and the latter part of it (19-29) was appropriate to every Jewish pilgrim who came up to the Holy City, and specially appropriate to our Lord, who had come to Jerusalem to claim the Kingship of His people.

10. Blessed is the kingdom that cometh of our father David. What seem to be undoubted echoes, in our Lord's own words, of the Lord's Prayer will be noted at 11²⁵, 14^{36,38}: it is tempting

here to see in 'the coming Kingdom' an echo of 'Thy Kingdom come' on the part of the crowd, though if so the petition had been but half understood. Our Lord is greeted as coming to restore under Divine auspices, 'in the Name of the Lord,' the Kingdom of David: He is King, that is, as Son of David. That title does not make its appearance in Mark's record till the final week. Bartimæus is the first to use it (10^{47,48}): our Lord recurs to it two days later (12³⁵⁻³⁷). Perhaps the Davidic Sonship was not an idea so prominent in Galilee, where, moreover, some sort of native kingship did exist, as in Judæa, where religious thought was much more developed and where the visible presence of Roman dominion was calculated to keep nationalistic ideas, and the connexion of Messiah with the old Davidic kingship, very vigorously alive. It was part of the regular teaching of the Scribes that Messiah was Son of David (12³⁵): when Bartimæus was told that the commotion in the street at Jericho was due to the passing of 'Jesus the Nazarene,' he addressed Him without more ado as 'Son of David': and the prominence of this title in the Messianic conceptions of Jewish Christianity is witnessed to by the genealogy in Mt 1. That Mark (so too Lk 19³⁸; Jn 12¹³) is right in emphasizing this element in the acclamations of the crowd follows from the charge brought by the Sanhedrin against our Lord before Pilate (15²), for it must have been primarily on this episode that the charge was based. And it must be noted that our Lord made no attempt to restrain the demonstration: in contrast with so much that we meet with in the earlier part of the Gospel, He accepted and encouraged it. But if He had come to Jerusalem as Messiah and King, His teaching in 12 is directed to show that He was this because He was more than this, and that being more than this His kingship involved no rivalry with any earthly sovereignty.

Hosanna in the highest: obviously in this connexion an ascription of praise, and Luke gives the Christian interpretation when he renders it (19³⁸) 'glory in the highest.' It is not unreasonable to suppose that the LXX 'Save us' represents the current Jewish exegesis of the word, so that we may take 'Hosanna in the highest' as equivalent to 'Salvation from God!'

11. he entered into Jerusalem into the temple: probably with two or three good Western MSS. we should read *they entered*, in the plural, as in 12, 15⁽¹⁹⁾, 20, 27: see on 1²¹, 10⁴⁶.

it being now eventide. Our Lord's

first duty as a Jew was to go to the national sanctuary for prayer: it was necessarily afternoon, for He had come that day on foot from Jericho to Bethany, and had rested some time at Bethany. Therefore it was too late for any public action, and indeed it may have been what He saw in the Temple, as He 'looked round about' (see on 10³³) at all that was going on there, or at the traces of what had gone on in the daytime, that decided Him to take the drastic action that followed on the morrow.

he went out unto Bethany with the twelve. From Sunday to Wednesday inclusive He lodged at Bethany. It may well have been difficult to find quarters at such a crowded time in the city, and at Bethany He had friends and could secure quiet. But also by withdrawing each evening from Jerusalem, He made more difficult a premature *coup* on the part of the authorities. In the daytime the presence of the crowd protected Him: a secret arrest was more feasible at night if He was still within the city, and He was determined to wait until 'His hour was come' at the Passover itself.

12-19. Monday in Holy Week.

12-14 (20-24). The Cursing of the Fig-tree. Of course the story raises difficulties in our minds: Luke did not like it any more than we do, and omitted it entirely. But there it is: and, though Mark may have overlooked some element in the story that would have enabled us, if he had not overlooked it, to understand things better, there is not the slightest reason to question the accuracy of the record as a whole. The difficulties are of the same kind as those which arise out of the parallel case of the herd of swine in 5, and the fundamental answer is the same, that man is 'of more value than many sparrows,' and that the animal and vegetable creation exists for his use. If, as in this case, it does not serve the purpose for which it exists, it is useless, and like the salt without savour may be thrown away, and become like the salt a lesson for man, that if he too does not correspond to his calling he will undergo a similar fate.

Now this interpretation implies that our Lord expected, and had a right to expect, to find something edible on the fig-tree. That expectation could not have been founded on the mere fact that it was a fig-tree: for, as the evangelist is careful to explain, at that time of year—the month was in all probability March—'the time of figs was not yet.' There is some reason to suppose that something

more or less edible might be anticipated on the tree when the foliage was so unusually forward: and that the point against the tree was that it promised more than it performed. But it is all difficult, and perhaps Mark did not understand what difficulties the story, thus baldly told, would raise for us. He does not explain how our Lord came to be hungry so soon after leaving Bethany. He does tell us on the next day that they started early in the morning, and indeed that day is crowded with events and teaching (11²⁰⁻¹³³⁷). But of the Monday nothing definite is related beyond the cleansing of the Temple, though perhaps¹⁶ is meant to imply a time of popular teaching during the day. Matthew may have felt that some more explanation was wanted, for he inserts mention of an 'early' start, before breakfast it may be (21¹⁸, see notes).

15-18. The Cleansing of the Temple. Our Lord returned to the Temple with immediate and definite action in view. The court was crowded with all the machinery of an authorized traffic of buying and selling for religious purposes, the doves required for purification and the bankers' 'tables' or counters, where Gentile money could be exchanged for the Jewish coins that alone could be used in the Temple. More than that, one sort of traffic naturally encouraged another, and the courts of the Temple, like the nave of Old St. Paul's in London, had come to be used, by people carrying the apparatus of their daily business to and fro, as an ordinary thoroughfare. Our Lord makes a clean sweep of it all, and, as throughout His teaching during Holy Week, bases Himself on an appeal to the words of Scripture (Is 56⁷). The House was meant to be a House of Prayer, and must be restored and confined to its proper function. It is implied that the traffic was a source of material gain to the Temple officials. The charges for the animals, the process of exchange, offered opportunities of exaction which, if not strictly dishonest—we are not bound to suppose that those concerned lined their own pockets—were a grossly improper way of raising revenue for the service of religion. There is reason to think that the Temple market was in fact a source of scandal to religious Jews, though vested interests are strong and a priestly caste is specially impervious to criticism. Our Lord's action was probably not unpopular. Even the Pharisees may have objected rather to His assumption of authority to act than to the action itself.

17. for all the nations: in more

idiomatic English 'for all nations,' unless we prefer to render 'for all the Gentiles.' Mark alone retains these words of the prophecy, and with full intent, just as he—no doubt faithfully representing St. Peter—preserves other indications in our Lord's teaching of the future world-wide scope of the Gospel, e.g. 2²¹, 13¹⁰. It is not easy to see why both Matthew and Luke omit them, but it is probably because they do not serve the immediate point of the quotation, which is the contrast, not between Jew and Gentile, but between merchandise on the one side and prayer and worship on the other.

18. the chief priests and the scribes: not technically the Sanhedrin, for which see 27, but the representatives of the two great parties, Sadducees and Pharisees, united for the first time against our Lord by this assumption on His part of supreme authority over the existing Jewish religious organization.

the multitude: as 12¹², 27, 14².

19. every evening RV: *when even was come* AV, rightly. A serious blunder of RV, due to the assumption that Mark wrote classical Greek, and never used 'whenever' for 'when.' See on 3¹¹.

XI. 20-XIII. 37. Tuesday in Holy Week. The close of the public Ministry of Jesus: His final challenge to the Jewish rulers and assertion of His authority over against theirs. His private prediction of the things that were coming on Jerusalem and on the world.

20-25. The power of undoubting prayer.

21. Peter, calling to remembrance. Nothing in the whole of Mark more clearly indicates Peter's close relation to the Gospel. Anyone else would have been content with 'Peter said': only Peter himself would add that he 'remembered and said.'

22-24. The lesson meant to be drawn from the cursing of the fig-tree and its result is the power of faith. Prayer is answered in proportion to the conviction in the mind of him who prays that it will be answered: without absolute 'trust in God' prayer does not arrive at its full proportions and effect. Because the words of Christ over the fig-tree had behind them that entire conviction of trust and union with God, they were not ineffective. If any of His followers could attain the same absolute union with the Divine Will, there would be no limit at all to what they could achieve. Our Lord's assurance to the Apostles is indeed cast in the form of a paradox: it is as if He said to them, Think of the most impossible thing you can in the natural sphere, the

rooting up of the solid foundations of earth, the casting of a mountain like the Mount of Olives before you right away into the sea, and be convinced that spiritual force is stronger than material force and can deal as it wills with it.

25. ye stand praying. Standing was the normal attitude of prayer, whether in the Old Testament, 1 K 8²², 'Solomon stood . . . and spread forth his hands toward heaven,' etc.; or in the New, Lk 18^{11, 13}, where both Pharisee and publican stand as they pray; or in the early Church, Justin, *Apology*, i, 67, 'then we all rise together and offer prayers,' *Acts of Peter with Simon*, 21, 'at the ninth hour they rose to pray,' *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 'as she stood and stretched out her hands and was praying'; at the Eucharist, *Acts of Perpetua*, 12; Tertullian, *de Oratione*, 14. In Eastern churches there are to this day no seats (except some sort of stalls along the wall for the aged), and the congregation cannot sit and do not as a congregation kneel, though individuals may kneel from time to time. In prayer the hands were stretched out to heaven: see besides the above quotations 1 Tim 2⁸, and compare the figure of the *Orante* in early Christian painting and sculpture.

forgive, Father which is in heaven, forgive you your trespasses: the substance of clauses of the Lord's Prayer is in large part used by our Lord in these later chapters of Mark (cf. on 14^{36, 38}). If the words were used in the context as given here, the meaning is that no one can be in that right relation with God which ensures that there are no limits to the power of prayer, unless he is first in right relations with his fellow-men (cf. 1 Jn 4²⁰).

26. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses AV: absent from RV, rightly as it seems, for though the verse might have been omitted accidentally, because it ends with the same words as 25, it is on the whole more likely that it was inserted from Mt 6^{14, 15}. The positive statement of 25 can be put into organic connexion with 24 more closely than the negative statement of 26.

XI. 27-XII. 44. The questions put to Jesus, and His comments on them. The final breach.

XI. 27-33. (1) The deputation from the Sanhedrin, 'By what authority doest thou these things?'

27. 'in the temple': the Temple was the scene the day before of the great act of self-assertion by which Jesus had begun

to force matters to an issue: it is on this day the scene throughout of His public teaching (cf. 12³⁵, 13¹). He claims His rightful position in the centre of the worship of God's people.

the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Here for the first time in Mark the three constituent parts of the supreme Jewish authority are formally enumerated (cf. 14⁵³, 15¹: in the latter passage the three are equated with 'the whole council' *synedrion* or Sanhedrin). They are here making, in fact, an official answer to His cleansing of the Temple; His act of challenge to them is met by their challenge to Him to justify the act by stating definitely and publicly on what authority He claimed to do what He had done. They may have hoped to extract some damaging admission on which they could base a legal accusation: but the question was, of course, after the event of the day before, a natural one.

29. Our Lord refuses to give them the handle for which they seek: He refuses to be drawn into a premature declaration which might have provoked His immediate arrest (see also on 14¹³) before the time was come. And we may well believe that He wanted to give them still the chance of thinking out the whole situation. So He counters their question with another: 'I will put a question to you on one point, and if you will make your position clear on that, I can make my position clear to you on the matter of my authority for what I did.'

30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? Not a mere conundrum to put them in a difficulty, but a question with a direct bearing on the situation; for if John's mission was from God, he had pointed to Jesus as the greater than himself for whom his work was but a preparation (1^{7, 8}), and *a fortiori* therefore the mission of Jesus and His authority was from God also, and the cleansing of the Temple an act within His rights. Note once more the primary importance of the Baptist's mission in the scheme of the Gospels, an importance which we are perhaps tempted to overlook: John's preaching was in truth the 'beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ' (1¹).

31. If we shall say. The true text (as it seems) prefixes the preliminary question 'What are we to say?' very much in St. Mark's manner.

32. But should we say (i.e. 'suppose we say'), From men—they feared the people, RV rightly. The alternative answer is broken off, we may picture, with

a shrug of their shoulders: it would not do, and the evangelist supplies the unspoken reason, namely that the popular verdict on John was clear.

verily held (RV): rather, with the alternative reading in the Greek, *knew indeed*—'held' has come in from Mt 21²⁶, and 'verily held' is hardly sense.

XII. 1-12. (1b) The Parable of the Vineyard and the Husbandmen. But though our Lord would give no direct answer to the official demand, He proceeds at once to push matters a long step nearer to the final issue. In the Parable of the Husbandmen He makes clearer than ever before what was the position He claimed for Himself, and what consequences the rejection of His claim by the Jewish authorities would have for them. God had planted for Himself a vineyard (cf. Is 5¹⁻⁷; the same metaphor is applied to the Church in Hermas, *Similitude*, vi), separate from the surrounding ground, and had entrusted the care of it to men who neglected their task, and treated with contumely or worse the prophets whom from time to time throughout the history of the Old Dispensation He had sent to them to remind them of their obligations. Now at last He sent His only Son (see above on 1¹¹); and Him they had made up their minds to put to death. That would be the end of things as they were: the present Dispensation would be brought to a violent close, and the true Israel would have other appointed leaders under the headship of Him whom their existing leaders were even now rejecting.

1. and built a tower (cf. Is 5²): probably in order that a watchman might be set there (2 K 9¹⁷) to scare thieves away: compare the description in the pseudo-Cyprianic *de montibus Sina et Sion*, 14, 15.

8. killed him and cast him forth out of the vineyard: killed him—that is to say, in the vineyard and threw the body outside. That would be the natural course of events: if Luke (20¹⁵) inverts the order and says 'cast him forth out of the vineyard and killed him,' he was probably influenced by the desire to make the parable correspond with the actual details of the death of Christ, who 'suffered without the gate.' The true text of Matthew agrees with Mark.

10, 11. The quotation is from Ps 118: see note on 11⁹ above.

13-17. (2) The question of the Pharisees and Herodians: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar? The official deputation, and the parable that in effect answers the question put by it, form the first stage

of the day's proceedings: the second and third are represented by unofficial deputations, so to say, from the principal parties which divided Jewish political and religious thought. Each propounds a problem which it was hoped would put Jesus into difficulties. But the unofficial parties come under the *ægis* of the Sanhedrin as a whole: 'they send unto him certain . . .'

Of the Pharisees and of the Herodians. The two parties are also mentioned together in 3⁶, and the 'leaven of the Pharisees' and the 'leaven of Herod' are put in juxtaposition by our Lord in 8¹⁵. In those passages the explanation is simply that Pharisees and Herodians were the prominent parties in Galilee: here an additional reason is that the school which took its name from its 'separateness,' and the adherents of the native princes, were the natural people to raise the problem of the right attitude for a good Jew to adopt towards the foreign suzerain power, which since A.D. 6 had in Judæa ousted the native line, so that Jerusalem was under direct Roman administration. 'That they might catch him in talk' (RV) too much suggests a prolonged conversation: literally 'in word,' perhaps as contrasted with the 'deed' of the Cleansing of the Temple. It is almost 'in his answer' to the question which they are going to put to Him

14. true, that is 'straightforward.' He would not hide Himself in a mist of words, but would speak, as He always did, plainly, simply, and directly.

the person of men. The word *proso-pon* is literally 'face,' as in 14⁶⁶: then metaphorically 'outward appearance'—it is technically used for the 'mask' of an actor, and so of a 'character' in a play—as here.

of a truth RV, 'in truth' AV. It means, I think, 'straightforwardly.'

tribute. Strictly and literally that is St. Luke's word: St. Matthew transliterates the Latin 'census,' and that, since it is also found transliterated in Aramaic, was possibly the word in official use. In Mark the evidence is divided between the transliterated 'census' and its Greek equivalent in this particular case 'poll-tax'—that is, a direct personal tax as opposed both to taxes on land and to customs duties. There were no special taxes at this period imposed on Jews as such: but every inhabitant of Judæa paid this direct tax, which went to the Emperor's privy purse, not to the State exchequer, and it was paid in silver *denarii*, which, unlike the copper money

of Palestine, belonged to the imperial coinage proper and bore the name and effigy of the Emperor. In every way, therefore, this tax implied subjugation to an alien power in its acutest form.

15. Shall we give, or shall we not give? (RV, AV): more strictly *Are we to give, or are we not to give?* If our Lord answered No, He could be instantly delated to the Roman authorities on a charge of sedition: if Yes, He would (they thought) be acting inconsistently with His acceptance of the popular homage at the Triumphal Entry, which identified His coming with the coming of the 'Kingdom of our father David' (11^{9, 10}). It is clear from the convergent evidence of all four Gospels that 'He claims to be King' was the substance of the charge brought before Pilate against Jesus.

bring me a penny, that I may see it. The translation 'penny' was not unreasonable in the time of our first English versions, when money possessed far more purchasing power than it does to-day: but it is terribly inappropriate now, and in this passage has the further disadvantage of obscuring the fact that the *denarius*, the coin common to the whole Empire, was silver, while copper coinage was the normal coinage in Palestine (6⁸ the Apostles are to take 'no copper' with them: there was no question of silver), and, just because it was free from pagan symbols, the only coinage current in the Temple. Therefore a *denarius* had to be 'fetched.'

16. *Cæsar's*. The *cognomen* of C. Julius Cæsar, though he was never 'Emperor' at all, impressed itself on Roman usage as the generic name for the Emperors, and from Roman usage passed down the centuries to the German Kaisers and the Russian Tsars. The reigning Emperor, Tiberius, had no drop of the blood of the Julian house in him, being step-son of Augustus, Cæsar's great-nephew.

17. Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Few texts have been more often quoted, and perhaps few more often pressed beyond the original meaning. The purpose of Christ was to draw a sharp distinction between the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena*. The Kingdom which He came to establish was a spiritual Kingdom: to be enrolled as a citizen of that Kingdom and to undertake the obligations attaching to its citizenship was something of so infinitely great a value that questions of civil allegiance, of a Roman Empire or a Jewish national

State, were dwarfed beside it into insignificance. His mission concerned this supreme Kingdom, and had so far nothing to do with any other. But it may fairly be deduced further from the Saying that there was nothing in the Imperial Government, as such, which was necessarily inconsistent with the foundation and spread of the Divine Kingdom on earth.

There was in fact much to be said for the Roman Government of the day. Like the British Raj in India, but on an even larger scale, it had brought order, peace, good government, and on the whole even-handed justice, with all the material blessings that these things carry in their train, to a vast mass of subject peoples, who made up between them nearly the whole of the civilized world. Virgil's paean in the fourth *Eclogue* was not devoid of truth. Even in matters of religion the Empire to no small extent anticipated the impartiality of British rule in India. No attempt had been made to impose the gods of Rome on conquered races: not only toleration but the protection of local rites and national worships was the normal policy of the Empire. The Jews in particular derived the fullest benefit in this regard: the stubborn resistance of the Maccabee movement had had its effect, and self-government in religious affairs was freely, if contemptuously, afforded them. The larger communities of the Dispersion, especially that at Alexandria, had their own separate quarter and their own organization: and historically the Romans had come into possession of Egypt and Syria as successors of the friendly Ptolemies in Egypt and enemies of the oppressive Seleucidæ in Syria (cf. 1 Mac 8, which, whatever its historical truth, reflects the conception in the mind of the writer). Under Cæsar and the earlier Emperors the Jews had been welcomed even in Rome: and the cult of the living Emperor as a divinity was as yet only in its beginnings. Even the worship of the genius of Rome and Augustus, intended as a sort of universal and unifying religious basis throughout the Empire for the existing state of things, left the Jews aside. Caligula's attempt, ten years later, to set up his statue in the Temple, however symptomatic of the later trend of Imperial policy, was in itself the isolated freak of a madman. And on the other side, the story of the next generation in Palestine was enough to show how far the anti-Roman movement of the Zealots was tainted with fanaticism and bloodshed. Small wonder, then, that religious Jews, what-

ever their political theories, felt that in practice acquiescence in the rule of the *de facto* government had much to recommend it.

Did our Lord mean to go beyond this, and to lay down for the citizens of His Kingdom a settled and permanent principle of non-intervention in worldly affairs? That was of course one of the charges most commonly brought against Christians from the end of the 1st century onwards: and no doubt it was, when the Church was a small minority pitted against the whole forces of society and the State, an inevitable consequence of the position. But our Lord's words must not be pressed to that meaning, now that Christians have their position and duties as citizens on equal terms with others—God has work for them to do in the world as well as in the Church—any more than they should be pressed to mean that Christians may under no circumstances take up arms against tyranny or oppression. Yet they are a permanent reminder that God's Kingdom in nature and His Kingdom in grace are distinct things, and all through the present age must remain distinct. The history of the 4th century, let alone of the centuries that have since elapsed, illustrates only too well the constant danger that this distinctness should be forgotten, and that in the process of accommodation Christian ideals, at one point or another, should suffer loss.

18-27. (3) The question of the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection. The third problem is propounded by the Sadducees. These were the sacerdotal aristocracy, the coterie of the families from among whom the High Priest was drawn, rich through the revenues accruing under the priestly code of the Old Testament, educated in Greek as well as in Hebrew literature, in fact the *élite* of culture, wealth, and official position at Jerusalem: they are never heard of throughout the Gospels in Galilee, and this is the first occasion on which our Lord is brought into contact with them. Theologically their special tenet was the denial of any resurrection. To the mass of Jews the belief in immortality had come to be, since the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, an integral element of their religion: against the gloom of the present they had learnt to set their hopes on a future age where the balance would be redressed, and God would vindicate His holiness and bring in by an act of universal judgement the reign of His elect. But the Sadducees, content with

what the present life had to give, saw no need to budge from a conservative adherence to the older Jewish view that God's judgements were accomplished in this world alone. And they thought to pose our Lord with a difficulty that was indeed obvious and real, so real that it may have had something to do with the discouragement of second marriages in the early Church. They put an extreme case—a woman who had had seven brothers as successive husbands. Jewish feeling laid great stress on the continuance of the family line: and the Deuteronomic law (Dt 25⁵) directed that in the event of an elder brother dying childless, his unmarried brother (or if need were his brothers successively) should marry the widow, and 'raise up seed unto his brother.' In the case put, seven brothers married in succession the same wife, and all died childless: whose wife, if there was such a thing as a resurrection state, would she be in it? If the wife of one, of which and why? if of all, what of the law of monogamy?

Problems of this sort can be multiplied easily enough. Of two brothers, if one die young or an infant, and the other in old age, how is the experience wanting to the one to be made up to him? And our answer must be that we simply cannot tell. Nor does our Lord enlighten our ignorance: He tells the Sadducees that they are hopelessly wrong in transferring the conditions of the present life into that of the world to come, where all limitations of age and sex, as well as of education and position, are transcended on to a higher plane of life in God. That principle they could have found adumbrated in Scripture, when God said of Himself to Moses, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for whatever is in present relation with Him must share His life (cf. pp. 184a-185a).

23. In the resurrection (RV): *in the resurrection when they shall rise* AV, rightly as it seems, in spite of the inferior MS. evidence, for such redundancy of expression is very characteristic of Mark (cf. e.g. 13¹⁹, 'from the beginning of the creation which God created'), and the phrase is taken up again in 35 'when they shall rise from the dead.' In the parallels to both verses Matthew and Luke have only the noun 'the resurrection': it is their constant habit to prune away one or other of Mark's redundant synonyms, as e.g. at Mk I 32, 42, 14 30.

25. marry, of the man: given in marriage, of the woman.

26. in the book of Moses, as Ac 7⁴² 'in the book of the Prophets,' i.e. the twelve minor Prophets.

in the place concerning the Bush RV, probably correctly, the reference being to a part of a book, as Rom 11² (RVm) 'in Elijah,' i.e. in the portion concerning Elijah. There were no chapters or verses in ancient MSS. of the Bible: and therefore this sort of reference according to subject-matter was natural and inevitable.

28-34. (4) The question of an individual scribe: What commandment ranks first of all? The last of the series of questions put to our Lord differs from the previous three in being put by an individual on his own initiative, and without any hostile intention. A scribe, of the Pharisee party no doubt, had listened with approval to our Lord's answer to the Sadducee deputation, and moved (it would seem) by an honest desire to inform himself as to what Jesus regarded as the core of His teaching, asked Him what was the fundamental commandment of the Law. Our Lord answers with texts taken *verbatim* from the Pentateuch (Dt 6^{4, 5}; Lev 19¹⁸), so stated as (1) to put in the forefront the supreme contribution of Judaism to the history of religion in the world, faith in One Only God, (2) to interpret the whole duty of man, to the One God and to his fellow-men, in terms of the single verb 'to love.'

28. knowing RV, as in 12¹⁵ 'knowing their hypocrisy': *perceiving* AV, rendering the same Greek word as in 12³⁴ 'saw that he answered discreetly.' The reading represented by AV is quite well supported, and makes better sense.

32. Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one, RV. It is rather difficult to get this order of the words out of the Greek; and it is tempting to render *Right, Master, with truth hast thou said that he is one.*

35. answered and said. No question had been asked: and it seems to be a habit of Mark to use the participle and verb 'answering said' as not really meaning more than 'went on to say' (cf. 10^{24, 51}, 11¹⁴, 15¹²).

35-37. The questions had been asked and dealt with: our Lord was left unmolested for the moment to continue His own teaching on His own lines. He proceeds therefore to develop the challenge raised by Him in the parable of the Husbandmen and the Only Son, as to His own person and office. He appeals now to a passage in the Psalms; and the point

is made, as so often in His teaching, in the form of a question, because if men have to answer they have first to think. It was common ground in current Pharisaic teaching (the Sadducees had less interest in Messianic speculation) that Messiah would come of David's line, and that was probably the implication of the triumphal appeal on Palm Sunday to 'the kingdom of our father David' (11¹⁰). Now in a Psalm admitted to be Messianic (Ps 110) the Psalmist calls Messiah his Lord: how can you reconcile Lordship and sonship? Our Lord did not mean to deny the latter: but He wanted His hearers to see that there was here a problem to be thought over. The heading of Mark's Gospel is 'the good news of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God'; and while the first half of the Gospel culminates in the confession 'Thou art the Messiah' (8²⁹), the second half of it sets in view, more and more clearly as the story goes on, our Lord's effort to make men realize that He who was Messiah and Son of Man was more than man and was Lord of man.

A difficulty, and a serious one, stares us in the face with regard to the form in which the argument is cast. As stated, it assumes and turns on the Davidic authorship of Ps 110. Yet nobody would wish nowadays to be committed to belief in anything of the sort. Whether or no any portion of the Psalter goes back to David, it is at least in the highest degree unlikely that Ps 110 has anything to do with him. It cannot but be unpalatable to Christians to admit that our Lord used an argument which, as stated, is invalid. But there are three things to be borne in mind. (1) It would really be much more upsetting to all idea of the fitness of things if our Lord had explained that David was not the real author of the Psalm: we should all agree that He had not really entered into the 'measure' of human nature if He had displayed knowledge in earthly things that was outside the reach of His time and place in the history of the world. (2) He does very distinctly tell His most intimate disciples, 13³², that the Son was ignorant of the day and hour of the End. But if the Son of God had emptied Himself, in order to become Man as we are men, of knowledge of the time of His own Second Coming, it almost follows *a fortiori* that in matters of such comparative unimportance as the authorship of the Psalm, He would have been subject to the natural limitations of knowledge which belonged to the age in which He lived. (3) So far, so good: what still oppresses us is not

the ignorance itself, but the consequent resting of an argument about Himself on a premiss which being invalid made the conclusion *pro tanto* invalid—though after all the particular premiss does not make the conclusion invalid for more than the particular reference to David. It remains true that a Psalmist spoke of Messiah as his Lord, and that therefore the Son of Man is more than man. But the fundamental answer is a deeper one. If once the main thesis of the Gospel be accepted that He whom the disciples first knew as Very Man was at the same time the Only Son of God, then we simply cannot pretend to fathom all the consequences of that tremendous mystery. We can only take whatever things we learn from our Lord's own words in the Gospels as our *data*, and build up our theology on them: above all things we must beware of reversing the process and wresting the *data* to suit the theology. Docetic tendencies—the tendency, that is, to suppress the truth of our Lord's real manhood and His real limitations under the conditions of His life in the flesh—have been, in the history of Christological speculation, the most serious danger to which Christian thought has all along been exposed. (Cf. pp. 185b-186b, 205 ff.)

37. the common people: RVm 'the great multitude,' which is literal but meaningless: it is just 'the masses.' Mark is extraordinarily fond of adding an adjective to denote the size of a crowd: here he wants to illustrate the large amount of popular interest that was felt in Jesus at Jerusalem.

heard him gladly is definitely a stronger phrase than the original, which is hardly more than 'liked to listen to him.' The same phrase is used of Herod Antipas and the Baptist in 6²⁰ (Swete).

38-40. Why are 'the scribes' singled out by our Lord as those whom He confutes (35-37) and denounces? Not because their faults were greater than the faults for instance of the Sadducees, but, no doubt, because they were the religious leaders of those to whom our Lord was speaking. It was their teaching and their example which would influence the masses: and it is of a piece with His whole determination to force matters to an issue that He now turns on what we may call the clerical class. The scribes were not indeed technically 'priests'—clerical influence and domination are not confined to religious bodies of which the ministers are called 'priests'—but they were the men with religious authority, and they were a profession; and both their

foibles and their vices were those of clericalism. They liked attention and deference: at their worst they made material profit out of spiritual influence.

desire RV; AV, much better, *love*. RV would suggest that the desire was not necessarily effective. Doubtless the Greek word in its classical sense means 'wish': but in modern Greek it has sunk to be the auxiliary verb of the future tense, like the English 'will,' and Mark's Greek shows quite definite signs of the process of deterioration by which such verbs as 'can,' 'will,' 'have' end by being simply auxiliary. 'Which like to walk' represents here Mark's meaning.

long robes of RV is perhaps better than 'long clothing' of AV, but the point is not so much the length as the impressiveness. A cassock would hardly count as a *stole* or 'robe': 'dress-clothes' would be more like it, if we ever wore them in the daytime; cf. Lk 15²².

salutations . . . chief seats . . . chief places: that is to say, signs of public deference, such as with us raising the hat, or in church front pews, and at dinner the seat on the right of host or hostess.

40. In the construction of this verse I follow the margin of Westcott and Hort (which is indeed the only way to make grammar) and believe our Lord to be distinguishing the foibles which precede from the graver faults which follow. 'Those among them who devour widows' houses or make use of devotional habits from ulterior motives, they shall receive severer judgement' than those who only make use of their position to exact outward signs of respect.

devour widows' houses. Widows are mentioned because they would presumably be the only Jewish women who would have large households and large incomes: the widows, for instance, of Jews who died in the Dispersion often came back to settle in Jerusalem, and though many of them were poor (Ac 6¹), some would be wealthy. Women all the world over have been more subject to religious influences and charitable instincts (all honour to them!) than men; and as long as the husband was alive the scheming ecclesiastic would have a much poorer chance.

41-44. The widow's mite. St. Mark has given much emphasis to our Lord's warnings against riches: here he illustrates the converse side, His benediction of the poor. Money is so useful for religious and charitable purposes that there is always the temptation to think more of the large offerings of the rich

than of smaller offerings which may yet represent a much greater effort and more real self-denial. Subscription lists are dangerous things at best.

the treasury, that is, the boxes for contributions which appear to have been ranged against the wall of the Court of the Women in the Herodian Temple; since no Gentile could penetrate there, the offerings were from Jews only, and if it is correct that only copper coins (RVm 'brass' is rather misleading) were allowed in the Temple, a large contribution would necessarily make a good deal of noise.

42. two mites which make a farthing. The 'mite' was the smallest coin in use, and Mark explains for his Roman readers that two of them were only equivalent to a *quadrans* (he transliterates the Latin word), the quarter of an *as*: since sixteen *asses* went to a *denarius*, the *as* was not much more than a halfpenny and the *quadrans* was much less than a farthing.

more than all: not merely more than any of them, but more than all of them put together.

XIII. 1, 2. The prophecy of the destruction of the Temple must beyond all reasonable doubt have been actually uttered by our Lord. Not only does it find place in one form or another in all our Gospels, but it was the subject of a charge brought against Him before Caiaphas (14⁵⁸): it was repeated against Him at the Crucifixion (15²⁹: see also the note on 14⁶⁵): it appears to lie behind the story of St. Stephen, whether in the charge made against him (Ac 6¹⁴) or in the whole contrast underlying his defence, as to the relative validity of the Law and the Temple: and if St. Luke's version of our Lord's words (21²⁰) and perhaps even St. Matthew's (24¹⁵) may be suspect as being coloured by the event, St. Mark's Gospel was certainly published before the final catastrophe. For the additional words found here in the Western text see note on 14⁵⁷⁻⁶¹.

behold what manner of stones and what manner of buildings RV. The exclamation of the unnamed disciple (probably Peter did not know, or had forgotten, who it was) is more naive in the original: 'Just look! what huge stones! what huge buildings!' Herod the Great, like the late Leopold II of Belgium, had a passion for building on a big scale: the impression made by his Temple on a Galilean visitor must have been as great as, perhaps even greater than, the impression of St. Peter's on a modern pilgrim in Rome.

3. on the mount of Olives over against

the temple. The Temple was on the east side of the city and therefore in full view from the hill facing Jerusalem from the east across the intervening valley of the Kidron.

3-37. The Signs of the End: the so-called Little Apocalypse. Just as the Eschatological school of Albert Schweitzer and his followers lays primary stress on this chapter as containing the quintessence of the message of Jesus—His supposed indifference to the world as it is, because of the imminent overthrow of all actual conditions with the return of Messiah in judgement and the visible establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth—so the Liberal Protestant school, alike in Germany and among ourselves, finds much that is here put in the mouth of Christ so unpalatable, indeed so irreconcilable with its conception of Him and His mission, that it tends to deny the authentic character of the tradition. But it is quite impossible to believe that the anticipation of the triumphant return of Christ could have had such firm hold on the first Christian generation, if it had not had deep roots in our Lord's own teaching.

asked him privately. The Greek verb, according to Mark's custom when a verb is followed by several names of which the first is the most important, is in the singular (1³⁶, 3³⁴, 8²⁷): Peter was at least the spokesman. It is very important to note that the apocalyptic matter of this chapter was not public teaching at all, not even part of the training of the Twelve, but a very private talk with Jesus' most intimate friends. There had been in more general discourse references to the Return—e.g. 8³⁸, 9¹—and our Lord did not hesitate to proclaim it before Caiaphas (14⁶²); but details about the indications which would precede it were not part of the Gospel, and He only discussed them in confidence with some few of those who were to be His most trusted representatives, and at the very close of His Ministry.

5-37. The discourse divides itself into three parts. (1) The signs before the End (5-23); (2) the End (24-27); (3) the Moral (28-37).

5-23. (1) The section begins and ends with the two words *Be on the look out* ('take heed') and *lead astray*: apocalyptic expectation is an upsetting thing, and calls for a temper of reserve and restraint. What He tells them in general is intended to calm and reassure them as to the immediate moment. They must not be looking at once for the End:

not every upset in the world is the beginning of the final tribulation: not every appearance of a supposed Christ is a sign of the final manifestation of the powers of evil. These things are only the beginning of travail: the End is not yet, and the 'good news' must first be preached everywhere (7, 8, 10). There will be increasing tension between the forces of good and the forces of evil, between the powers that be and the company of Christ's followers. Family ties will count for nothing: persecution will come upon them not only from their own people but from their own parents or children. Everywhere they will encounter odium for the sake of the Name. Then will come a supreme effort of the forces of evil, alike in the physical and in the spiritual sphere: at Jerusalem the 'abomination of desolation,' throughout Judæa tribulation so terrible that the whole population would be like to be exterminated if God for His Elect people's sake had not mercifully determined to hasten the consummation; on Christian faith a more deadly assault through pseudo-Christian teaching and pseudo-Christian miracles.

5, 6. These two verses are a preliminary summary, ⁶ being taken up again in 21, 22; see note there.

6. 'in my name, saying, I am he' RV; 'I am Christ' AV: the point of the false pretence was that they would claim to be the actual Jesus of Nazareth, returning, as He had promised, to bring in His Kingdom in power. Otherwise 'in my name' would seem to be meaningless.

7, 8. The 'hearing' about wars, about 'nation' against 'nation,' the news of earthquakes and famines, all point outside Palestine, to the happenings in the great world around. That is the first stage of catastrophe: but it will not directly affect the disciples in Palestine.

9-20. After the general prophecy of political commotions and convulsions of nature in the world around them, our Lord concentrates His vision on His immediate surroundings at home. Coincident with disturbances outside, there will be, He warns them, a time of persecution for His followers at the hands of their fellow-countrymen, and after that tribulation beyond anything so far known on all in Judæa, Christians and non-Christians alike.

9-12. The horizon is here limited to the relations of Christians with Judaism: the Roman Empire is nowhere indicated as initiating persecution. 'Councils' (i.e. local Sanhedrins) and *synagogues* are obviously Jewish, and the punishment

inflicted by them is Jewish ('of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one,' 2 Cor 11²⁴): 'governors and kings' are Roman officials like Pilate (Mt 27²; Lk 20²⁰), Felix and Festus (Ac 23²⁴, 26³⁰), and Jewish kinglets like Herod Antipas (6¹⁴), Herod Agrippa I (Ac 12¹) or Herod Agrippa II (Ac 26³⁰), secular authorities before whom the Jews would bring Christians for the sake of securing the death penalty which they had not themselves the power to inflict.

9. for a testimony unto them RV, literally; AV, giving the sense, 'for a testimony against them,' i.e. against the Jews: cf. 6¹¹ (1⁴⁴).

10. must first be preached unto all the nations (see on 11¹⁷): rather *must needs be*, since the meaning is 'must as the Scriptures teach' (see on 8³¹). So certainly the Apostles in their earliest preaching (e.g. Ac 2³⁹, 3²⁵) proclaimed the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Messianic Kingdom on the basis of the Scriptures: and it is reasonable to think that this earliest preaching was based on our Lord's own words.

14. when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not (let him that readeth understand) . . . RV rightly. The language is based on the pollution of the Temple under Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan 11³¹, 12¹¹); but it is intentionally obscure, because there is meant to be an indication of the Roman power, and open reference to it might be construed as treasonable. The combination of neuter and masculine, 'the abomination . . . standing where he ought not,' has an exact parallel in 2 Thess 2^{6,7}, 'that which restraineth' (the Empire), 'he that restraineth' (the Emperor). The evangelist's parenthesis 'let him that readeth understand' simply asks the reader of the Gospel to look beneath the surface, for what is said is less than what is meant, exactly as in Rev 13¹⁸, where 'he that hath understanding' will see that the number of the Beast conceals an allusion to Nero. It may be useful to add that, though the Greek word for 'readeth' means properly to 'read aloud,' that does not prevent its applying here to the individual reader, since the ancients read aloud to themselves: Augustine notes that the usage of St. Ambrose was peculiar—he read, as we do, to himself, without using his voice.

in Judæa: that is, Judæa in the narrower sense (not including Samaria and Galilee), as always in St. Mark (3⁷, 10¹).

15. not go down RV after Mt 24¹⁷: AV *not go down into the house*. Not

only is the redundancy 'into the house . . . out of the house' quite in St. Mark's style, but the reading of RV makes nonsense, for a man on the roof must 'go down' to get away at all.

20. would have been saved, in the physical sense, as generally in St. Mark: see on 5²³.

shortened: a picturesque colloquial word, properly used in the literal sense 'amputated,' and in the New Testament only found here and in the parallel passage in Matthew (24²²), who, however, avoids 'the Lord shortened the days' by turning it into the passive 'those days had been shortened.' Metaphorical use of words being more characteristic of English than of Greek, we could quite easily render 'curtailed.'

elect whom he chose (AV 'hath chosen'); in Greek the noun and verb are the same word, 'his elect whom he (hath) elected.'

22. false Christs: the best 'Western' authorities omit the word, and it has perhaps been introduced into St. Mark's text from St. Matthew, for it is rather the mark of a 'false prophet' to show lying wonders: see especially Rev 13^{13,14}, 19³⁰: the 'for' which connects 22 with 21 appears in fact to imply that the reference is not to the false Christ himself, but to the man who says, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' that is, to the false prophet.

24-27. (2) The End. When Christ should in fact return, there would be no doubt about it: His Coming would be in the strictest sense catastrophic, a complete and instant 'overthrow' of the present age, at the moment when evil seemed entirely triumphant and the elect had all but failed under the double pressure of physical and spiritual trial.

26. See note on 14⁶².

27. from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven (Greek 'of earth . . . of heaven'); the Old Testament parallels are all either 'from the uttermost part of heaven to its uttermost part' (so here Matthew), or 'from the uttermost part of earth to its uttermost part'; in Mark both are combined, simply in order to make the description as widely flung as possible. Above all, the phrase must not be taken to suggest 'the living elect on earth,' 'the departed elect in heaven'; the New Testament gives no colour to the idea that departed saints are 'in heaven' before the Consummation.

28-37. (3) The Moral. What is the lesson to be learnt by those to whom

this teaching about the Signs of the End and the End itself had been addressed? It is twofold: in the first place, that there will be preceding Signs, and that they will be no more meaningless than that spring—He points to a budding fig-tree—is meaningless as a sign of summer; in the second place that the actual moment of the End cannot be made known to them, for it is not known even to Him, and that their attitude must therefore be just that of 'wakefulness' (³³), a different word to 'watch') and 'watching' (³⁵), lest the Master who is leaving them should on His return take them unawares.

28, 29. even so ye also suggests a definite contrast with the subject of the preceding verse: instead of 'ye know' in ²⁸, we must therefore adopt the alternative reading (it is only the interchange of two almost equivalent vowel sounds in the Greek) *it is known*, 'men know.'

these things, that is, the Signs of ⁶⁻²³, preliminary to the End, as opposed to 'those days' of ²⁴. The Greek words for 'these' and 'those' imply a sharper contrast than their English equivalents.

30, 31. This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished . . . of that day or that hour knoweth no one . . . neither [not even] the Son, but the Father. Much was indeed accomplished in the generation of our Lord's own contemporaries; the final breach between the new Israel and the old, the martyrdom of the chief Apostles, the catastrophic close of the Jewish polity: but yet not all the things predicted, and after nineteen centuries the Master's return still mercifully tarries—like Tertullian we may still pray 'pro mora finis,' for the delay of the End. What explanation are we to give of the difficulty? Are we to suppose that in the course of thirty or forty years, as some at any rate of the preceding Signs seemed being fulfilled, the expectation had become more acute and the tradition of our Lord's words had unconsciously taken on a more definite form? It cannot be said that there is any evidence of this: the earlier utterance recorded in 8 ³⁸, 9 ¹, so far as it goes, is against it: and the very writing down of a Gospel perhaps implies as its background the idea that the use of the written word might not be wholly ephemeral. Or are we rather to remind ourselves of our Lord's own statement in ³² that He, the Father's Only Son, was, in His Incarnate life, as ignorant of the moment of the End as we are ourselves? Christians have from early times to our own, and particularly after the rise of

Arianism, which deduced an essential difference of nature between an all-knowing Father and a not all-knowing Son, been reluctant to take these words in their natural meaning. But the apostolic tradition of our Lord's own sayings must be our primary guide as to the conditions of that Self-emptying of which St. Paul speaks (Phil 2 7; 2 Cor 8 9), and we must honestly consider whatever deductions appear to follow from them. In such a matter no Christian critic can speak more than tentatively and with reverent caution, and always with the recollection that the *ultima ratio* is the guidance of the Spirit in the Body of Christ. But it does not seem that we can exclude consideration of the possibility that the ignorance which our Lord attributed to Himself was not merely academic but a real ignorance with real results. See the note on 12 ³⁶ above. (Cf. also pp. 193b-194b.)

33. and pray: the addition is quite inappropriate in this context, and has doubtless been introduced from 14 ³⁸; the omitting authorities are very few but the very best, both Greek and Latin.

34. given authority to his servants: rather *given his servants their authority* or possibly *his authority*—the Greek article implies one or other. The use of the word is natural when we remember that those addressed were all Apostles, office-bearers in the Divine household.

commanded also the porter to watch RV: AV more simply *and commanded*. If RV is right, the clause becomes a sort of climax to the whole verse; even with AV the emphasis on 'the porter' individually after 'the servants' in general is not a little remarkable. I cannot help suspecting that a reference to St Peter is intended in the phrase. The singular verb 'watch' in ³⁴ combined with the plural in ³⁶ is of a type with other references in the Gospel tradition to Peter singly and the Apostles collectively, e.g. Mt 16 ¹³, 18 ¹⁸.

35. at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning: the four watches of three hours each, into which the Romans divided the night (cf. 6 ⁴⁸), put into popular language.

37. what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch. The duty just inculcated on the office-bearers of the household of God is equally incumbent on all its members. The ethics of the Christian clergy are not a separate code from the ethics of the laity: in their different measures they have the same code.

XIV. 1-XVI. 8. Sixth main section of the Gospel: the Passion and Resurrection.

1-11. Wednesday in Holy Week.—The previous day was Tuesday (11²⁰⁻¹³³⁷); and though it is not said that this was the next day, yet the following day (14¹²) was certainly Thursday, the day before the Crucifixion, so that the intervening day can only have been Wednesday. And that is also the result to be obtained from the phrase here used, 'after two days' was the Passover: for if 'after three days' (see on 8³¹) means the interval from Friday to Sunday, which we, not counting both ends, call two days, by parity of reasoning 'after two days' must mean what we should call one day, i.e. 'the next day.' The next day, then, was the Passover, because St. Mark, writing for Gentiles, uses the Roman (and modern) reckoning of the day from midnight to midnight: see note on 12.

On the Wednesday, then, St. Mark places the definite determination of the 'chief priests and scribes,' that is not the Sanhedrin officially (15¹ and apparently 11²⁷), but the leading members of the Sadducee and Pharisee parties, to effect a private arrest of Jesus. The emphatic word, put first in the Greek in accordance with constant Greek idiom, is 'with subtilty'; and the reason for avoiding an open arrest is that 'they said, Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people.' The connexion between premiss and conclusion is not at first sight obvious: but remembering that Mark regularly means, by the phrase 'they said,' '(unnamed) people said' (e.g. 2¹⁸, 3³², 5³⁵: see on 3²¹), it would seem that the argument was being put forward by some that an arrest at Passover with all the crowd then present at Jerusalem, many of whom were sympathizers with Jesus (11^{8, 18}, 12^{12, 37}), might provoke a riot; and that the 'chief priests' so far deferred to the objection that they proposed to make the arrest privately on some occasion when they could find Jesus alone and comparatively unattended. That was why the assistance of Judas was all-important and so eagerly welcomed by them: that was perhaps why our Lord enveloped His future movements with so much secrecy, see 14¹³⁻¹⁶.

3-9. The meal at Bethany, placed apparently by St. Mark on the Wednesday, is definitely transferred to an earlier day in Jn 12¹⁻⁸. And it is just possible that St. Mark only records it here because the anointing 'beforehand for the Burial' belongs to the story of the Passion, somewhat in the same way that the execution

of John the Baptist is recorded at the moment when Herod began to interest himself in our Lord's preaching.

3. in the house of Simon the leper. We hear nothing of this Simon elsewhere: the name was very common, like Judas and Levi and Joseph, as being that of one of the twelve patriarchs: whether he was of the family of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary (Jn 12¹⁻³), we cannot tell, but obviously he was connected with the circle who gave lodging to our Lord and the Apostles at Bethany, 11^{11, 12} (13³).

an alabaster cruse of ointment of spikenard very costly. St. Mark characteristically (or St. Peter before him) heaps up the details that illustrate the value of the gift: Matthew (26⁷)—Luke also, if we are to bring Lk 7³⁷⁻⁴⁸ into connexion with this episode—reduces the epithets to the smallest compass, while the 4th Gospel copies St. Mark's description much more closely. What St. Mark's *pisticæ* meant, the earliest Latin and Syriac translators knew no better than we do, for they simply transliterate the word: both AV and RV omit in the text and give various alternatives in the margin. Perhaps it is worth considering whether Mark did not really mean *pisticæ*, 'of the pistachio nut.'

4. some: Jn 12⁴ says it was Judas. Either Judas was supported by others, or St. Peter simply had not noticed or did not remember. The objection was not unnatural: 'three hundred pence' (*denarii*), that is to say £10 or more—Matthew and Luke again drop the number, John again retains it: compare on Mk 6³⁷—was a large sum for anyone, and for our Lord and the Twelve a very large sum indeed. But He would not check the woman's devotion; and we may reasonably see in His approval of it a sanction for costly offerings for the worship of God in His Church, if we remember that these must be exceptional and that the poor who are 'always with us' are the regular channels for our offerings to Him (10²¹).

8. she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying. To the Jews the due performance of the rites of burial was placed very high in the scale of religious duties: see the Book of Tobit (1^{17, 18}, 2⁸⁻⁷, 14¹⁰⁻¹⁸), and note the contrast in Lk 16²² between Lazarus who 'died' and the rich man who 'died and was buried'; for our Lord's burial see Mk 16¹; Jn 19^{39, 40}.

9. the gospel (that is, 'the good news') RV rightly, according to Mark's regular usage, and an indication of his early date (see on 1¹): Mt 26²⁸ (followed here by

AV) 'this Gospel,' and Matthew makes the same change in 24¹⁴ = Mk 13¹⁰.

10. he that was one of the twelve RV rightly, but the margin is still better *the one of the twelve*. An odd phrase, but not inappropriate, if we take St. Mark to mean 'the Judas who was one of the twelve,' in contrast with 'Judas of James,' whom St. Luke includes among the Twelve (Lk 6¹⁶; Ac 1¹³: cf. Jn 15²²), though Mk 3¹⁸, followed by Mt 10^{3,4}, does not.

11. conveniently, literally 'at a good season,' i.e. avoiding, according to the desire of the chief priests, any publicity.

XIV. 12-72. Thursday in Holy Week.

12. on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover. Strictly speaking the first day of unleavened bread, Nisan 15, began at sunset, and the paschal lambs were slain a few hours earlier, that is to say, by Jewish reckoning on the afternoon of Nisan 14. By Roman and modern reckoning the killing of the lamb in the afternoon and the eating in the evening would of course fall on the same day: see on 1.

that thou mayest eat the passover. Our Gospel is absolutely clear that the Last Supper was also the Passover: the 4th Gospel is equally clear that Passover fell on the day following, and many or most modern critics prefer its narrative. The constant use of leavened bread for the Eucharist in the Eastern Church implies the Johannine tradition: just similarly unleavened bread was probably introduced in the West because the scholars of the Carolingian revival accepted the Synoptic account, and so assumed that unleavened bread was used at the Institution.

But if the 4th Gospel is right, how is it that Peter, or even Mark, can have made what is at first sight so incredible a blunder? Let us cast our thoughts back to that first Good Friday evening. Can we suppose that Peter and his fellow-disciples, at the moment when their Master had just been put to a shameful death, proceeded to celebrate the Paschal meal? Must they not rather, instead of keeping the feast, have fasted and wept, and dwelt rather on the meal of the preceding evening when He had last eaten with them and had left them the Memorial of the New Covenant in His Blood? What it all meant they did not yet realize: but either all the faith and hope they had cherished had crumbled to dust, or something had happened which was radically to transform the Old Covenant and its rites. Pass on a year: as Nisan 14-15

came round again, were the disciples to think of the Jewish Passover, or of the death of Jesus and of its meaning for them and for Israel and for the world? Were they to feast or fast 'in that day when the Bridegroom' had been 'taken from them'? Is it overbold to suggest that they may have treated the preceding evening, that of the Last Supper, as the Jewish Pascha, and then on Nisan 14-15 have kept their Christian Pascha, the fast that ended in the Easter feast? If this were so, we can see how easily the phraseology would grow up which spoke of the Last Supper as a Passover. There is no direct evidence, to be sure: but there is a real problem to solve, and what else but some such explanation will solve it?

13-16. The reason for the roundabout directions given for the finding of the house where Jesus intended to eat the Passover with His disciples was presumably for secrecy and to avoid arrest, and therefore perhaps also to give no clue beforehand to Judas as to His movements.

14. The Master saith. Clearly our Lord was known to the owner of the house. It is not at all unlikely that the 'large upper room' was also that in which the disciples met after the Ascension (Ac 1¹³). See note on 6¹.

17-25. The Last Supper.

17. with the twelve: obviously not a separate set of people from 'the disciples' who in 12 had enquired about the preparations to be made, but more or less identical with them. See also 6^{30, 35}, 9^{31, 35}, 11^{11, 14}.

19, 20. The question and answer as given in Mark are barely intelligible without the fuller details of the 4th Gospel. The Twelve cannot all have asked our Lord privately and all received a private answer: yet a public answer would have defeated its object. The ambiguity has arisen from the fact that it was St. Peter to whom the answer was given, and that, as so often elsewhere in this Gospel, he has suppressed his own name.

21. the Son of man goeth. There is no ordinary word in Greek, oddly enough, for 'go' as opposed to 'come': Mark uses—frequently in the imperative, but otherwise only in 6^{31, 33}, 'coming and going,' and here—a word which presumably was colloquial only, for Luke almost always, Matthew sometimes, omit or replace by another word; St. Paul never uses it, but it is common in the 4th Gospel and the Apocalypse (cf. Rev 13¹⁰, 17⁸). Here, too, as in the Apocalypse, it seems

to mean 'goes on his way,' 'goes to his death.'

as it is written: see on 9¹². We should note how very close, as the end draws near, Biblical thoughts and language are to the mind and speech of our Lord (cf. 24, 27, 34, 36, 49, 62, 15³⁴).

22-25. The other accounts of the Institution of the Eucharist are in 1 Cor II 23-25; Mt 26 26-29; Lk 22 16-20. The textual confusion in some of the accounts shows very clearly how far liturgical usage and the instinctive desire to unify the tradition of so universal and sacred a formula were early at work in obscuring the original words of the evangelists. All the more important is it to note that our earliest authorities, St. Paul and St. Mark, agree on the essential elements: 'He took bread [or rather "a loaf"], and when he had given thanks' ['had blessed it' Mark] 'he brake it . . . and said, This is my Body.' But the text of St. Paul has affected in many of the best MSS. the text of St. Luke; and it is at least possible that the text of St. Matthew—the Gospel which was so largely based on St. Mark, but which so largely in the 2nd century superseded St. Mark—has in all but one of our witnesses affected the text of St. Mark. For while in the account of the Institution of the Cup the structure of Mark's text differs sensibly from that of Matthew's, in the Institution of the Bread their texts are practically identical, save in one, and only one, witness. That witness is, however, the codex Bobiensis (B), the unique fragment of the earliest Latin version as used by St. Cyprian in the middle of the 3rd century: and its text of Mark runs thus: 'He took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them, and they all ate of it: and he said to them, This is my Body. And he took a cup and blessed and gave to them, and they all drank of it: and he said to them, This is my Blood . . .' If this is the true text of Mark, he recorded the Institution of the Bread and that of the Cup on precisely the same lines, and Matthew made the same alteration in both, replacing the statement that 'all ate,' 'all drank' by the command 'Take, eat,' 'Drink.'

22, 24. this is my body . . . This is my blood: Mark never puts into our Lord's mouth such figurative expressions as 'I am the Door' or the like, and there is no reason at all to suppose that he and his readers did not understand the language of our Lord at the Institution to mean just what it said: the words are so familiar that it is quite impossible for us to realize how the tremendous claim here

made must have startled any outsider, however much in sympathy with the Christian ideal, into whose hands the Gospel may have come. Jn 6⁵² suggests the language that might have been used: and that may be why the 4th Gospel, and perhaps the 3rd as well, omit the actual Institution. It had become a Christian *arcanum*, a 'mystery' in the strict sense, hidden from all but the 'initiated.'

24. my blood of the covenant RV rightly: in most MSS. of Mark, and in nearly all of Matthew, the adjective 'new' has been added from 1 Cor II 25. The words 'the Blood of the Covenant' are repeated directly from Ex 24⁸: 'And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.' But this was a greater Covenant, and this Blood was no longer the blood of oxen, but the Blood of the Mediator of the New Covenant Himself.

which is shed [literally 'which is being poured out'] for many. Not 'many' as opposed to 'all' (Christ 'died for all,' 2 Cor 5^{14, 16}), but 'many' in contrast with 'one': not even, primarily, the 'many' (Jew and Gentile) as opposed to the one Chosen People of the Old Dispensation, but, as in 10⁴⁵, the 'many' redeemed and the One Redeemer. Cf. Rom 5¹⁵; Is 53^{11, 12}: 'by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many . . . he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many.'

25. the fruit of the vine, literally 'the produce of the vine.' The Greek word, when spelt with two n's, means 'that which is born' of men or animals; when spelt, as here, with one n, 'that which is made' or produced from anything inanimate: cf. Nu 6⁴ (of the Nazarites), 'nothing that is made of the vine tree.'

until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. Matthew adds 'with you,' Luke, perhaps disliking the words eating and drinking in connexion with the Kingdom, substitutes 'till the kingdom of God come.' Jewish imagery tended to picture the future life under very material forms (so especially the Apocalypse, and that was one principal reason for the hesitation of Greek Christians, outside Egypt, in accepting the book as canonical), and our Lord used the language of His people, e.g. Mt 8¹¹ = Lk 13²⁹, where 'sit down' ('recline') means 'sit at the feast.' The Western Church has not scrupled to reproduce such figurative language; as in 'Jerusalem the

golden,' the 'song of them that feast.' But it is easily overdone, and our Lord uses it with much restraint.

In this verse the emphasis is on 'new,' which perhaps corresponds to the use of the same word in St. Paul 'the new covenant in my Blood': in the New Israel 'all things are made new,' and the new Wine of the Eucharist supersedes the cups of the Passover: in that sense the 'Kingdom of God' came with the Passion and Resurrection and Gift of the Holy Spirit. It may well indeed be that the Saying is a further prophecy of the approaching Passion: this last time that He would touch wine before His death He consecrated it to a special relationship to the Blood He was about to shed.

26. And when they had sung a hymn: AVm 'psalm,' no doubt a correct interpretation, for the Psalter was the hymnal of the Jewish Church, and special Psalms were prescribed by Jewish custom as part of the paschal solemnity. 'A hymn' is so far misleading that the Greek has only a verb, and might just as well be rendered 'sung hymns.'

they went out: not only from the upper room, but from the city, as 11¹¹.

to the mount of Olives: 11¹ suggests that we cannot make distinction between 'Bethany' (11¹¹) and 'the Mount of Olives.' It was the familiar route they had taken each night; but they did not even reach the Mount: Gethsemane (see 32) lay between it and Jerusalem.

26-42. The Agony in Gethsemane.

27, 28. On the way our Lord reveals to the Twelve His human sense of desolation in face of the approaching trial. He must tread the wine-press alone: every one of the friends and trusted followers in His company would be 'offended' or, more literally and idiomatically, 'scandalized.' They could not, even now, when the crisis actually came on them, fully grasp the knowledge our Lord had been, since the confession at Cæsarea Philippi (8²⁹), educating them to face, of His coming death. But once more He combines it with the confident assurance of His Resurrection. As He had 'gone before them,' in the days of His awe and consternation (10³²), from Galilee to Jerusalem, so in the days of His victory He would 'go before them' from Jerusalem to Galilee.

it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad (Zech 13⁷). It is noticeable that here, as elsewhere in the Gospels, the text of the Greek Old Testament used by the evangelists seems to have resembled codex

Alexandrinus (A)—not the Vaticanus (B), which gives 'the shepherds.' Our Lord Himself presumably cited the Hebrew: see on 15³⁴.

30. to-day, even this night RV: more literally 'to-day, in this night.' See, for the similar tautologies in Mark, on 12²³. Matthew omits 'to-day,' Luke omits 'in this night.'

before the cock crow twice, shalt deny me thrice. Only Mark, of all the four evangelists, mentions a double cock-crowing; but after all Peter's witness in this matter is naturally conclusive. So drastic, however, was the influence of the text of Matthew on the text of Mark that no one of our best authorities retains on all four occasions (30, 68, 72a, b) the mention of it. The second cock-crowing is mentioned as a note of time in various classical writers: Aristophanes, Cicero, Juvenal, Ammianus Marcellinus, are cited. It was this second cock-crowing, somewhere about 3 to 4 a.m., which was technically known as *gallicinium* (see below on 66-72).

32. a place [or 'piece of land'] called Gethsemane, i.e. 'vat for olives.' Codex Bezae (D) and St. Jerome, two authorities rarely found in agreement, give the name as Gesemani, 'valley of olives,' perhaps rightly: the spot was in fact in the valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, just across the 'brook Kidron' (Jn 18¹).

33. Peter and James and John: the three who had witnessed the anticipation of glory at the Transfiguration were now to witness something of the Agony.

began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled. John, and perhaps Luke, omit all details of our Lord's Agony; it seemed to the second generation of Christians better to draw a veil of reverent reserve over such things: Matthew copies Mark's account with some lessening of the description: Mark (and nowhere do Christians owe more to his Gospel) gives, as elsewhere (cf. 10³²), the fullest emphasis on our Lord's human emotions—the first of the two verbs is never found in the other three Gospels, the other only in the parallel passage here in Mt 26³⁷. On the other hand, the tradition of our Lord's own language was, as always, much more faithfully reproduced (see on 7¹⁹): Matthew copies into his account both 34 and 36 of St. Mark; Luke copies 36.

34. My soul is exceeding sorrowful, from Ps 43⁵: as in 15³⁴, our Lord falls naturally, in His hour of desolation, into the language of the Psalms.

36-39. If we ask ourselves how the words in which our Lord prayed were

known to the evangelist, the answer must be, either that He was only 'a short distance' (³⁶) away from the three Apostles, so that Peter may well have been awake long enough to hear the first words, and catch the drift, of the prayer; or perhaps more probably, in view of the Apostles' drowsiness, that it was Mark himself (see on ³¹) who had followed close enough to have overheard.

36. *Abba, Father* (the Aramaic word and its Greek equivalent), and so St. Paul (Gal 4⁶; Rom 8¹⁵), while Matthew and Luke drop the Aramaic and retain only the Greek. Mark and Paul use the phraseology of the first Christian generation, where even in Greek-speaking circles some few Aramaic pass-words, so to say, survived for a time, especially in the language of worship: compare St. Paul's *Marana tha* (1 Cor 16²²).

this cup, as in 10³⁸: once more an echo of the Old Testament Scripture, since the 'cup' must apparently be the cup of the Lord's fury of Is 51¹⁷, cf. Jer 25^{18, 17}; Ps 75⁸ (so Rev 14¹⁰, 16¹⁹); but here the thought of it is preceded by the expression of assurance in a Father's love and followed by the acceptance of His will.

37, 40. *sleeping . . . asleep*. They had been bidden to watch; but our Lord's prayers were long and sustained, the hour was late, and they were doubtless accustomed to rise early and sleep early. They did not mean to be lacking in sympathy, the spirit was willing enough, and our Lord, even in His agony, does not forget the hardest thing for a sufferer to do, and makes allowance for their weakness. But just because the flesh was weak, watchfulness and prayer were the more incumbent on them.

37. *Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour?* ^{38, 40, 41} are addressed to the three collectively, ³⁷ to Peter only: our Lord, as always, calls him by his personal name Simon, not by his official name Peter (Lk 22³⁴ is the only exception in the Gospels), and asks reproachfully whether at least he, our Lord's most trusted friend and the leader among His followers, could not keep awake for an hour. 'Couldst': literally 'hadst thou not strength enough?' and though the full classical meaning of this verb, as of many other similar words, tends in later Greek, and especially in St. Mark, to be weakened, we should at least render 'wast thou not able?' The same verb is used in 9¹⁸.

38. *that ye enter not into temptation*. A clear allusion to the substance

of the last clause of the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6¹³=Lk 11⁴), and enough to justify us in seeing an allusion to other clauses in ³⁶, 'not what I will, but what thou (wilt)'; (Mt 6¹⁰: not in Luke), and perhaps also 'Abba, Father.' Comparing 11²⁵, it seems certain that the Prayer lies near the mind of Christ as expressed in the record of the earliest Gospel.

40. *they wist not what to answer him*, exactly as at the Transfiguration (9⁶), but in this case from drowsiness.

41. *Sleep on now, and take your rest*. If we take these words closely with what follows, they must be meant ironically. That does not seem, in the context, satisfactory: it seems better to take them as a real concession to the Apostles' weakness, broken off suddenly as our Lord detects the approach of the party sent to arrest Him.

it is enough: and so Jerome in the Vulgate renders it, 'sufficit,' and the Greek lexicographer Hesychius says the same thing. That is strong authority: but in view of the regular classical use of the verb in the sense 'to be far from,' it seems possible that it may here express the sudden reversal by circumstances of His encouragement to sleep—'far from it! the hour has come: lo, the Son of Man is at this moment being handed over into the hands of sinners.'

of sinners: literally 'of the sinners,' and St. Mark's meaning is therefore certainly 'of the Gentiles'; cf. Gal 2¹⁵ 'Jews . . . and not sinners of the Gentiles,' and 10³³ 'they shall hand him over to the Gentiles (nations).' See note on 2¹⁵.

43-52. The arrest of Jesus.

43. *a multitude with swords and staves* from the chief priests and the scribes and elders. The party sent by the Sanhedrin were no disciplined force, such as Mark's Roman readers would be accustomed to, but what they would regard as a 'rabble' armed with such weapons, 'knives and sticks,' as had come to their hands.

a token: Mark uses a word which was common in the LXX and later Greek in this technical sense of a concerted signal.

take him: rather perhaps *arrest him*, as 6¹⁷, 12¹², 14¹.

45. *Rabbi: and kissed him*. Rabbi was the regular Aramaic term by which our Lord as a Teacher was addressed whether by His disciples or by other Jews (cf. 9⁵, 10⁵¹, 11²¹), though it is normally translated into the Greek 'Teacher' or, as our English versions render it, 'Master': see note on 4³⁸.

The kiss, we are told, was the proper

method of saluting a Rabbi: and Judas 'kissed' Him. RVm gives 'kissed him much': and it is true that in classical Greek the simple verb means 'kiss,' the compound verb here used 'to kiss tenderly.' But in the New Testament 'to kiss' is never, save in ⁴⁴ of this passage and its parallels, expressed by the simple verb but always by the compound verb. In the colloquial Greek of the 1st century many compound verbs were losing the special force of the preposition: cases in Mark of verbs compounded with this particular preposition which have come to mean no more than the simple verb would be: 6 ⁴¹ 'brake,' 10 ¹⁶ 'blessed.'

47. a certain one of them: Peter, according to Jn 18 ¹⁰: see note on 19, ²⁰.

49. that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Mark, writing for Gentiles, does not, like Matthew, call constant attention in his narrative to the correspondence of this or that event with prophecy: but he shows with no less clearness than the other Gospels how entirely the Old Testament Scriptures filled the background in our Lord's own mind.

51, 52. The certain young man has of late been generally identified with Mark himself; in which case the introduction of the episode, otherwise meaningless, would be at once accounted for—Mark wanted to bring in his own solitary point of contact with the Gospel story. The details given suggest that the lad had got out of bed in his night-clothes to follow our Lord and the Twelve to Gethsemane: it looks as if he belonged to the house where the Last Supper had been held, was perhaps aroused by the chanting of the final psalm, and then with a lad's adventurous curiosity had determined to see things to the end. If he was a son of the house, his father was well acquainted with our Lord (see on ¹⁴), and so he may have heard talk about the danger to which the Prophet of Galilee was exposed, and the animus of the Jewish authorities against Him, after His dramatic cleansing of the Temple: a lad's enthusiasm may have reinforced a lad's curiosity, and when the Apostles all fled he still 'followed with him' (see also on ³⁶). When we remember further that Mark's mother Mary had a house in Jerusalem large enough for many Christians to meet in, and central enough for Peter to turn his steps to after his deliverance from prison (Ac 12 ¹²), it must be admitted that, though the elements of this reconstruction are conjectural, they connect astonishingly well together.

they lay hold on him: Mark's common

use of the impersonal plural, where later texts, followed by AV, supply a nominative by inserting 'the young men.'

53. to the high priest: here for the first time (apart from the indirect reference in ⁴⁷) in the singular. The office was properly a life office, and the use of the plural of living persons, the 'chief priests,' would probably have been inconceivable in earlier Jewish history. But in the two preceding centuries the high priest had been so often deposed by the interference of the secular power of the Seleucid kings, and even more commonly under Herodian and Roman rule, that there might be as many ex-high priests as there are ex-Lord Chancellors: and the language of the Gospels no doubt reflects current Jewish usage, whether we interpret 'chief priests' as meaning 'high priest and ex-high priests' or 'members of the high-priestly families': cf. Ac 4 ⁶. The name of the high priest, Caiaphas, is not given in St. Mark: he held the office for the unusually long period of eighteen years, from A.D. 18 till his deposition in A.D. 36.

there came together with him all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes, that is to say, a meeting was held of the whole Sanhedrin, as ⁶⁵ 'the chief priests and the whole council' further shows. But the contrast with 15 ¹ perhaps suggests that this meeting was technically an informal one, and that a more formal meeting was held in the morning.

54. Peter followed afar off: while the young man in ⁶¹ had more boldly 'followed with Jesus' and was consequently arrested.

even within, into the court of the high priest. Mark, as we should expect, gives us the fullest data of St. Peter's movements, Luke the fewest; John only mentions Peter's original introduction into the 'court,' Matthew follows Mark more or less closely, but with some blurring of details: neither Matthew nor Luke helps us to interpret Mark. Mark then gives three notes: (a) Peter followed 'right within into the court' (how he got into it the 4th Gospel tells us, 18 ^{16, 16}) and sat there with the attendants by the fire; (b) he was 'down below in the court' (⁶⁶), the hall where the Sanhedrin sat being presumably up a flight of steps from the courtyard; (c) he went out into the 'outer court' (AV and RV 'porch' wrongly, following Matthew: RVm 'fore-court'), ⁶⁸, where he would be colder but safer.

warming himself in the light of the fire RV: the revisers do not explain how the 'light of the fire' would warm anyone.

What Mark might conceivably have meant, what Lk 22⁶⁶ apparently took him to mean, is that Peter was warming himself at the fire and therefore sitting in the fire-light, where he would most easily be detected. But while Luke tells Peter's story as a whole at this point, in order to preserve the sequence of the Trial of Jesus before both Jewish and Roman tribunals without interruption, Peter, narrating events annalistically, first brings the characters on the scene (53, 54), then tells what concerned his Master (55-56), and last of all what concerned himself (66-72), so that the mention of the firelight is too far removed from the mention of the maid's detection to be intended as the reason for it. The plain fact is that Greeks said 'the light' where we should say 'the fire': Liddell and Scott quote from Xenophon the noun with the very preposition used by Mark and render it 'by the fire.' AV *warmed himself at the fire* is therefore not only good sense but good Greek.

55-65. The Trial before the Sanhedrin. The chief priests, in order to compass the death of Jesus, had to satisfy the conditions of both Jewish and Roman law: they had to satisfy Jewish opinion (and even in the Sanhedrin there were currents of opinion not definitely unfavourable to our Lord, Mk 15⁴³ = Lk 23⁵¹) by finding a capital charge under Jewish law established by such evidence as that law required, and they had also to persuade or intimidate a reluctant Roman governor to ratify their sentence by dangling before him some capital charge under Roman law. It says something for the sense of justice of at any rate a part of the Sanhedrin that for some time no decision could be reached: there were charges, and witnesses to support them, in plenty, but the merciful provision (Dt 19¹⁵) that a single witness was inadequate for the legal proof of any charge, 'at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established,' was not satisfied, for in no case did the two witnesses give, as St. Mark phrases it, 'equal,' that is coincident, testimony.

57-61a. What had probably been selected as more or less the official charge was that of disloyalty to the national worship (cf. Ac 6^{13, 14}). 'I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands' (cf. 15²⁸). Our Lord had clearly foretold the destruction of the Temple, see 13², and if the Western text in that passage is right, He had gone on to foretell that 'in three

days another would rise without hands' (cf. Jn 2¹⁹). If He had been overheard on that occasion, both the accusation and the discrepancies in the evidence for it, substantially true though it was, would be explained. It is likely enough that, after the events of the Monday, spies and eavesdroppers had shadowed our Lord's public movements.

61b-63. To the first charge our Lord answered nothing: to the second He made instant answer. The first would have meant explanation and interpretation: the second went to the root of the matter, and He was as ready as the high priest to force matters to a crisis. Just as He avoided arrest before the advent of the feast, so He would not be condemned on any less issue than His claim to be Messiah and Son of God.

the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. The disciples had not felt the identification to be necessary: it needed a second stage of their education before the 'good news of Jesus as Messiah' was completed by their realization of the 'good news of Jesus as Son of God' (Mk 1¹): though in fact one line of Jewish Messianic thought (for instance, one of the later *strata* of the Book of Enoch) had made the identification. Caiaphas, as a Sadducee, would not himself have been much interested in Messianic theology: but any Pharisee who looked for a Messiah would have regarded a spurious claim to Messiahship, carried to the point of a claim to be Son of God, as in the last degree blasphemous. Now our Lord's teaching about Himself in the preceding days—e.g. the parable of the Husbandmen and the Only Son—may well have been matter of discussion among the leading Sanhedrists, and if He could be induced to repeat His assertion of a unique relationship with God, there need be no question of the sifting of evidence, no hesitation on the part of Pharisees to accept the lead of the chief priests.

62. ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven: cf. 8³⁸, 13^{26, 27}. The common elements in all three passages are (1) the Son of Man, and (2) the Coming: in the first and second the mention (3) of 'glory,' and (4) of the angels: in the second and third the mention of (5) 'clouds' and (6) 'power.' Of these (1), (2) and (5) come direct from Dan 7¹³: 'clouds' are a symbol of the glory that surrounds the presence of God and veils it ordinarily from the eyes of man, as 9⁷; Ac 1⁹. As 'authority' in Dan 7¹⁴ is 'given' to the Son of Man, so in Mark in 8³⁸ it is 'the glory of his

Father,' while in 13²⁹ it attaches to the Son of Man. Similarly 'power,' like 'glory,' belongs in 13²⁸ to the Son of Man, while here He is 'at the right hand of power.'

sitting at the right hand of power is the one new phrase in this passage. The right hand was with the Jews, as with us, the place of honour: Mk 12³⁶ = Ps 110¹ (the Psalm is clearly in our Lord's mind) shows, with many other New Testament passages, that 'the right hand of the Power' (the Greek here has the article) means 'the right hand of God': we may compare the *Gospel of Peter*, in which 'My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me' takes the place of the canonical 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But this combined reference to the Session and Second Coming under the one verb 'Ye shall see' seemed strange enough to both Matthew and Luke to call for some alteration, since the Session attached to the Exaltation of Christ after His Passion: Matthew does not do more than insert 'from henceforth,' thus emphasizing the immediate Session, but leaving unexplained the 'ye shall see': Luke similarly adds 'from now,' but drops all reference to the Second Coming, 'from now shall the Son of Man be seated at the right hand of the Power of God.'

63. rent his clothes. A primitive expression of genuine personal grief had become an official convention under highly specialized rules. While the Law forbade the high priest to show any such sign of mourning for private bereavement (Lev 21¹⁹), custom required him when acting judicially to make under certain circumstances something like a formal protest from the Bench. It is not surprising to learn that the rent had come to be of specified length and to apply to specified clothes, those in fact which could most easily be mended: not the outer garment, but as Mark correctly says, the vests—waistcoats we should perhaps now call them: the Emperor Augustus, we are told, being very susceptible to cold, wore five at a time—which were torn at the neck.

What further need have we of witness? The meticulous sifting of evidence, he means, need go on no longer: the accused has admitted a charge of blasphemy by uttering it: it only remains to take the votes of the judges.

64. blasphemy: see on 3²⁹. It was of course under the Law (Lev 24¹⁶) a capital offence: Jn 19⁷ 'we have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself Son of God.'

they all condemned him to be worthy

of death RV, inadequately: it means *they all gave their votes against Him as guilty on a capital charge*. It was no mere platonic expression of opinion, but a definite sentence; one indeed which they had no legal power to carry out on their own authority (Jn 18³¹), and therefore St. Mark does not say here 'they condemned him to death' (10³³).

65. Parts of this verse are simple enough: some persons of importance (for they are contrasted with the 'officers' or, as we might say, with 'the police') began to vent their feelings by offering personal indignities such as spitting and hitting at Him, and the guard, encouraged by this example, struck Him with blows: but other parts present real difficulty. Why did they 'cover his face'? and what did they mean by saying 'Prophecy'? Luke clears matters up by writing 'they covered up his face, and asked him saying, Prophecy: who is it that smote thee?' But that can hardly be Mark's meaning: for (1) he does not connect the covering of the face directly with the 'Prophecy,' and (2), more important, he does not add the explanation of the demand to prophecy as 'Who is it that smote thee?' Therefore by 'Prophecy' he must apparently mean 'Give us more prophecies,' alluding to the prophecy of the destruction of the Temple and building it in three days' (14⁵⁸, 15³⁰). Of the other phrase 'to cover his face,' the only tolerable explanation is that it was the Roman custom to cover the face of a condemned criminal (cf. Est 7⁶). But we have not to do at this point with Roman officials at all: and in fact it is probable that the word 'cover' ought not to stand in the text, for it is omitted by three good authorities of different groups. Tentatively, then, we may suppose that the 'covering' has come into the main tradition of Mark's text from Lk 22⁶⁴: and if so the verse ceases to offer any obstacle to straightforward interpretation.

the officers received him RV: it is difficult to be patient with a process of revision which produces meaningless literalisms of this sort. Clearly Mark is using the verb in a colloquial (or, as we should say, slang) sense 'got him.' AV *did strike him* is quite near enough.

with blows of their hands RV: this again is senseless, for all blows are blows with the hands, and AV correctly reproduces the technical meaning of the word in later Greek, 'blows with the open hand' as opposed to 'blows with the fist.'

66-72. Peter's three denials. Matthew and Luke reproduce Mark, adding, as is

natural, no new historical data: John alone tells the story with fresh material. Mark on the three occasions has 'one of the maids,' 'the [same] maid,' 'the bystanders'; Matthew 'one maid,' 'another [maid],' 'the bystanders'; Luke 'a maid,' 'another man,' 'some other fellow'; John 'the maid that kept the door' (when the other disciple introduced Peter to the high priest's court), 'the bystanders,' 'a man-servant who was kinsman to Malchus.' Mark tells a simpler story than the rest in identifying the first and second questioners.

On the first occasion the maid 'looked hard' at Peter and said, 'You too were with the Nazarene, with Jesus' (John indicates that 'You too' meant 'You as well as the friend who is introducing you'): on the second she tells the bystanders 'he is one of them': on the third the bystanders say 'She is certainly right, for you are a Galilean' ('as your dialect shows,' adds Matthew, correctly interpreting their innuendo). The story is very simply and straightforwardly told: any hostile intent there may have been in the remarks made is implied and not expressed.

Peter's first answer (⁶⁸) was a hurried and embarrassed one, so awkwardly expressed that both Matthew and Luke in different directions clarify it, and RV gives alternative renderings: on the whole it may best be translated 'I neither know him [compare ⁷¹], nor have I any idea what you can mean' (by saying I was with a man I do not know). Then, in order to avoid further notice, he retreated 'into the outer court'—and a 'cock crew,' perhaps soon after midnight: quite a long time may have elapsed between the first and the third denial. AV and RV both have here and in ⁷² 'the cock' (against the Greek), as though Jerusalem could only produce one cock. But it is creditable to the revisers that they retain this first cock-crowing in their text against their favourite authorities: it is necessary to Mark's story (see on ³⁰), it is quite alien to the type of addition made by scribes, and its absence from some very good MSS. only shows once more how powerful was the influence of the text of Matthew on Mark for omission as well as for insertion.

His second answer was merely a repetition of his 'denial'—his denial, that is, that he knew Jesus: his third was accompanied by anathema and oath; 'anathema' on himself if he was not telling the truth, and a solemn asseveration that he did not know 'this man of whom you speak.' 'And' a 'second time' a 'cock crew.'

On the first occasion he had paid no conscious attention at the time: now he is suddenly reminded of the Lord's prophecy, and the revulsion of feeling is immediate: but of the form it took we can only say for certain that 'he wept,' for the accompanying participle is of very doubtful interpretation. 'When he thought thereon he wept' AV, RV, but both with marginal alternatives: AV 'he wept abundantly,' 'he began to weep,' RV 'he began to weep.' None of these renderings appears to do justice to the situation: a more definite action seems implied. Matthew and Luke were as much in the dark as ourselves about the meaning of the participial verb used by Mark—unless indeed the action suggested was too violent for their liking—for neither has anything corresponding to it, so that we may guess Mark, as elsewhere, to have used a colloquial non-literary expression. Dr. Field (one of the greatest of all the scholars who have commented on the Greek of the New Testament) argues for the meaning 'threw his cloak over his head.' If one may venture a suggestion, it would be 'cast himself on the ground and wept.'

XV. 1-47. Good Friday.

1-15. The Trial before Pilate.

1. held a consultation AV, RV. In view of the facts that (1) this occasion seems to be related to 14 ^{53, 55}, as the more formal to the less formal meeting, (2) that the Greek noun is technically used of the 'council' with which a Roman governor conferred (cf. Ac 25 ¹²), it seems better to translate *formed themselves into an assembly*. It is possible that they could not technically do this before daybreak.

delivered him up as 10 ³³, 14 ⁴¹: the same word as is rendered 'betrayed' in reference to Judas.

to Pilate. The name was too well known to Christians to need any introduction: 'was crucified under Pontius Pilate' (cf. 1 Tim 6 ¹³ 'was martyred under Pontius Pilate') was, it may be, already part of the Baptismal Creed at Rome. We need not suppose that Pilate was thus singled out because early Christian opinion wanted to transfer to him from the Jews or chief priests the responsibility for our Lord's death, though after all he was technically responsible; but his governorship supplied the date for the greatest fact of history. All the Gospels emphasize Pilate's reluctance to condemn—St. Mark, whose account is briefest and most 'objective,' less perhaps than the others: later Gospels reflect the growth of tension between Jews and Christians, till in the 4th Gospel and

the *Gospel of Peter* 'the Jews' as such are the enemies.

2. Art thou the King of the Jews? Comparing ¹² 'whom ye call the King of the Jews,' it seems clear that the charge on which our Lord was arraigned before Pilate was primarily the political one (cf. Lk 23 ²; Jn 19 ¹²).

Thou sayest RV: but this is hardly intelligible in English, and AV *Thou sayest it* is right; as we should now put it, 'You say so.' Our Lord neither admitted nor denied the charge: not simply that He threw on Pilate the responsibility for the decision, but that He trusted to the whole circumstances of the position to convince Pilate that He and His few followers, unarmed and unresisting (apart from the impetuous act of a single disciple in Gethsemane), were not meditating any action in the political sphere.

3. And the chief priests accused him of many things or perhaps adverbially (a favourite usage of Mark) *accused him at length*. If we compare Mark's narrative with those of the other Gospels, we get the impression that Mark had not at his disposal at this point (neither Peter nor the women would here have been available as witnesses) any detailed account of the proceedings: either he depended on general information, or his authority was too far off to follow accusations, questions, answers, at all fully. It is more than likely that the chief priests (note once more that they, not the scribes and elders, are the accusers), finding that the first charge made little impression on Pilate, went on to indicate that the accused was guilty of capital crimes under the Jewish Law. It looks at least as if they must have accused Him of claiming to be the Messiah, a charge that would easily be connected with the claim to Kingship.

5. He answered nothing: as He had been silent before the high priest to all accusations save the final one, so now He is silent to all accusations save the one which Pilate, representing the civil power, had a right to hear and judge.

6-11. The episode of Barabbas. The evidence of the Gospels makes it clear that, just as any happy event in the annals of the State—a victory in war, or the conclusion of peace, or the accession of a monarch, or his birthday, or the like—is customarily marked by amnesties or remission of penalties, so great occasions in the life of Judaism (and those were the annual festivals) were similarly marked by an act of grace on the part of the civil power. At the Passover the

governor, it seems, was always in Jerusalem: and doubtless the act of grace was personally and publicly announced. Only in Mark is the initiative placed with the crowd: and as it is difficult to see why the multitude should have introduced Barabbas's name at all at this moment, it seems better once more to suppose that Mark's information was defective, and that Matthew and John are right in ascribing it to Pilate, who would see in the customary act of grace a way out of his difficulty. But all accounts agree that the prisoner to be released was selected by the Jews themselves.

6. whom they asked of him: the Greek word which RV is intending to represent must certainly be rendered 'wanted to beg off.'

7. one called Barabbas, i.e. 'son of the father' (actually found as a name of Rabbis), unless we understand it as Bar-Rabba, 'son of the Teacher.' If the former is correct, even more interest would attach to the evidence for reading in St. Matthew (27 ¹⁷) 'Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called the Christ.' In Mark 'the Jesus called Barabbas' would make excellent sense, but there is no extant evidence at all for it: we must be content to translate 'the man known as Barabbas.' That he was a notorious personage in Jerusalem seems to follow from the double use of the definite article 'a prisoner together with the [= 'his'] party of rioters, who in the [= 'their'] riot had gone as far as murder': he was liable to execution, in fact, on either of two counts.

8. the multitude went up (so RV rightly); they were below (as Peter was below in the high priest's courtyard, 14 ⁶⁶), and proceeded upstairs to present their demand to the governor in person: Mark's previous mention of Barabbas seems to imply that he supposed they had him already in their mind as the prisoner whose release they would ask.

9. the King of the Jews: as in ²⁶, Pilate plays with savage irony on the charge brought by the chief priests against the humble prisoner before him. He recognized easily enough that it was no loyalty to Roman rule which had moved them, but envy of the influence of Jesus over the people in matters of religion. It is possible that he knew more than the Jewish authorities gave him credit for about the character of the new religious movement.

11. stirred up the multitude. It would seem therefore that 'the multitude' had not as yet taken up a definitely hostile attitude to Jesus, though it is

probable enough that the chief priests had organized a *claque* of their followers to support them in putting pressure on Pilate. It is of course a real problem to account for the discrepancy between the popular favour accorded to our Lord during the earlier days of the week (12³⁷) and the popular outcry against Him in this final scene. To some extent no doubt the change was more apparent than real: many who favoured Jesus would have been of the quieter type that avoided demonstrations in the street: but no doubt many also would have been shaken in such allegiance as they had so far been inclined to render Him by the charges of disloyalty to the national worship and of blasphemy against God.

12-15. The condemnation of Jesus to death. What then shall I do? RV: the reading represented by AV 'what then do you want me to do?' is more likely to be right, for it is a much more natural question for Pilate to put.

13. Crucify. That is, 'condemn Him to death': it is assumed that the death will be by crucifixion.

15. wishing to content the multitude: the Greek phrase is a Latinism for *satis facere*, and might be better rendered 'to satisfy.' Two other words in the immediate context, 'scourged' in this verse and 'prætorium' in the next, are actual transliterations from *flagellare* and *prætorium*—used no doubt by Mark because the Greek vocabulary at Rome was naturally replete with Roman technical terms.

when he had scourged him: not a gratuitously additional punishment, but a normal part of the sentence of crucifixion.

16-20a. Jesus in the hands of the soldiery. Like the menials after the condemnation by the Sanhedrin (14⁶⁵), so now the platoon of soldiers, to whom Jesus is committed after the scourging for the execution of the capital sentence, take their own part in mockery and maltreatment. They knew that He had been condemned as a pretender to Kingship: with the brutal humour of their kind they will give him a taste of kingly honours before He dies. He had been stripped for the scourging: and instead of restoring His clothes, they find a bright-coloured garment—perhaps a scarlet *sagum* or soldier's cloak—that suggested royal 'purple' or red (at a not much later date the rare red Egyptian granite called 'porphyry' was, for instance, reserved for the Emperor's own use); for a diadem they hastily wove a cirlet from the nearest thorn-bush: other accounts add, probably

enough, that a reed was put in His hand for sceptre (Matthew) and that He was seated on some sort of raised chair to receive homage (*Gospel of Peter*): the homage was expressed in a parody of the *Ave Cæsar*. If we wonder how they could find opportunity for their horse-play with a prisoner awaiting execution, it may be conjectured that Pilate's judgement may have named a definite hour for carrying out the sentence (see 25), and that that left a certain interval to be filled up.

16. within the court, which is the prætorium. The prætorium was originally the general's headquarters in a camp, but it came to be used of the provincial governor's official residence. The normal residence of the procurator of Judæa was at Cæsarea, and he occupied there the palace or prætorium of Herod (the Great), cf. Ac 23³⁵: by analogy therefore it would be likely that when in Jerusalem he would occupy Herod's palace; and a striking parallel from Josephus's *Jewish War*, as to proceedings before Gessius Florus at that palace, is quoted in Sanday, *Sacred Sites of the Gospels*, 53. Moreover, there was a main street leading direct from the Temple area and council-chamber of the Sanhedrin to this palace of Herod, and the traditional site of Calvary is not far outside the neighbouring gate. Therefore modern archaeologists are pretty well unanimous in identifying the *prætorium* with Herod's palace and not with the fortress of Antonia.

the whole band: RVm 'or cohort.' The Greek word is in itself indeterminate: it is no doubt used by St. Luke in the Acts to represent the Latin *cohors* or 'battalion' (Ac 10¹, 21³¹, 27¹) with *chilarch* (*ibid.*, 21³¹) to represent its commander, the Latin *tribunus*. But it is in the last degree unlikely that a whole battalion of several hundred men was 'called together': and in fact the officer in charge is called in 39, 44, 45, *centurio*, the Latin word being transliterated, and a centurion was originally, as the word implies, the commander of 100 men, our 'captain'; not to say that Jn 19²³ implies that not more than four men were left in actual charge at the Cross. But further the word here translated (by AV and RV text) 'band' is in Polybius (see Liddell and Scott) the regular rendering of the Latin *manipulus*, two centuries or one 'company.' Clearly, then, on all grounds 'cohort' is wrong: 'band' does well enough, being as ambiguous in the English as in the Greek: but if we desire further precision, we must say either 'company' or 'platoon.'

19, 20. spit, mocked, crucify: with

the scourged of ¹⁵ the Lord's sufferings at the hands of 'the Gentiles,' as foretold in 10 ³⁴.

19. bowing their knees worshipped him. It is characteristic of Mark's style that he intercalates this final reference to the mockery of Jesus as King into his description of the physical ill-treatment which followed on the mockery: Matthew sorts out the elements of Mark's story into a more logical order, and naturally connects 'bowing the knees' with the salutation 'Hail, King.'

worshipped him. We must not suppose any thought of our Lord's claim to be Son of God: the word came in later theological Greek to be limited to the 'worship' due to God only, but it was the regular word in classical Greek for 'the Oriental fashion of prostrating oneself before kings' (L.S.), and is so used here. Cf. 5 ⁶; Jn 9 ³⁸; and often in Matthew.

20b-24. The road to Calvary: the preliminaries of the Crucifixion.

they lead him out: not, probably, 'out of the city' (though it was also this in fact), but 'out to execution.'

21. they compel: RVm 'Gr. impress.' A Persian word, used of couriers 'impressed' into the royal service. Doubtless our Lord had started, according to the brutal custom of Roman law (and not only Roman: there are enough modern parallels), bearing His own cross: so the 4th Gospel expressly (Jn 19 ¹⁷). But Mark had not been an eye-witness himself: only he did happen to be acquainted with the sons of a man, who as it happened was coming into the city as the procession left it, and was 'impressed' to carry the cross which Jesus was too exhausted to carry any longer Himself—if He could not carry it, a fellow-countryman must be found to do it; no soldier would so demean himself. It is very worthy of note that the evangelists make no attempt to heighten the picture of our Lord's sufferings: the Stations of the Cross may emphasize His giving way under the burden, the Gospels maintain a reverent reserve.

one . . . Simon of Cyrene . . . the father of Alexander and Rufus. 'Of Cyrene,' to distinguish him from the many other Simons: Cyrene, between Alexandria and Carthage, capital of the Pentapolis, in the district now called Tripoli, had one of the largest settlements of Jews, witness the references in Ac 2 ¹⁰, 6 ⁹, cf. 13 ¹. 'Alexander and Rufus': obviously named because they were known to Mark either at Jerusalem or Rome, and perhaps more probably at Rome, for

then they would be known to his readers also; if the Rufus of Rom 16 ¹³ is our Rufus, he was living with his mother, and his father was presumably dead, so that the episode *may* have come to Mark's knowledge only through the sons.

22. Golgotha . . . the place of a skull. One would naturally suppose that the gruesome name was somehow connected with the gruesome use of the site, rather than with the configuration of the ground, though it is probable enough that it was a low rounded rise.

23. they offered him RV: *gave him* AV. Literally 'they were giving,' 'were for giving' (imperfect tense); and if Mark were a writer skilful in the Greek use of tenses, RV would no doubt be right. But Mark quite habitually uses the imperfect where he ought to have used another tense, and indeed he has it in ³⁶, where the act was a single one, and our Lord did not refuse the drink offered. Therefore the simpler rendering of AV is better.

wine mingled with myrrh: that is, drugged, in order to deaden the nerves; a humane expedient, not without its analogies to-day. Mark records the kindly touches here and in ³⁶ with the same simple 'objectiveness' as he records the brutality of police or soldiery. No one would call him, by our ordinary standards, a great historian: but he has one of a good historian's supremest qualities, he never suppresses evidence. He is about the last writer in the world to suspect of 'tendency.'

but he received it not: perhaps because it was wine, and He had vowed at the Supper not to taste wine again, 'that maketh glad the heart of man,' this side the Coming of the Kingdom: perhaps because it was drugged, and He would not cloud His vision; see Keble's fine poem in *The Christian Year* for Tuesday in Holy Week.

25-39. The Crucifixion.

25. And it was the third hour: Mark with his fondness for precision in numbers gives, what Matthew and Luke in reproducing him both omit, the time of day, 9 a.m. The hour may have been fixed in Pilate's sentence (see on 16-20a).

and they crucified him. But Mark has mentioned that already in ²⁴, and the parallels in Matthew 'sitting down they watched him there,' and in Luke 'the people stood beholding' make it almost certain that they read here in Mark not 'they crucified him,' but, with the Western authorities, 'they kept guard on him.'

26. the superscription of his accusation: that is, the *titulus* or inscription containing the name of the prisoner and an indication (apparently by an adjective in agreement with the name) of the crime for which he suffered: Swete aptly compares the Letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne in A.D. 177 (Eusebius, *H.E.*, v, 1, § 44) where one of the martyrs is marched into the amphitheatre with a board preceding him containing the notice 'This is Attalus the Christian.' In Papal Rome even in the 19th century printed notices were posted up before any execution, announcing the time, the place, the name and city of origin of the criminal, and the character of his crime. The parallels suggest that the fullest form of the inscription given us, that in Jn 19¹⁹, is probably the most correct—in Latin HIC EST IESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDÆORVM: Mark's information confined itself to the one element that could vary, the nature of the charge. Pilate repeats the charge brought against Jesus in ², probably intending to suggest, 'A proper King for such a people.'

27. robbers of RV is better than 'thieves' of AV, but is still inadequate. As 14⁴⁸ shows, the word implies some sort of desperado who might show fight: 'brigands' is more like it.

one on his right hand and one on his left; two Jews, with Jesus their King enthroned between them. Cf. 10³⁷ of James and John.

29-32. The railing of the passers-by and of the chief priests. Some chance passers-by, going to or from the city, overheard by Mark's informant (it might have been Simon of Cyrene, who would not improbably have stayed, after his task was over, to see the end; it might have been one of the women, ⁴⁰), knew our Lord only from the report of His prophecy of the destruction of the Temple (14⁵⁸): obviously that charge was well calculated to arouse local animosity and had succeeded in doing so. His admirers had spread knowledge, we may well believe, of His wonderful cures in Galilee: if He had the power, let Him use it now. But there were other visitors at the Cross: no passers-by, but His principal enemies, who condescended to witness a Roman execution, perhaps to make sure that no 'untoward event' should baulk them even then of success; and taking up the jeers of the country folk (executions were doubtless too common to attract more than passing attention from any but those directly interested) they repeated the taunt at the miracle-worker. Here is

His chance: not on obscure folk in the provinces, but on Himself: not in any hole and corner, but in the sight of credible witnesses like themselves: if He is what He claims to be, King-Messiah, that is surely not much to ask.

32. And they that were crucified with him reproached him. If we try to reconstruct the scene from St. Mark, the impression quite definitely emerges that the story is told as from a distance. The centurion is standing 'over against him' (³⁹), presumably in order to keep back the crowd from too near approach. The passers-by would be on the road: if the chief priests took up their jeers, they too must have been among the spectators, and indeed it would have been below their dignity to approach the crosses of criminals too nearly. What happened was visible enough: of what was said by our Lord nothing was audible, save when He raised His voice to a 'loud cry' (^{34, 37}), and even so the words used only carried on one occasion, when He ejaculated a well-known verse from the Psalms. Luke and John had more detailed knowledge, gathered from some who were nearer: Mark only knew that the Lord's fellow-sufferers appeared to join in the revilings.

33-38. The End. From noon till 3 p.m. there was darkness over the whole land. The word rendered 'land' can mean either the earth in the sense of the world, as 9³ 'no fuller on earth,' or 'land' in the sense of a large district, as Mt 4¹⁵ (Is 9¹) 'land of Zabulon and land of Nephthalim.' Taken by itself the phrase might perhaps suggest 'the whole world': and if it were question of an eclipse, that would be not out of place. But at full moon, when the moon is visible all night and not at all in the daytime, it cannot get between earth and sun, and an eclipse at midday is then impossible. Ancient exegesis (the *Gospel of Peter* and Origen are quoted by Swete) adopted the alternative rendering 'the whole land of Judæa,' and it is reasonable to follow them and give Mark the benefit of the doubt.

34. Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? This reading cannot be right, for the form 'Eloi' cannot possibly have suggested 'Elijah.' We must therefore follow the best Western authorities, codex Bezae (D) and *heli* of the Latin codex Bobiensis (*k*), which, with some support from the codex Vaticanus, give the Hebrew form, 'Eli, Eli, lama zaphthani?' Our Lord would naturally make His dying ejaculation from the Psalms in the sacred language itself, just as in similar circumstances a

Roman Catholic would naturally use Scriptural words according to the Vulgate, not in the vernacular.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Once more the same authorities, with two other Old Latin MSS., give (instead of 'forsaken') 'reproached'; and as no one could have thought of inventing this reading, it must certainly be accepted as what Mark wrote. The combined influence of Matthew and the LXX account quite sufficiently for the substitution in all other authorities of 'forsaken.'

Behold, he calleth Elijah. No Jew could possibly have confused the Name of God with any other name: the 'some that stood by' were therefore those who stood on guard or on duty at the Cross—not necessarily Roman legionaries, but at any rate non-Jewish provincials to whom the Hebrew Name was unfamiliar. But then the difficulty meets us, what should non-Jews know of Elijah? Now the Old Latin MS. (*k*), quoted just above, gives in ³⁵ not *helian* but *helion*, that is to say, not Elijah but *Helios*, the Sun. [A similar confusion between the two Greek words occurs in the apocryphal *Vision of Paul*, § 20, where the Latin version has *solem* for *Helian*.] This change of one letter may have been pure accident; but whether due to accident or to faithful transcription, it has high claims to be regarded as reproducing the word of which these bystanders actually made use. Remember that it was at the ninth hour that Jesus cried aloud 'Eli, Eli,' and that that was also the moment when the darkness passed off and the sun emerged: what more likely than that non-Jewish Orientals, to many of whom *El* or *Elî* (*Helî*) was the name of their sun-god, hearing the cry and connecting it with the reappearance of the sun, should suppose that Jesus had called on the sun and had been answered by it, and that they, or one of them, should have gone on to say, 'Let us see whether after all Helios is coming to take Him down?'

36. The sense of this verse is clear: but its interpretation in detail is not easy. It is certain that the act was intended in pity: it seems to presuppose the 'I thirst' of Jn 19²⁸, and if that word was not more than whispered, it may well not have reached the ears of Mark's informant at some distance: but the merciful action was visible, and the soldiers' comments would be loud and audible enough. So far so good: but what is meant by 'Let alone'? It may be supposed that there was some word or movement on the part of the others to discourage their com-

panion's act of mercy, and that he answered, whether in jest or in earnest we cannot tell, 'Let be, let us keep life going in him in case after all the sun-god is coming to deliver him.' And certainly 'let be' is most naturally interpreted 'let me alone,' not 'let him alone,' which would have needed the word 'him' expressed in the Greek: cf. 14⁷ 'let her alone.'

37. And Jesus uttered a loud voice, RV, with more regard to sense than to English. Our Lord spoke loud enough for Mark's informant to hear that He was speaking but not apparently to hear what He said. Lk 23⁴⁶, Jn 19³⁰, fill up the gap in different ways: Luke certainly intends to identify the 'loud utterance' of Mark with his own 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.'

38. the veil of the temple was rent in twain: the veil, that is, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex 26³³). Mark, followed by Matthew, connects the rending of the veil with the moment of Jesus' death, but he gives us no clue for deciding whether he attached any other significance to it than that of a mysterious and presumably supernatural concomitant, like the great darkness, of the Passion. Mystically by the Sacrifice and Death of Christ we have gained free access to God, and all that barred the way is brushed aside: and it was natural for Christian exegesis to interpret in this sense the synchronism of Jesus' death with the rent veil of the Temple. The Epistle to the Hebrews at two points (6^{19, 20}, 10^{19, 20}) emphasizes the opening up for us of a way 'within the veil' by the passing of Jesus on our behalf into the Holy of Holies, a High Priest offering the sacrifice of His own Blood: but in neither passage is there any definite reference to a rending of the veil. It is possible that the episode of the rent veil of the Temple, as an element of very early Christian tradition, suggested to the author of the Epistle his allusions to the veil: it is possible that the conditions were just the reverse, and that early Christian teaching on the sacramental meaning of Jesus' death in relation to the supersession of the Temple worship had spoken of it as a symbolical rending of the veil, and that the symbolism had then been crystallized into concrete fact. This would imply that some sort of doctrine of Atonement was brought into connexion with Jesus' death at a very early period in the history of the Christian community; for the rending is certainly treated as fact by St. Mark, and time must be allowed

for the transition to a concrete interpretation of the symbolical language.

39. the centurion, which stood over against him : see notes on 16, 32.

he so gave up the ghost RV; literally 'expired.' With this reading it is not quite easy to see how a reason is supplied for the profound impression made on the centurion: we should have to expand the word 'so' to cover the whole of Jesus' attitude and of the accompanying circumstances, and that may possibly be the true interpretation: but the reading of AV and RVm, 'he so cried out and gave up the ghost,' gives a more natural sense. It would imply that our Lord had uttered words just before His death: and whether or no the centurion could understand them, he could tell that they were uttered in a tone of confidence, as of one who was 'master of His fate' and triumphant over it. But may we not perhaps, with the help of Lk 23⁴⁶, go a step farther? Suppose the centurion had either understood the words or (more probably) asked some bystander to interpret them, and learnt that Jesus was commending His spirit into the hands of a 'Father,' we can better understand—what otherwise is not obvious—the point of his comment that this man was in truth a 'son' of God.

the Son of God AV, RV: RVm *a son of God*, rightly, for there is no definite article: contrast 3¹¹, 14⁶¹.

40, 41. The holy women are mentioned here, perhaps as informants or part informants of the evangelist for the preceding narrative, in any case as introducing their part in the story of the Burial and Empty Tomb. They were all Galileans, who had been among the 'followers' of Jesus 'when he was in Galilee,' their special function there, as women, having been to 'minister' to His bodily needs. The emphasis on their work in Galilee suggests that they had not been in His company after He left Galilee: but they had come up to the feast, so as to be with Him again, and they were now 'beholding from afar,' on the further outskirts of the spectators.

Mary the Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less [RVm *Gr.*, 'the little'] and of Joses, and Salome. All of these women are here named for the first time in Mark: Lk 8² is the only place in the Gospels where any of the women followers are named earlier, and that enumeration includes of these three only 'Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven devils had gone out.' Obviously from that fact, as well as from

the order of names, here and 47, in Mark, and from Jn 20¹⁻¹⁸, she was the leading spirit among them. 'Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses' is only named in St. Mark, in the dependent passages of Matthew and Luke, and also (if she was 'Mary [wife] of Clopas') in Jn 19²⁶: Mt 27⁵⁶ simply copies Mark, and in 27⁶¹, 28¹ calls her 'the other Mary,' which suggests that she was only a name to him; Lk 24¹¹ calls her 'Mary of James.' We may assume that to the Christian community, in this case no doubt of Jerusalem, Mary was distinguished from other Marias as the mother of two well-known sons, James the little (whether little in stature or in age: so called to distinguish him from other homonyms) and Joses: but in 47 James is omitted and the mother is 'Mary of Joses,' probably because Joses, though the younger, was the better-known son. As she is thus the least known otherwise of the three holy women, it is more than likely that she is specially named because she was St. Mark's special informant. Salome is named in no other Gospel: but Matthew has instead 'the mother of Zebedee's children,' and John 'his mother's sister.' If we may combine these several data, Salome was sister to the Blessed Virgin, and mother of James and John, who were therefore first cousins to our Lord: a result not unlikely in itself, though their father appears to have been in a better social position (Mk 1²⁰) than the parents of Jesus.

42-46. The Burial. Jesus died, it would seem, soon after 3 o'clock in the afternoon: the day was Friday, or, as it was called by Greek-speaking Jews and is still called by Greek-speaking Christians, 'Preparation,' that is (as Mark goes on to explain for his Gentile readers) preparation for the Saturday or Sabbath. On the Sabbath no work could be done, and therefore any burial must take place before sunset of Friday, and time did not allow of any elaborate rites. Whatever was done had to be done hurriedly. Even so the introductory phrase 'as it was now late' must be construed very loosely: in 1³² it is used of the time at and following sunset, and the implication of 14¹⁶ is almost as clear: Luke therefore (23⁵⁴) transfers the note of time to the completion of the Burial.

But there was another reason for haste. The Jewish law (Dt 21^{22, 23}) made specific provision for the burial of crucified criminals before sunset on the day of their death: and though our Lord's death was no doubt unexpectedly speedy, the Jewish

authorities would soon learn of it, and would therefore be likely to claim the body of Jesus for immediate disposal. On every ground, therefore, those who wished to secure a reverent burial would have to act at once.

43. **Joseph of Arimathæa, a counsellor of honourable estate.** Joseph is described, in distinction again from other Josephs, as 'from Arimathæa,' variously identified with a village on the north of Jerusalem and a village near Lydda in the south-west of Judæa; he was 'a counsellor,' that is, a member of the Sanhedrin, and 'of honourable estate'—the word used properly means 'a gentleman,' like the Latin *honestus*, but in vulgar use (against which purists in Greek protested energetically) it came to mean 'rich,' and Matthew, no doubt rightly interpreting Mark, paraphrases it in that sense. It is employed to account for the prodigal outlay of Joseph.

who also himself was looking for the Kingdom of God, just as in Lk 2^{25, 38} Symeon was 'looking for the consolation of Israel,' and Anna was talking about the Child to all that were 'looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.' Joseph was not a regular follower or open disciple of Jesus, and was apparently not known by sight to the Galilean women: but he had been powerfully attracted by Jesus—like Cleopas and his friend in Lk 24²¹, he had doubtless 'hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel'—and though too timid it would seem to record his sentence in favour of Jesus in the Sanhedrin (14⁶⁴), he resolved at least to secure Him honourable burial and an undisturbed tomb.

he boldly went in unto Pilate, a rendering which underrates the merit of the deed: it means that he 'screwed up his courage,' as we should say, a timid man atoning for his timidity by taking a course from which anyone might have shrunk: to ask for the body of one who had died a criminal's death was doubtless as unusual then as it would be now. But he was met half-way: Pilate was more than willing to affront the Jewish authorities who had forced him in the morning to act against his sense of justice, and only waited to satisfy himself, by sending for the officer in charge, that the sentence had been really carried out and that it was no scheme on Joseph's part to remove a still living prisoner.

45. **he granted the corpse.** The verb implies that it was a special act of grace: the noun, only used of the Lord's body here and perhaps in 43, and only by Mark,

reflects presumably the language in which the request was made and granted. Note once more the straightforward faithfulness of Mark's record in the use of a word which it might have been natural to avoid.

46. **he bought a linen cloth.** 'Bought,' both to save time, and to secure that the linen shroud should be clean and unused.

wound him in the linen cloth. For Mark's 'wound' or 'swathed,' which we must suppose was unusual or colloquial or both, the other two Synoptists substitute an equivalent verb 'wrapped.' The cases where we cannot at once account for agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark are extraordinarily few, so few that they may easily be reckoned accidental. With more knowledge we might be able to explain their common rejection of Mark's word and common substitution of another—perhaps the technically correct—word.

in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock. Mark's knowledge at this point becomes more jejune than that of any of the other three Gospels. That the tomb was a rock-tomb would have been visible to the women: the earlier details in Mark's account may have come from some one of Joseph's servants in attendance on him.

47-XVI. 8. Easter Eve and Easter Day.

47, XVI. 1. **And Mary Magdalene and Mary the 'mother' of Joses beheld where he was laid.** And when the sabbath was past, **Mary Magdalene, and Mary the 'mother' of James, and Salome, bought spices that they might come and anoint him.** This repetition of names in successive verses is odd in itself: and when we compare the dependent narratives we are puzzled by the absence of Salome from both of them. Mt 27^{61, 28¹}, have only 'Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary,' Lk 24¹⁰ adds Joanna on his own account to 'the Magdalene Mary . . . and Mary the *mother* of James': the two obviously depend (apart from Luke's Joanna) on Mark, so why should neither have included Salome, if Mark had at this point named her? Therefore when we find that the two Western witnesses, whose evidence we found so valuable in 15³⁴, agree on omitting altogether the mention of names in Mk 16¹, we shall be inclined to accept their evidence and to read: 'And Mary the Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid, and when the Sabbath was past bought spices to come and anoint him.'

Once more it is the text of Matthew which has played havoc with the tradition of the text of Mark: Matthew, having copied Mk 15⁴⁷ in its proper place at 27⁶¹, interpolates in 27⁶²⁻⁶⁶ the story of the sealing of the tomb, returns at 28¹ to follow Mark, and therefore *repeats the names of the women*.

The two Mariæ then watched from a distance the action of Joseph. They did not know him, and did not venture to approach and take part: they were near enough to mark the exact site of the tomb, but could not see anything that was done inside it, and had no assurance that there had been any proper fulfilment of the duties which it was the natural part of women to carry out, and they were not to be balked of all that tender devotion inspired of care for the Body of their Lord. It was close on sunset, and the Sabbath precluded their doing more for another twenty-four hours. On Saturday evening, after the Sabbath ended, they made their purchases and preparations: early on Sunday morning they took their way to the tomb.

1. come and anoint him: rather *go and anoint him*. On the absence of any separate Greek word for 'go' in our sense, see note on 14²¹.

2. very early . . . when the sun was risen. For Mark's curiously loose use of language in describing hours near sunrise and sunset, see on 15⁴²; the other accounts all make it clear that 'very early' is the element in Mark's language here which is exact; it is tempting indeed to suppose that the Greek word 'not yet' has dropped out of the text before the word 'risen.'

3, 4. As they approach the tomb, it occurs to them, as perhaps it had not done before, that they might have difficulty in moving aside the stone at the entrance: perhaps they had not seen, at their distance and in the twilight of Friday evening, how large the stone was: AV rightly prints the greater part of 4 as a parenthesis.

4. and looking up they see that the stone is rolled back. The tense of 'rolled back' is perfect, and the idiomatic equivalent in English is 'had been rolled back.' AV has 'rolled away,' as in 3: RV tries to represent the slight change in the Greek, between the verbs used in 3 and 4, by 'rolled back,' but that is the same thing as 'rolled away,' and we should probably be right in crediting St. Mark with meaning a real change in the sense. The *Gospel of Peter* too says that the stone had 'given way a little,' and possibly that is Mark's meaning.

5. a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe. A 'young man' as in 14⁵¹: but Mark is here describing a supernatural visitant in terms of a human figure, just as Old Testament writers do: compare the 'three men' of Gen 18, and the 'two young men . . . splendid in their apparel' of 2 Mac 3²⁶, while Mark's exact word is used of the angel Raphael in Tobit 5⁵⁻⁹ (according to the better text, that of the codex Sinaiticus).

on the right side: Mark perhaps means to note that the Lord's Body had in fact lain on the right side of the tomb, the place of honour (see on 14⁶²).

arrayed in a white robe: for the 'robe' see on 12³⁸. The full phrase in Rev 7⁹: here obviously to emphasize the supernatural character of the visitant, as in 2 Mac 3²⁶.

6. ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified RV, a rendering which is not good English and does not give the effect of the Greek: we must render either *Jesus the Nazarene the Crucified* or with AV *Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified*. It is doubtful whether the clause is, as Matthew takes it (and so AV, RV), a statement, or, as Luke takes it, a question. Ancient MSS. are not punctuated, and Mark makes very sparing use of the particles by which Greek writers indicate their meaning apart from punctuation. We have therefore to consult Marcan usage: and Mark is fond of heaping up a succession of brief clauses as here (cf. 1²⁴, 2⁷, 14⁶⁴), and his custom appears to be to combine both statements and interrogations. On analogy, then, as this is the only clause in a group of five which can possibly be interrogatory, it seems probable that Luke is right. For the word Nazarene see note on 1²⁴.

7. tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you RV. This punctuation overlooks the fact that what our Lord had said was not that they should see Him in Galilee, but that He was going before them after His resurrection into Galilee (14²⁸). Punctuate therefore 'He goeth before you into Galilee (there shall ye see him), as he said unto you.'

8. Neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid. Here ends the Gospel according to St. Mark as it has been preserved to us; not indeed as he wrote it, or at any rate intended to write it, for it seems incredible that anyone could have ended a book with the words 'for they were afraid,' or that any evangelist should have recorded the fact

of the Resurrection, as implied by the Empty Tomb, without going on to record any of the appearances that guaranteed the Resurrection. For further discussion of the Lost Ending and its probable contents, see the appended note.

APPENDED NOTE: THE ENDING OF ST. MARK'S GOSPEL

THE conclusion of the Gospel according to St. Mark is found in three different forms in ancient authorities: (1) As ending with the words 'they were afraid' at 16⁸; (2) as continuing, after the words 'they were afraid,' with a summary account of some appearances of Christ, of the unbelief of the Apostles, and of Christ's appearance to them, His rebuke of their unbelief, and His charge to preach the Gospel everywhere—this ending is familiar to us as 16⁹⁻²⁰ of AV, and is commonly entitled 'The Last Twelve Verses,' or the Longer Ending; (3) as continuing, after 'they were afraid,' with a few brief words rounding off the narrative: 'But all the things that had been enjoined on them they announced briefly to Peter and his companions. And afterwards Jesus himself too appeared and sent forth through them from the east right to the west the holy and uncorrupt preaching of eternal salvation. Amen'—this is known as the Shorter Ending.

(1) *The Gospel closes at 'they were afraid'* in the Greek codex Sinaiticus (N), and in the Old Syriac as given in the lately discovered Sinai MS. So nine out of the ten oldest known Armenian Gospel MSS. So also apparently the original form of the oldest of the Old Latin MSS., the codex Vercellensis (a), though it might have had (3), the Shorter Ending. Further, it would seem that Eusebius's analysis of the Gospels into sections, which we know as the Eusebian Canons, ended Mark with a section corresponding to 16⁸. And the codex Vaticanus (B) also closes at 16⁸, though a whole column is then left blank as though the scribe supposed something to be missing.

(2) *The Longer Ending* is found without any sign of doubt as to its genuineness in all later authorities, Greek and Latin, and among earlier Greek MSS. in the codex Alexandrinus (A), in the Washington MS. (W, but with additional matter between 14 and 15, see below), and in codex Bezae (D). Quotations of matter from the Longer Ending are found in Irenæus, and perhaps in one of the votes given in Cyprian's Carthaginian Council of A.D. 256.

(3) *The Shorter Ending* is found as the

close of the Gospel in the codex Bobiensis (k); while in four Greek uncial MSS., mostly of the 8th century, including L (codex Paris, 62) and Ψ (of the Laura on Mt. Athos, 172), the Gospel ends at 16⁹, but is immediately followed by the Shorter Ending, and that again by the Longer Ending, both Shorter and Longer Endings being preceded by a heading to the effect that 'this also is found in some MSS.'

Now the Shorter Ending (3) may be dismissed at once. Obviously it was tacked on to a text that ended 'for they were afraid,' in order to provide something more suitable for the closing words of a Gospel. It has no claim to be authentic, though its place in k is sufficient to guarantee its early date. It may well have been put together at Rome some time in the 2nd century A.D. But since no one would have added it to, or substituted it for, the Longer Ending, *all evidence for the Shorter Ending is evidence against the Longer Ending*: (1) and (3) must be taken together against (2). That (3) is of Western origin is suggested alike by its presence in k and by the reference to 'the West.'

What then are the claims of (2) to be considered the genuine ending of the Gospel? On the side of external evidence, it can claim very early attestation in Gaul: Irenæus, the codex Bezae, and the Old Latin MS. ff. But in every other part of the Christian world the earliest attestation is against it: Italy (codex a), Africa (codex k), Egypt (codex B), Palestine (codex N), Syria (the Old Syriac). No early father but Irenæus cites it, and the silence of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen can hardly be accidental. It was indeed adopted into the Antiochene recension of the New Testament by Lucian about A.D. 300, and so passed into the official text of Constantinople: but Lucian's younger contemporary, Eusebius of Cæsarea, tells us in his *Questiones ad Marinum* that the accurate copies ended 'for they were afraid,' while the additional matter was found only in comparatively few copies.

But the external evidence against (2) can be taken much further back, since it is practically certain that neither Matthew nor Luke found it in their copies of Mark. That *both* Matthew and Luke cannot have used it follows from the fact that, while their narratives run more or less parallel to one another as far as Mk 16⁸ = Mt 28⁸ = Lk 24⁸, from that point onwards they diverge, never to come into contact again. For Matthew we note further: (i) that after 28⁸ his