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CHRIST'S TRAINING OF THE TWELVE DISCIPLES
IN RELATION TO THEIR RESPONSE
ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL BY MATTHEW

By

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INTRODUCTION

CHRIST'S TRAINING OF THE TWELVE DISCIPLES
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Stated and Delineated

This work will not merely examine the training of the twelve to determine Christ's aims of accomplishment, nor will it merely be an examination of the group to determine what effect their contact with Christ had upon them. Ample research has been done in the first field and some has been done in the latter. It will be the purpose of this thesis to examine the relation between these two factors.

In the development of the thesis the following questions should be considered. Was the response of the twelve disciples the chief variable influence upon the development of Christ's training of them? Did Christ base the method of teaching them upon their response to their previous training? Does the factor of the disciples' response explain why Christ went over some lessons very swiftly, but placed great stress upon others, sometimes repeating them several times and in different ways? It is with this subject matter that this thesis will be concerned, and in an attempt to answer these questions this thesis will move toward a conclusion.

This thesis will limit its treatment to the Gospel of Matthew on the grounds that only one Gospel can be treated adequately in the limited scope of such a work and Matthew seems to be the Gospel that is most concerned with the twelve as a group.

The thesis will not concern itself with the training of any other group or individual, except as it is coincidental with the training of the twelve disciples. What is more, it will be concerned only with the training which the twelve receive from Christ, not from other sources.

In regards to Christ's status at the start of the training, two pertinent points will be noted. First, he preached the same message as John the Baptist, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (3:2, 4:17) Secondly, this message was in direct contrast to the general views of the day, such as the materialistic legalism of the Pharisees and the extreme militarism of the zealots.¹

Where the text states the response of only one or of only a few of the disciples, the degree to which that response expresses the group feeling will be considered on the basis of Christ's immediate treatment of the group or of the individual. Sometimes an unstated response may be established from other evidence.

B. Justification of the Subject

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1. Cf. H.E. Dana: The New Testament World, ch. 6.

While countless works have been done on the training of the twelve and several others on the reaction, growth, or change wrought in the personalities of the disciples, this seems to be the first work that has had as its main purpose a consideration of the inter-relation of these two factors.

Because of this it should prove valuable as an interesting and worthwhile approach to a study of the book of Matthew and also a study of the life of Christ, in that it will approach either study from an aspect that was very near the heart of Christ. It should, to some extent, reveal the thought process of Christ in regard to the activities of His days on earth.

It should also prove of value to pedagogues, in that it should reveal methods of teaching by Christ, which could be applied to their contemporary student-teacher situations.

C. The Method of Procedure

For facility of dealing with the subject, a series of eighteen incidents has been chosen from Matthew on the basis of their accepted relation to the training of the twelve, their position of importance either in Matthew or in the Gospel accounts as a whole, or the fact that the incident contains material and information especially relevant to the relationship of the subject under study in this thesis.

The following chapter divisions have been made:

(I) Early Training of the Twelve Previous to the Commission to Preach, (II) Training from the Commission to Preach to the Confession of Peter, (III) Training in Relation to Christ's Death. These chapters comprise the body of the thesis with an Introduction, Summary and Conclusion added. These three divisions were made on the basis that each represents a period of growth in the type of response made by the disciples. Each will be treated in full in the individual chapter introductions and summaries.

Each incident will be treated in three basic steps of procedure. First, the incident will be examined from the aspects of Christ's training, showing purpose and aims of each incident in the training program. Second, the training will be considered in relation to previous teaching and response. Third and finally, each incident will be examined to determine the disciples' response and the implication of the response in regard to their inner understanding of Christ and His training and their willingness to accept it.

Since this procedure will be followed throughout all eighteen incidents without any variation in titles, and to escape redundancy and boredom, and for simplification, the headings of the three divisions of each incident will be listed here and under each incident in the body of the thesis instead of in the table of contents. The divisions of treatment of each incident come under the following headings:

(1) The Training, (2) The Relation to Previous Experience,

and (3) The Response.

All chapter and verse references to the Gospel of Matthew have been placed in brackets following the sentence in which the reference applies rather than in the footnotes due to the quantity of such references.

D. Sources of Study

Since this work is to a large degree a first study in an unplowed field, the main source is the actual Gospel of Matthew as found in the American Standard Version of the Bible, and in Nestle's Greek text. "The Training of the Twelve" by A. Bruce and G.C. Morgan's Commentary on Matthew proved very useful supplementary material. Various other works were also used.

CHAPTER I

7 EARLY TRAINING

PREVIOUS TO THE COMMISSION TO PREACH

CHAPTER I
EARLY TRAINING
PREVIOUS TO THE COMMISSION TO PREACH

A. Introduction

This chapter concerns itself with the period of training that took place between the call of the disciples and their commission to go and preach. The treatment of chapter one starts with the call because it is the initial point at which a demand is made of the disciples by Jesus. It is the point in their contact with Christ at which they are called upon to make a decision regarding the course of their own response to Him. From this point it goes on to what happened between the time they made that response and the time they were called upon to make a further step of progress, the actual going and carrying Christ's teachings to others; it deals with the introduction of the basic concepts Christ brought into the minds of the disciples.

Four main incidents or series of incidents are included herein. They are (1) the call, (2) the Sermon on the Mount, (3) the parables, (4) the miracles. The Sermon on the Mount is included because of the importance Matthew gives it. The parables are included because they are found in all of the synoptics and deal with the Kingdom of Heaven, which is a basic theme in the Gospel of Matthew. The miracles

are included because some miracles are found in all of the Gospels and because they seem to occupy an established position in Christ's teaching program. The parables are presented before the miracles because, upon consulting the texts of the synoptics¹ and various authorities such as A.T. Robertson² and Henry H. Halley³ it was felt that this was the actual chronological order.

B. The Call of the First Disciples. 4:17-25

1. The Training.

Christ's call to the disciples to follow Him took a significant form. He did not offer them an invitation, but rather made a demand. The Greek verb for "come" takes the imperative form, " $\delta\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$ " (4:19). Thus at the point of this call, Christ made a demand upon the disciples to respond to what He said according to a pattern which He, Himself, prescribed.

The first fact to note about this command is that it was not a universal one (at least not necessarily) but that it was made to a particular group of men.⁴ Christ issued no such call to the multitudes as a whole, instead certain would-be disciples were rebuffed. (8:18-22) Christ

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1. In this connection see: Luke 8:4-56. See also: Mark Chapters 4 and 5.
2. In this connection see: A.T. Robertson: A Harmony of the Gospels, introductive material, p. xvi.
3. In this connection see: H. H. Halley: Pocket Bible Handbook, p. 383.
4. Cf. G. Campbell Morgan: Commentary on Matthew, p. 36.

did not wait for these men to come to Him. He went to them as they went about their ordinary day's work. The text tells us, "...he saw...Peter and Andrew...and...James the son of Zebedee, and John...", (4:18-21) "and he saith unto them, Come ye after me..." (4:19) There were others who were about, but they were not included in the 'ye' who received the command.

Then this was a call to a special work, a call to become "...fishers of men." (4:19) Fishing for fish was a common occupation, entered into by many. Viewed from the viewpoint of the natural man it was a logical work, for it supplied one's material needs. Suddenly, these fishermen were told that they were to take up a new kind of fishing. They were not to be ordinary fishermen any longer, for now they were to fish for men's souls. No material dividends were offered to them. They were assured that their new work would be an activity to which they would be able to adapt and familiarize themselves.¹ For a call to fish was a call to a task at which they could feel they might become proficient.

But even more than a call to a group, or a work, this was a call to an individual. It was not a call merely to gather together and go out and begin to fish for men, it was first and foremost a call to "...come ye after..." (4:19) It has been mentioned that this call was given in the form

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1. Cf. Ibid.

of a command. If the men to whom it was given felt that the one who gave the command had neither the right to give it nor the authority with which to back it up, they might well have reacted violently against it, and they certainly never would have obeyed it. Obedience to a command implies the authority of the giver of the command.

Finally, this was a call to see the relation between the individual, the group, and the work. It was a call to realize that by following this special individual, by following Him in thought as well as in footstep, a special group would be born, and that the change of these fishermen into a special group would be brought about through their contact with this individual. Then, it was a call to realize that only as they became special individuals, and thereby a special group, would they be able to do a special work.¹

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

One can hardly imagine Christ going up to a complete stranger or group of strangers and ordering them to follow Him, on the grounds that He would change their lives. It would seem much more plausible that He would first have some sort of contact with them that they might have some reason to trust His command and understand His purpose. This would be more in harmony with the manner in which God operates.²

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1. In this connection see: Ibid.

2. Cf. L. Latham, *Pastor Pastorum*, p. 196

The especial likelihood that the disciples were acutely aware of these facts may be inferred from several factors. First, Christ would not have gone to unprepared men, and God's method of preparation seems to have been John the Baptist. Then the response of the fishermen indicates that they felt Christ to be someone special, i.e. The one of whom John had spoken. It is demonstrated throughout the New Testament that these men had more spiritual concern than the multitudes. This fact gives evidence that they probably would have been aware of what John the Baptist was teaching the people and of what John's message truly meant. Finally, over and above all other facts, there is the record in John that Jesus' first disciples were disciples of John the Baptist.¹

The message of Christ clearly stood out from all that surrounded it as an attempt to meet basic needs through a spiritual contact with God that would lead to changed lives. Thus a response to this man and His message would involve a response that set one apart from the established populace of the time and marked one as having a realization that a spiritual base was necessary to any adequate philosophy of life.

3. The Response.

When the disciples followed Christ they "...left

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1. In this connection see: John 1:35-42

the nets...the boat and their father..." (4:19-22) Here were men who were willing to leave livelihood (nets), possessions (boats), and family (father) in order that they might respond to the call of this man who was to become their leader. Such a sacrifice is made only with the assurance that a greater worth will be gained thereby. The disciples felt that the call of Christ held great value for them. In fact such a sacrifice would tend to indicate that the value obtained from it was not only greater in degree but in kind.

When the disciples followed Christ they did it immediately. The word "εὐθέως" occurs in the text. (4:20-22) There is no note of hesitation, of questioning, or of doubt. No disagreeable words tend to mar this picture of perfect obedience. These were men who were not going to wait to have their lives changed; they were going to allow it to happen now. In fact, they were going to do everything they could to help it to happen.

The disciples not only went with Christ, but in the immediate events that followed they stayed with Him. (4:23-25) This was not merely a case of a passing idea; this was a changed way of life because of a contact with an individual.

Thus from the overt evidence it may be inferred that the idea of becoming fishers of men was an invitation that caught the disciples' imagination and appealed to them. They may not have comprehended all that the task would in-

volve, but they were drawn with a keen compulsion to take up this work. They were willing to leave their ordinary life for an extraordinary one.¹ They were even willing to accept Jesus' message that repentance leads to a relationship with God as King, thus producing purpose and worth in life. These men were willing to be a special group.

Finally, it is to be noted that the reason for the above response is that these men responded to the man Christ Jesus.² They accepted Him as the one of whom John the Baptist had spoken.³ They accepted Him as the one who would see to it that their material needs were provided, because they left their means of provision behind. (4:20-22) They accepted Him as the author of the change that He said should take place in their lives. What is probably most important of all, they accepted Him as the one who would be their intimate master, and would lead them where they could not go alone, along a new path.

C. The Sermon on the Mount. Ch. 5-7

1. The Training.

Again the disciples were singled out as a special group. Bruce writes:

Mark's narrative confirms the view suggested by

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1. Cf. Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 36
2. Cf. Alexander B. Bruce: *Training of the Twelve*, p. 16
3. Cf. John, Ch. 1:35-37

these observations on Matthew and Luke, viz. that the twelve were called just before the sermon on the mount was delivered.¹

Matthew brings out that while the multitudes may have been present, it was the twelve with whom Christ was particularly interested; He taught them. Although Christ started the Sermon speaking in general terms that could be applied to any man, He showed that He had the disciples in mind as those in whom He expected to see these ideals embodied.

(5:11-16) For He shifts to the personal pronoun 'ye', which undoubtedly refers to the group which He is especially addressing, the newly titled disciples. (9:1) Thus, they were expected once again to be a special group by making a special response that the multitudes would not be expected to make. Their call alone had set them apart from others who followed Jesus.² Now as disciples they were to follow the mind of Christ.

In the Sermon on the Mount Christ gave an exposition of the individual Kingdom subject. Morgan writes:

When Jesus came to set up a Kingdom, the first thing He said was: It is not a question of what you have, or what you do, save in a secondary sense; it is a question of what you are.³

The concept developed in this Sermon was to be a fundamental building block with which Jesus could correlate any further teaching on the Kingdom which He might give.⁴ He laid down

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 31
2. In this connection see: Luke 6:13
3. Morgan: op. cit., p. 40
4. Bruce, op. cit., p. 42

the ideal standard of conduct on this earth, and told how this might be adapted by an individual to himself. Once and for all the relation between His message and God's revelation in the Old Testament was established, for these teachings of His were the fulfillment rather than annulment of all that had gone before. (5:17) Morgan brings out:

The Christ does not begin in the material realm: He came to teach men that character is before conduct. He came to teach them that the spiritual realization underlies the spiritual manifestation. He came to teach them, as we shall see, that He does not say a word about the government of property, not a single word about any of these things; but He gets down under the surface, and He corrects man in the realm of his character. He says "Blessed" but never a single blessing does He pronounce upon having anything or doing anything; every blessing is pronounced upon being.¹

The Sermon falls into six major sections. First Christ begins His message on characteristics of a Kingdom subject to reveal these as they will be found in persons who are adjusted to life in the eyes of God. (5:4-16) Next Christ portrayed the Kingdom subjects as persons who would be making a positive effect upon this world for God. Christ showed that they would carry on a secret inner worship of God that would be based upon a true spiritual contact, and that this worship would be effective. (6:1-18) After that He expressed how they would first seek God's reign and spiritual priorities and would not be anxious over material matters, but would trust God in that area. (6:19-34) Then

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 40

He showed that where no set code existed they would act cautiously and wisely in accordance with the character of their heavenly Father allowing a spirit of love to rule over them. (7:1-12) Finally, Christ taught that such a character was not acquired by merely saying that one desired to have it, but by truly seeking the will of the Father and by following the instruction and commands of Christ, Himself, which He indicated that few would do. This, then, is allied with the repentance that Jesus had given earlier as the prerequisite of the Kingdom. (7:19-27)

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

There were two paths Christ might have taken in gathering a group of followers who would have special contact with Him that the ordinary man would not have. He might have listed the full requirements that were entailed, the talents that were required, the difficulties to be faced, the hardships to be overcome, and all of the other factors that an adequate disciple and worker would eventually have to face, and then have opened an invitation to any who wished to attempt to qualify for the position. This would emphasize the work, and the people would be repulsed by the enormity and severity of the task.

On the other hand, He could state briefly as a general principle that He needed repentant individuals who wanted God to reign as King in their lives and in the lives of others, and then He could go out and select twelve men

who believed in this principle and who were willing to accept Him as the one who was able to bring about this change in their own lives and the lives of others.¹ After He had this group, and had demonstrated at least a little of His ability and they realized His power, He could tell them more precisely what allowing God to be King in their lives involved. This emphasis upon the master was the method that Jesus chose.

Matthew used the term 'disciples' immediately before the Sermon, indicating that those who were selected to hear the Sermon were disciples, or followers. (5:1) In the former incident Christ had used an entirely different figure for the twelve, 'fishers of men.' (4:19) The obvious relation between these two terms is that to become a fisher of men one must follow the mind of Christ through the Sermon on the Mount. Thus this discipleship was the beginning of the change into a new kind of fisherman. Christ could not just send any kind of man out to fish for men; He could send only a Kingdom citizen who would be able to catch men.² The man who had not built his life around the ideal of the Sermon was not equipped to give a worthwhile ideal to another.³

3. The Response.

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1. Cf. George Soltan: Portraits of our Lord Jesus Christ, pp. 42-43. See also Morgan, op. cit., p. 38
2. Cf. Cunningham Geike: Life of Christ, Re. Ed. p. 417
3. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 40

The disciples allowed themselves to become a separate group. "The multitudes were astonished by His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (7:28) Here was a realization that Jesus had set Himself in contrast to the pattern of the organized Judaism as one who was not going to conform to it but who claimed a more direct contact with God. This meant that if the disciples remained with Christ as His chosen group, they were standing over against the formal organization of Judaism. The disciples adhered to Christ rather than Judaism, signifying that they were willing to abandon their old way of life.

Another fact worthy of note is that the disciples not only followed Christ but they also accepted Christ's teachings. In staying with Christ they signified that they believed repentance was essential, and that it would lead to the type of individual characterized in the Sermon on the Mount, and furthermore that this was a valuable result. What is most important, they signified that they believed it would be fitting for them to become such individuals. This was how they were to become a special group, by all becoming special individuals.

Finally, the disciples demonstrated that they accepted the man, Christ, as their master. They acknowledged that He was the only one who had the power to bring about this complete change in character and being. The people with

their marveling had indicated that they realized that Christ was setting Himself up as the chief religious authority. The twelve, by their constant presence at His side, indicated that they felt His assumption was a valid one.¹ He was to be their master.

D. The Parables. Ch. 13

1. The Training.

In the series of parables recorded in Matthew, chapter thirteen, Christ attempted to make known to the disciples the nature of the Kingdom's future and its external affect upon men. He painted a picture of the Kingdom showing it's entrance by only those few who realize its preciousness. He told how Satan would attempt to thwart the growth and power of the Kingdom by confusion and by outright action but promised that it would continue its undaunted growth and would produce a lasting effect upon the entire world.

Bruce has provided a concise but excellent analysis of the individual parables:

One of these, the parable of the sower, apparently the first spoken, shows the different reception given to the word of the Kingdom by different classes of hearers, and the varied issues in their lives. Two - the parable of the tares and of the net cast into the sea - describe the mixture of good and evil that should exist in the Kingdom until the end, when the grand final separation would take place. An-

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1. Cf. Isaac Da Costa: The Four Witnesses, p. 22

other pair of short parables - those of the treasure hid in a field and of the precious pearl set forth the incomparable importance of the kingdom, and of citizenship therein. Other two - the grain of mustard seed, and the leaven hid in three measures of meal - explain how the kingdom advances from small beginnings to a great ending.¹

In the parables Christ called the attention of the listeners to a contemporary material situation that was analagous to a spiritual axiom about the Kingdom. Christ, explained that He did this that He might give to the disciples, in the presence of the multitudes, explanations about the nature of the Kingdom which the multitudes were not prepared to receive. (13:11-17)

But there is another reason for the parables. Christ continued to speak to them in parables when they were apart from the multitude and the disciples claimed to understand the lesson. (13:36-51) Now, Christ had continually emphasized hearing as a key to understanding the parables. (13:9, 13, 14, 16-18, 43) He stated that the reason most did not understand was that "this people's heart is waxed gross." (13:15) All of the parables treated common physical situations and were so clearly related to spiritual truths that the only reason for not understanding would be that one was not listening for a spiritual lesson but instead was absorbed in the material world.² This then was a test of

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 45

2. See also: Richard C. Trench: Notes on the Parables of Our Lord, p. 148

2. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 140

the disciples to find to what degree they were approaching life from a spiritual viewpoint.¹

Thus, the disciples were called upon to show that they were a special group. Would they react differently than the multitudes, and if so, how differently?

Then finally, if the disciples did not understand how would they react? Would they come to Christ as the one who had the explanation, and who, as their loving leader would give it to them? This was a test as to how the disciples would react to Christ as well as to how they would react to His teaching.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

Christ continued to follow the program which He had taken from the beginning of His teaching and followed in the Sermon on the Mount. Each time He prepared His disciples for a more spiritual concept before He delivered it to them. The difficulty in realizing the nature of a spiritual Kingdom can be inferred from the fact that the great majority of the Jewish people never were able to grasp that Christ's reign was to be primarily, if not entirely, a spiritual one. They were always waiting for Him to set up a physical kingdom.² Therefore, Christ must first give them the picture of what their individual response to God must be. After they

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1. Cf. G. Jones: The Master and His Method, p. 82

2. In this connection see: H.E. Dana: New Testament World, p. 133-135.

had assimilated that truth into their lives He would be able to give them a picture of what the effect would be upon those who had made such an individual response when they were considered as a group.

But here Christ addressed a group that was, at least for the first part of the talk, a mixed group. (13:2) Certainly they had not all accepted the ideal of the Sermon as their own. It was not the purpose of Christ merely to present to them a picture that would cause them to enter the Kingdom merely to escape the tares. (13:15) The only means of entrance was by repentance and acceptance of Jesus as King. If some of the unconverted crowd were to glimpse the fate in store for them, they might well own lip allegiance to Jesus without actually having any change take place within their heart, not realizing that this was not enough to bring them into the Kingdom. They would in truth become the tares.

Christ must then find some way to present this truth so that it would be available and lucid to all who were listening for it and so that, at the same time, it would be hidden from those who would not repent, lest they should place themselves in an even worse position. Christ accomplished this ~~fact~~ by means of the parables.

But even when the disciples were the only group present, Christ spoke in parables. (13:36, 44-52) Christ expected that, with guidance and the introduction of a train

of thought, His disciples should be able to look about them at the ordinary instances of life and see how some of them paralleled spiritual situations. Why should they be able to do this? They should be able to because of the training Christ had given them in the Sermon on the Mount. If they responded properly to it and to what had happened before and since, they would have a spiritual perception which would be far beyond that of the ordinary man. The man who was seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven should be able to see it in these little illustrations. The man who saw only the material story was the man who was seeking all other things first, and then the Kingdom.¹ The disciples, who were now fishing for men, should see in these stories information that was relative to their spiritual work. The fisherman who saw only information about material work and events in these stories might well still have the outlook of one who only fished for fish.

3. The Response.

The disciples did not present an outstanding picture of spiritual perception and aptitude in this instance. They failed to heed the warning, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear," (13:9) that Christ gave at the close of the first parable. The fact that after the explanation of the first parable Christ began all of the following parables

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 140

with the introduction, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto," indicated that He felt this added bit of stimulus was necessary to the perception of the spiritual application behind the story. (13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 51) The disciples grasped the fact that they were a special group who were supposed to have the knowledge of the truth of the parables even if an explanation was needed. This was shown in that they came to Christ about the second parable. The discouraging fact was that even when they were listening for the spiritual, or when they should have been listening, they missed it. (13:43) The fact that Christ repeats His former warning now to the disciples alone indicated that He was far from satisfied with their response at this point. However, after teaching the disciples several more parables, He was apparently satisfied that their understanding was at least adequate, for He then left this type of teaching to take up other matters. (13:51-53)

The disciples were constant in their response to the man Jesus, and their attraction to Him in no way declined after the cessation of the parables. They came to Him to find why He was not fishing for the multitudes. (13:10) They accepted what He said without questioning. They showed no reluctance to come to Him for an explanation of the parable of the tares. Christ had told them that they were to come to Him for such help and they took Him at His word and came fully expecting an explanation and not a rebuff.

E. The Miracles 8:23-24, 9:18-38

1. The Training.

The most obvious lesson in this series of six miracles is Christ's power over the physical world. From this series of incidents it would seem that Christ's power in the physical realm was unlimited. Then too, in the miracles Morgan finds an insight into God's character:

The miracle of healing was the manifestation of His power to work as well as to preach; and such manifestation was, moreover, a revelation of the order of the Divine Government. God is King, and everything that limits the sphere of His control must be subject to His purpose; and, therefore, He healed disease.¹

But the great lesson at this point seems to be not so much regarding Christ's power which they had already seen as it was a lesson on the human prerequisite that made the power available. (4:24) Now this faith, of course, was purely a spiritual element.²

In all but one of the six miracles it was either directly stated or strongly implied that faith in the power of Christ to perform the act was a prerequisite to the actual miracle. (8:29, 9:18, 22, 28) In the account of the last miracle there was justification for the omission of the reference to faith on the grounds that this account served more as an introduction to what would follow rather than as

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 99
2. Cf. Hebrews 11:1

a conclusion to the series. Besides, by now faith should have been assumed as coexistent with any miracle and should not need to be mentioned in such a brief account.

If it is faith in Christ that controls the operation of miracles, and Christ insisted upon it as a prerequisite, then again the spiritual was taking preeminence over and controlling the physical. Again contact with God was the basis of constructive change within our world, and there are other subsidiary factors that help to bring out the importance of the spiritual over the material. (9:27-33) In spite of the fact that chapter nine deals mostly with physical occurrences, a summary of Christ's work mentions the more strictly spiritual activities of teaching and preaching first. (9:35) Christ called first for contact with the Father and then for action only as a result of this contact.

The Pharisees openly set themselves and Christ in extreme opposition by declaring that His power came not from God but from Satan. (9:34) In answer to their claim Jesus went on doing what He had been doing, namely, creating a beneficial influence in the world and manifesting power in the material realm. The Pharisees manifested no such power. Christ showed compassion for the people because they were "...as sheep not having a shepherd." (9:36) The Pharisees showed no such compassion.

Finally, Christ called upon His disciples to make a definite response. (9:37-38) They had heard the accusations

of the Pharisees, and they realized that to stay with Christ meant a complete separation from their national religious leaders, and even from their national religion. Christ called on them not only to stay with Him, but to show the change that He had wrought in their hearts by applying what He had taught them and changing the material situation around them by a spiritual contact with their Father in prayer. This seems to have been the climax of all that had preceded thus far, in that it was the first time the disciples were asked to apply the principles of Christ in such a way as to transform conditions in their own immediate lives.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

Authorities seem to feel that the storm immediately followed the last parable.¹ They believe that Jesus departed across the lake and on the way the wind arose. (9:13-53) This position is adequately supported by the synoptics.² This would establish a close chronological tie between the teaching of the parables and the beginning of the teaching of the miracles; a tie so close that it might well be a matter of minutes rather than hours between the two events. In such a short time it would seem almost impossible that the disciples would have forgotten the lesson of the parables if it had been thoroughly learned; yet, in the instance of the

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1. In this connection see: Halley, op. cit., p. 346.
See also Robertson, op. cit., introductory material, p. xx
2. In this connection see: Mark, Ch. 4 and Luke, Ch. 8

storm which followed so closely the telling of the last parable, they showed "...little faith." (8:26)

But the great lesson for the disciples at this point came to them as a result of a need in their lives that became evident during the storm. For when the disciples went to Jesus on that occasion they received not commendation but rebuke for their lack of faith. (8:26) "A predominant idea of trust or confidence," is given in J.H. Thayer's Lexicon¹ as a definition for faith that occurred often in accompaniment with the miracles. This is a faith which the disciples lacked and which Christ persistently tried to show the necessity for, during these six incidents. Faith is an inward conviction that leads to an external response to a situation. If the external response is lacking, the depth of the internal conviction may seriously be questioned.

Now in the call, the Sermon, and the parables Christ had stressed the idea of keeping their eyes upon God and trusting that the material end of things would work out according to His will. The disciples were not doing that in this case, for they were afraid. (8:26) This was why Christ said they had little faith. They had accepted what Christ had said as true statements, yet they had not fully incorporated this truth into their lives. The material world

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1. J.H. Thayer: A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 513

still came first in their thinking in an emergency situation. At such a time they reverted to the outlook of the ordinary man and were no longer a special group. The freedom from anxiety that characterized the Kingdom citizens was not yet theirs; nor had the leaven of the faith of the Kingdom yet grown enough to influence the whole. (6:19-34, 13:33) Therefore, they must have it impressed upon them by a series of highly visual incidents that an individual may better his material situation only after he has adjusted his spiritual situation.

3. The Response

There is no definite word as to how the disciples responded to this group of miracles, the blasphemous accusation of the Jewish leaders, or to the command to pray; but much may be inferred.

In regards to the accusation of the Pharisees, it may be noted that the disciples did not leave Jesus, but, if anything, drew closer to Him.¹ These men had laid down their nets by the Galilean shore and left all that they might grasp this one pearl which they valued so highly. They had cut the ropes that moored them to the past and drifted out on a misty unchartered sea because they trusted the man at the helm of their ship. Behind them lay a systematized legalistic pattern which they had learned from childhood;

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 49

ahead of them lay a harvest, a shepherdless flock, a strange fishing assignment, and, as the key to all, contact with their Father in prayer. They had heard Jesus deliver a new and startling teaching that had fed their souls; they had seen Him master the physical elements, the blights of the body, and the power of demons. They had followed Him when they knew little or nothing of Him, and they were not leaving now.

These men not only stayed with Christ, but they obeyed His command to pray for workers. This may be inferred from the fact that Christ gave the command but once and that there was an answer to the prayer in the sending of the twelve, themselves.¹ Christ would not have dismissed this request so easily unless the disciples had fulfilled it. They could not have prayed in this way if they had not expected that it was highly probable that their request would be answered. This, then, was the first concrete sign that the disciples were beginning to embody the teachings of Christ in their lives to the degree that it influenced their relationship to others. The purpose of the call by the Galilean shore was being fulfilled; and the disciples were praying that God would send forth more fishermen. Who would be better fitted to serve the Kingdom's cause than these hand-chosen disciples? Who were better qualified for the task than these men whom Christ had picked to fish and were now so concerned about the multitude that they prayed for workers to be sent forth?

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 102

F. Summary

Christ gave a call to select individuals to leave their present way of life to become a distinct group with distinct responsibilities, and to follow Him, because He would be able to create from them a group that would make a positive effect upon the world in the creation of the reign of God in the hearts of men. To this call the disciples showed an unqualified affirmation of their acceptance. Jesus gave this group, that had come apart to rebuild their lives according to His pattern, a picture of what the new life would be like. The disciples stayed with Christ, signifying that the new life still appealed to them and that they believed that Christ could create it within them, and would create it within them.

Next Christ gave them a picture of the situation that would be created in the world because of this new group of Kingdom individuals. Because of the mixed group present and in order to test the disciples' spiritual perception, Christ told them this in hidden stories. To this the disciples did not respond so alertly and soon showed the lack of incorporation into their lives of these truths and those of the former lessons.

Jesus stressed again with material demonstrations that all the effect, whether physical or spiritual, made by any would come about only through an adequate contact with Him and His Father. Although this lesson hit them rather

abruptly, they responded and even answered Christ's call for prayer.

What had happened? Christ now had a group within which a new outlook had already been infused to some degree. He had a group who realized that they were different in that through their faith in Christ they should make an impact on the world. In the immediate outlook on the future, Christ had a group of men who had so set their minds in accordance with the mind of Christ Jesus that they were praying that He would thrust laborers into the harvest. Who were fitted to be these laborers? Christ's unique message and concepts had now affected these men to the extent that they had become somewhat unique in their concepts and message. They were to be these laborers.

CHAPTER II

TRAINING FROM THE COMMISSION TO PREACH
TO THE CONFESSION OF PETER

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A. Introduction

From the beginning of Christ's ministry to the time of his entry into Jerusalem, the feeding of the five thousand is the only incident treated by all four evangelists. This indicates that all of the writers of the gospel felt that this incident was of such importance to the development of Christ's message that it should be included in their brief accounts. The synoptics all treat the confession of Peter in a similar manner, also indicating a sudden change in the content of Christ's teaching at this point. This chapter will start with the disciples' first mission, which immediately preceded the feeding. This mission gives the background and source of a problem which came to the fore of the disciples' experience at the feeding and which moves across an ever changing scene of action to its solution. The result of that solution was codified in the words of Peter. (16:16)

The disciples' inadequate realization of the fact that God was stressing an inner relationship with Him now comes to the fore. The disciples had not adequately realized the nature of the singularity of Christ and His message and

mission. Comprehension of these facts was difficult because of their human natures, environments and their backgrounds. This second chapter therefore is concerned by and large with the solution to this problem.

B. The Commission to Preach. Ch. 10

1. The Training.

At the very beginning of the group training, Christ endeavored to create within the minds of the twelve disciples, now become apostles, the realization that they were a separate group with different potentialities from the multitude and even different potentialities from the rest of the disciples. They had received a special training that most had not received and because of special privileges they now had a special responsibility. Christ attempted to bring to this group an awareness of their distinctiveness in many ways.

First of all, "And he called unto him his twelve." (10:1) They were not just men who had happened to respond to Jesus Christ; they were "his twelve," the ones whom He had called.

Then, He gave them authority in certain aspects of the physical world through the use of His name. (10:1) This was the first time Christ had done this for the disciples, and it made a singular impression upon the group, in that this was the greatest commendation the Lord had ever

given them. They should know by now that Jesus only thoughtfully gave out compliments or gifts and that this act definitely meant that they were set apart.

Finally, their new title, "apostle," was recognized and used by Matthew. (10:2) All of the other disciples of Christ were coming to Him that they, too, might receive strength from Him. The apostles were single in that they alone of all Christ's followers were to be thrust forth from Him, out to other people. These were marked men and they were to carry the mark to others.

Christ also tried to impress upon the group that they were able and would have an equally special message to carry to the people. They were to bring a spiritual message to "...the lost sheep of the house of Israel" at a time when there was no parallel ministry to these people. (10:16) This was the purpose of their mission, "πορευόμενοι δὲ κηρύσσετε " (10:7) True the apostles were going out to heal the sick and to cast out demons, but their real purpose in going was to tell that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (10:7) This was to be the content of their message; the time had come for God to reign directly in the hearts of men.

Then Christ told them a little of what the general effect of their message would be. First Christ told the twelve apostles that they would encounter severe physical opposition and danger but that He would care for them.

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L. Morgan, op. cit., p. 103

(10:8-33) Second Christ told them that their message would bring a division among individuals and that the division would be a sharp one. (10:34-38) Finally He explained the great value their mission would have to any that accepted their message. (10:40-42)

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

What a sense of deep personal satisfaction these men must have felt over this commission. They had been told that they were to be fishers of men, and now it was to be so. They had been chosen as the twelve apostles, and such they now became. They had been told to act as light and salt, and now they were to be put in a position in which they would have a wonderful opportunity to do so. They had been told of the good seed that would respond favorably to God's word by bringing forth abundant fruit, and now they were to become such seed. They were now to become a part of the leaven of the parable of the parable by the same name. In short, they had been told that the man who responded adequately to God would have a positive effect upon other individuals, and now they were to be given the assignment of having such an effect.

This was to be a climax for the disciples, but it was not to be the climax, as some of the disciples may well have interpreted it as that time. The man who taught that communion with God came by such a universal means as doing the will of the Father, would hardly feel that a mission

which went "not into any way of the Gentiles," was the complete fulfillment of His plan.¹ (7:21, 10:5) This was not Christ's ultimate goal, it was rather an important step toward the attaining of that goal.²

If this was not to be the completion of the disciples' training, what part was it to play in that training? It was to act in the function of an important test at a turning point in that training. In the disciples' attempt to impart the message of Christ to others, Christ would discover how much of the training the twelve had actually incorporated into their own lives. In examining their methods He would see how much they had learned of His methods. This was to be their equivalent of a solo flight.

Therefore a valuable insight into Christ's evaluation of the twelve disciples' development was evident, for just as a flight trainer would not send a pilot out on a solo until he thought the pilot was ready, so Christ would not send the twelve out on such a mission if He did not feel that by now they had absorbed enough of His message to impart it to others. For them to fail would indicate that they were not measuring up to the level of development that Christ expected from them when He called them.

What was in their previous training that should show itself now in their message? First of all, there was

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1. Cf. G. Matheson: Studies of the Portrait of Christ,
Ch. 20-21

2 G. Bruce, op. cit., p. 100

the basic core of Christ's message that men must repent in order for God to become King in their lives. How much of the Sermon on the Mount would be in their sermons? Then there was the extreme importance of the basic core of Christ's message in regard to people's destinies. Would this pearl be so precious to them that they would be able to impart to others a realization of its worth? Finally, there was the fact of their own separateness. Would they be so conscious of this that they would demand it of others at the cost of division?

3. The Response.

When the disciples left Christ to go on their mission they did so with many encouraging signs. As in previous experiences they showed no hesitation about doing as their teacher bade them. They had no questions by the seaside or on the mountain, and they had no questions now. By this instant willingness, they showed two things. First, they showed that they felt that this sending was at least a step toward the personal goal they had accepted when they answered Christ's call. They felt that here, in germ form at least, they were bringing to the world the answer to its problem. Secondly, they showed a strong personal allegiance to Christ. No man would have carried the message of Christ into the face of the growing intensity of the opposition unless he had both a deep devotion to Christ and complete trust in His guidance.

However, at the disciples' return a somewhat negative response was evident. For example, the first thing the disciples mentioned to Christ was the physical aspect of their mission.¹ This was no mere accident. They mentioned this first because in their mind this was the basic thing that happened and had been accomplished on their mission. Oh yes, they had preached, but the thing that was most vivid in their minds was not the spiritual change wrought, but the physical one.

C. The Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Storm.
14:13-33

1. The Training.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand came about as the result of an unplanned situation. Jesus had withdrawn from the multitude with His disciples.² (14:13) He wanted to be alone with them to discuss at greater length the result of their mission, but the multitude followed Him. Christ constantly faced this problem during His ministry. He wanted to teach the disciples but had compassion upon the spiritually hungry people. He strove to meet the needs of both groups. (9:35-38, 14:14) But this dual purpose did not confuse Christ. The master teacher taught in such a way that He could simultaneously impart two

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1. In this connection see: Luke 9:10 and Mark 6:31
2. Cf. Luke 9:10-11 and Mark 6:31-32

lessons at one time. This work will deal only with the lesson aimed at the disciples.

The disciples came to Christ with a problem: the multitude was hungry. (14:15) In saying, "...give ye them to eat," (14:16) Christ said in effect, "That is what you are here for, to solve problems." The answer to the problem was within their grasp or Christ would never have given them the problem in the first place. He never gave them a goal that was beyond their attainment. He was saying that those who would be His disciples must have a better answer for the problem of men than mere dismissal of both the problem and the men.

In a matter of minutes, or even seconds, Christ demonstrated that the answer to their problem had been in their immediate presence; it was in the power of Christ, Himself, as He dwelt there among them. The answer the disciples should have found was in the pattern Christ gave them; "He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples and the disciples to the multitude." (14:19) Christ's power was to be delivered to the people through His workers.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

The fact that, upon their return, the disciples made an incorrect evaluation of the importance of their mission indicated a serious problem, one which Christ immediately took steps to solve. He withdrew with the disciples. (14:13) Even here the people were with Christ, and so He gave the

disciples the practical problem of feeding the multitude. What was there in the previous experience of the disciples that should have led them to the solution of the problem, if considered carefully?

The attitude of the disciples in respect to the multitude indicated that in their previous experiences they had learned little of Christ's attitude toward people, or at least that they had absorbed little of His attitude.

The manner that Christ dealt with the twelve is important. He put them out on their own to see what they would do. Would they indicate that they had really learned the secret behind their power to heal, by showing the power to feed also, or would they indicate that it was not so much through the faith of the disciples that the people to whom they went were healed, but rather the faith of the people themselves, in Christ Jesus? To fail here would indicate that the disciples had never bothered to reason out that the one who could adjust one type of physical situation so that it was corrected, i.e. sickness, could probably adjust any physical situation in a like manner. If they could heal through His power there was no reason why they could not feed through His power, when it was necessary.

The disciples' inability to adjust to the storm and to the figure they saw on the sea, also showed a lack of an appreciation of previous events. Not too long before, they had been caught in a similar storm and Christ had resolved their distress. What should have been more natural

than for them to expect Him to do the same thing on this occasion. The lack of realization that this was a likelihood indicates that their minds were not so much on Christ as they might have been, as the storms beat about them. It also indicates that they did not have an adequate appreciation of Christ. To bring this fact before them, Christ gave them the same rebuke which He had given them during the earlier storm, "...o thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?". (14:31)

3. The Response.

The next step is to review the different points in the disciples' response. They had come to Christ and asked Him to send the multitude away. They were not only unable to feed the mass; but were also unable to see how it could be done. When the feeding was over Christ had to constrain the disciples to leave, for they also would have liked to have seen Him made King, on the spot.¹ When Christ appeared on the sea, they thought not of their master but of a ghost; and when one of them would have come to Christ out of the wrong motive, the result was "...he was afraid, and began to sink," because he doubted. (14:30-31) Finally, when Christ was in the boat; when He had saved them and done what no other man had ever done - fed the people - they gave Him the title, "θεοῦ υἱός ." (14:33) a title meaning only a righteous man.²

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1. In this connection see: John 6:15 and Mark 6:45
2. In this connection see: International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. V., p. 2827.

It does not take a very detailed study of this series to realize that the response of the disciples fell far short of what Christ desired. In fact, this response fell short of any previous response. One might even feel that it had a sense of otherness, of contrast, about it. In all of the other responses the disciples at least attempted to follow the mind of Christ, but here it seems that they had moved off on a thought pattern of their own. In this action they were no longer behaving like disciples in that they were not following the mind of Christ. What had happened to them? When they had gone out on the mission they had become so engrossed in the details of the healing that they forgot the great spiritual value of the message. They had let the material outlook of their society creep in to their own thinking.¹ This was a serious matter, since it meant that they had also lost their perspective of the true worth and work of the Kingdom of Heaven. The inability to relate the possibility to heal and the ability to feed was not simply a mental lack but a spiritual one.

But even in all of this darkness there is one faint ray of light. The disciples still desperately sought the physical presence of Christ. They would even sail into the face of the gale to be with Him.²

D. The Issue of Defilement Ch. 15:1-28.

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1. In this connection see: Bruce, op. cit., p. 127
2. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 191

1. The Training.

G.C. Morgan excellently analyzes Christ's rebuke of the Pharisees and the reason for that rebuke. Although his entire section on this matter touches the problem at its core, for the purpose of brevity only two summary passages are quoted:

His whole question to these Pharisees was: 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God, because of your tradition?' and in that answering inquiry we come to the very heart of the difference between the religion of the Pharisees and the religion of Jesus Christ. He charged them that by their very tradition they had transgressed the commandment of God. His question suggested the inference, that the supreme thing in every life is not human tradition, but God's commandment.¹

First, in His dealing with the tradition of the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ revealed the perpetual conflict between divine and human religion. Human religion is conditioned in externalities, and therefore fails to touch essential life, and from that center governs every externality.²

What a contrast appears in the incident of the Gentile woman and the incident of the Pharisees. Here was one whom tradition would have refused but Christ accepted. The disciples, who were worried about the feelings of the Pharisees, would have dismissed the woman with, "Send her away, for she crieth after us." (15:12-23) This woman showed that she really had an appreciation of Christ's spiritual ministry. For Christ, in saying, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" in effect said

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 195

2. Ibid., p. 197

that in the estimate of all those that worshipped the God of the Jews, the Gentiles were nothing more than dogs.

(15:26) The woman did not argue this but avoided the line of reasoning by going above it. "But she said, Yea, Lord: yet even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table." (15:27) She said in effect, that perhaps this was the concept of the Jews, but that she had seen that God even had love for the Gentiles, and even the Gentile women. He was not merely a God of the Jews. Now, the greatest contrast, of course, was in the difference of Christ's ultimate treatment of the two situations, for the woman went home with her request granted because she had come in sincere faith, while the Pharisees only had a rebuke as an answer to their request because, in spite of their position, they had come with wrong motives. This woman was truly the antitype of the Pharisees.

In all of this, Christ was desperately trying to show His disciples God's real basis of dealing with people, that it was not their position or accepted authority that counted, but their spiritual realization of the nature of God, and their response to that realization.¹

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

Note that this situation was an unplanned one, as the last one had been. The disciples had failed to re-

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., pp. 197-198

spond in a satisfactory manner in the previous instance, and Christ took this opportunity to show them the truth that they must grasp. In the instance of the multitude who were hungry, the disciples had failed to grasp the true relation between the spiritual and the material, so in this instance Christ not only stressed a right relationship between these two but demonstrated it as well. In the instance of the Gentile woman and the Pharisees, Christ showed the contrast of a correct and an incorrect evaluation of how man serves and contacts God. Here Christ tested the disciples to see whether or not they were beginning to be warped in their sense of values and found that they were.

Everything in the background of their training should have pointed them to a reaction to these situations similar to that of their teacher. In the immediately preceding incident, Christ had acted according to God's will and not according to any traditional pattern. This had been His formula from the first time the disciples had seen Him. To show a lack of incorporation of this truth in their own outlook indicated a dangerous rigidity of human thought pattern that must change before much of Christ's novel philosophy could be incorporated in their daily actions.

3. The Response.

The contrast in the attitude of the disciples and the attitude of Christ is quite clear. "Then came the disciples, and said to Him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees

were offended..." (15:12) "Send her away, for she crieth after us." (15:23) They were concerned over the ones which Christ rebuked and rejected those Christ heeded.¹ Definitely, their minds were not yet the mind of Christ.

What did this indicate concerning what was going on underneath the surface of the disciples' experience? The pearl of great price had not yet become the reality to these men that it must become. They had not sold all their pearls to obtain it; they had left their nets, but not all their old fishing habits. They still had much of the outlook of those men who followed Christ along the sands of the beach. The light which Christ asked them to set upon a hill they had hidden under a basket of preconceived attitudes. Worst of all, one notices the increasingly dangerous symptom of not going out to people with a power that would change their lives, but of even sending away people who came seeking it.

But once again, through all the lack of their understanding, we see the disciples going with Christ and coming to Christ with what they consider problems. Here we see their great devotion to their master.

E. The Second Feeding. Ch. 15:28-39

1. The Training.

The second feeding was an almost exact physical

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 197

repetition of the first feeding, with only a few exceptions. The crowd was a little smaller and composed mostly of Gentiles. The people had been with Christ longer and were therefore in more need than in the earlier case; and here Christ came to the disciples with the problem rather than the other way round. These three factors may not be unrelated. Christ may well have waited so long to come to the twelve because He wanted them to come to Him; they may not have come to Him because these people were Gentiles and they did not expect them to receive the same treatment as the Jews.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

Sometime when a student fails, an instructor will go back in his training to the last general point that the student indicates he has learned and from that point the instructor tries to establish a base from which he can operate in attempting to demonstrate to the student the particular in which he has failed. Christ went back to the fact that the disciples had seen God's power in action; they had seen Christ's power flow through them to the people. In an identical situation they had seen how Christ had multiplied the food and given it to them to give others to eat. Christ went over the situation and stated His personal reaction to it, "I would not send them away fasting." (15:32) The disciples knew Christ's will in the situation. The memory of the previous feeding should have been fresh enough in their

minds that they could apply the solution of that situation to this incident.

If they had but remembered well enough to realize that Christ could feed these people also, they would have gone through the procedure they should have gone through at the earlier feeding, and in doing so would have learned that they failed to make the correct response at the preceding occasion. In learning this they would have realized the trend that had developed in their reaction and undoubtedly would have corrected it.

On their return from their journey the disciples had shown their concern over the physical welfare of men. Here Jesus was saying that the only way to help the physical situation of men is to realize that one must operate from a spiritual base in order to truly realize what the nature of men's needs are. Also He was saying to them that if and when they realized men's needs revolved around a spiritual base they would make an effect upon Gentile as well as Jew, for these were Gentiles, but they were Gentiles who had spiritual perception; "...they glorified the God of Israel." (15:36)

For the disciples to fail at this point indicated an inability to relate parts to each other. It indicated that far from having the depth of the perception of the parables, they even lacked the basic realization of cause and effect which the ordinary man should possess. To fail now indicated that the disciples had so firmly formed their

own conception of a philosophy of life and matter that there was a mental block that resisted any change of the philosophy.

3. The Response.

One might almost say that this was the most explicit case of failure that the disciples ever made. Christ had shown them perfectly what should be done, and they came and said, "...whence shall we have so many loaves in a desert place as to fill so great a multitude?" (15:33)

Such a lack of understanding indicated not only a lack of appreciation for the former lesson, but a lack of appreciation of the teacher as well. A student, who believed that his teacher was able to give life the only real meaning it could have, should try to acquire the thought pattern of the teacher for his own, rather than just apply what the teacher said to his own ideas.

Christ had now met with a basic obstacle in His training of the disciples. The human nature of His students was proving to be resistant to change. It had molded itself in a set pattern and then hardened. It found difficulty in being remolded. Christ must show the disciples that their natures must either become pliable to His guiding will or be recast completely. Until He accomplished this He could carry them no further in their training. As clay is remolded and gives and reshapes to the master potter's touch so the disciples must react to their master's teaching.

F. The Leaven of the Pharisees. Ch. 16:1-12.

1. The Training.

In this incident Christ dealt directly with the influence the Pharisaic and Jewish outlook and thought process had on the disciples. It is notable that this thought process is referred to four times in Matthew.

(15:1,6,11,12)

Bruce and Morgan analyze the basic points of discord between this system and Christ's Kingdom attitudes:

The Religionists, the philosophers, the politicians, were all members of one great party, which was invariably hostile to the divine kingdom. All alike were worldly minded (of the Pharisees it is expressly remarked that they were covetous); all were opposed to Christ for fundamentally the same reason, viz. because He was not of this world.¹

The revelation that this paragraph gives us is the revelation of the absolute inability of man, unaided, to understand the highest and best things of God. Said Jesus, "You ask me for a sign out of heaven. The air is full of signs. All about you are the voices of the eternal and the infinite speaking to you, but you are blind concerning the things of God."²

This basic divergence of the Pharisees and the others from the one true way of contacting God had become so fixed that they had alienated themselves from God's perfect revelation, Jesus Christ. They allowed themselves to become absolutely fixed in their regard for physical detail, such as the supposed signs of the Messiah's coming, that

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 159
2. Morgan, op. cit., pp. 204-205

they had disregarded the actual fact of His living presence among them. It was this fixedness that proved so devastating. Christ could reach adulterers, blasphemers, and murderers who realized their condition, but the one who prayed the prayer of a supposedly righteous man was setting himself beyond reach and refusing to admit his position.

On the way across the sea Christ adopted a three-step procedure to show the disciples how insidiously they, themselves, had been affected by this outlook.

First, He made the statement, "...take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (16:6) He gave them a warning to regard the effect these groups made on others.

When the disciples fell into the pitfall of a natural man and turned their minds to material bread, and gathered by themselves, Christ rebuked them, saying "...O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread." (16:8) They were not showing the work of God upon themselves by withdrawing from Him to reason by themselves, or in the fact that they were so concerned over bread.¹

Then He called upon them to perceive that He had dealt with the problem of physical hunger and even had an abundance left, but that He had warned them of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, which accordingly was

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 206-207

something different and far more dangerous. (16:9-10) He was trying to show the disciples how similar their concern for bread was to the Pharisees' concern for a sign. They had no more need to worry about bread, when the feeder of thousands was in their midst, than the Pharisees should have had need to worry about a sign when the one the sign was to herald was already with them. Both attitudes alike indicated that the natural outlook of man pervades, rather than a new spiritual one; the contrast in the disciples' case was that Christ dealt with them as though He expected a change.¹

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

In the parables Christ gave the disciples the concept of the leaven of the Kingdom, the leaven of God's will. Now He gave them a picture of a leaven of an entirely different will.

In regards to the condition existing, Bruce states:

Such was the state of things in Israel as it came under His eye. Spiritual blindness and deadness, with the outward symptom of the inward malady, - a constant craving for evidence, - met Him on every side.²

The disciples were wrong in that they were allowing their background and the popular opinion of the day to influence

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1. C. Bruce, op. cit., p. 161

2. Ibid., p. 170

their thoughts more than their new experience and teaching in Christ Jesus.

Christ was trying desperately to show the disciples that the approach to life they were taking was wrong before it became as fixed within them as it was within the Pharisees, and while He could yet reach them. He tried to show them that they were concerning themselves about the same things that the Pharisees were concerned about and were therefore accepting the Pharisees' standard of values. (15:17-18) He gave them the same rebuke that He gave them both times upon the sea. (16:8) They still were not showing the effects of repentance by living the life of the Kingdom citizen which Christ had described, for they were yet concerned over physical maintenance rather than spiritual maintenance. They were taking heed and being wary of the wrong things, not the things that destroyed the spirit, such as the Kingdom citizens should have been wary of, but the things which destroyed the body, the things that contemporary Judaism was taking heed of. (7:15, 10:17, 16:7)

What is more, Christ was showing them the effect this was already having on their response to Him, "...Why reason ye among yourselves?" (16:8) He was saying in effect, that the people who came to Him seeking spiritual guidance received not only that but bread also, while the Pharisees who came seeking only a physical contribution to their own position did not even appreciate the opportunity of being in the presence of Christ. Now, the disciples had so allowed

this material thought pattern to affect them that they, too, were withdrawing from Christ, for their thought pattern was not in harmony with His. Christ called upon them to realize that He, who had looked after their physical welfare perfectly every since they first trusted Him, was much more concerned about their spiritual welfare for it was infinitely more important.

Morgan brings out very beautifully how this incident is related to what has gone before:

There is a danger, there is a peril, there is quite a tendency to imagine that He experimented and tried one method after another, and that Jesus tried a new one each time one failed. That is not the story. It is rather the story of consecutive links in one great chain. The master hand forged them all. He failed at no point, but by His patient persistence toward victory, He brought into view the failure of man.¹

3. The Response.

"Then understood they." (16:12) The Greek word *συνῆκαν* is different from the word used just before for perceive. (*νοεῖτε*)² It is the word that Jesus used at the close of the parables when He asked, "Have ye understood all these things?" (13:51) It is a word that is seldom used in the New Testament. A comprehensive definition would be, "to correlate into one's overall outlook, to understand not only the teaching but the source of, and reason for the teaching."² It implies not only an acceptance of the teach-

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 294

2. In this connection see: Thayer, op. cit., p. 427, 605

ing, but a harmonizing with the mind of the teacher.

In the three preceding instances Christ had been hammering away at a wall or partition within the minds of His men, a partition that had come as a result of their natural background and environment and was separating them from the fact that Christ was bringing them something that was not merely a revision, but something entirely new. This hammering was not without results, because suddenly the walls crumbled at just the right stroke; and the disciples stepped out of the confines of their old thought patterns. The quick "yea" that they gave in answer to an earlier question of Christ, given at the close of the teaching of the parables, became a living reality within them. (13:51) This was the most encouraging response the disciples had given since they first left their nets to follow Christ.

G. The Great Confession. Ch. 16:13-20.

1. The Training.

Christ took five steps in His training of the twelve in regard to their confession.

First He asked the disciples to analyze the general conception people had of Him.¹ They responded perfectly with the view that most people thought Him to be a resurrected prophet, a position that would be higher than that occupied by any previous individual.

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¹ Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 164

Second, "He saith unto them, but who say ye that I am?" (16:15) He was saying that all admitted that He was the greatest that had yet come, that even the Pharisees admitted that, but do you say that I am more;¹ are you different from the mob in your conception and if so do you realize the difference of your conception and why?²

Third, when Peter, acting as spokesman of the group gave his reply, Jesus, in return, gave the disciples the greatest praise He had ever given them,³ and also showed them the basic reason for the difference in their conception from that of the multitude, when He said, "...Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in Heaven." (16:17) The disciples had finally come to a position in which God could reveal that the only reason Christ could so perfectly reveal the will of the Father was because He was the Son of the Father. He was not only different in degree but in kind from all that had been before. He was the "...Christ, the Son of the Living God." (16:16) The disciples, too, were different from all others, at least for the time being, in that they were the ones who followed Christ closely enough, not only in body but in mind, to be in a position for God to reveal this fact to them.⁴

Fourth, Christ showed them that it would be upon

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1. Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 166

2. In this connection see: Morgan, op. cit., p. 209

3. In this connection see: Bruce, op. cit., p. 166

4. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 211

this realization that He would build His church.¹ On a much greater scale He would have a group similar to the disciples who would follow Him in spiritual paths and whom God would bring to this same basic realization, "...Upon this rock I will build my church..." (16:18) This larger group would ultimately come to the purpose that the disciples had accepted, fishing for men.

Fifth and finally, He told them "...that they should tell no man that He was the Christ." (16:20) Until men are ready to follow Christ as disciples, they will never be ready to own Him as something different from anything that has ever come before. What is more these men had come to their realization through their contact with the perfect man, Christ Jesus, who knew whereof He spake. God had given this revelation through Him. They still had much of God's will to learn, and God might not be able yet to reveal Christ's identity to another through or by means of them at this time because of their own lack of complete understanding.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

In the former response it was discussed how the disciples realized that Christ was bringing them something new, something entirely different from what they had received before. Now they were ready to find what that new

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¹ Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 169

revelation was. So it was that God for the first time was able to reveal to man that one of the men on earth was His son, that one of them shared in His divine essence. All this the disciples were able to realize because they finally understood the real contrast between Christ and the Pharisees. Now that they understood how Christ was basically different from the Pharisees and from all others they were ready to understand that He could only have come to them from God, Himself. Matthew lists no intervening training between the incident of the Pharisees and the great confession made by the disciples. Instead, he treats the incident of the confession as though it was only natural that it should follow in swift succession after the incident of the Pharisees.

But this statement by Peter, "...Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God..."¹ had a larger relation than merely to the previous incident.¹ (16:16) This new thought was the culmination of all of the training, thus far, of the disciples; this was the end of a long chain of evidence that had begun at the baptism of Christ, ascended to the Mount upon which He preached His Sermon, descended back along the shores of the seacoast, crossed a storm-tossed lake in a small boat, and finally carried the disciples out of the land of Galilee into the world of the Gentiles. Some points along the way might prove difficult to pass, but to

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¹ GE Morgan, op. cit., p. 210

the determined pilgrim who stuck to the path would come the realization at the end of his journey, that as Christ, Himself, finally explained, He was not of man but of God.

3. The Response.

Now, the response was not the old lake response of little faith. (14:31, 8:26) This was a brand new response, a response of faith, a response that indicated the teachings of Christ had finally led to convictions which strongly affected the disciples' lives and their response to Christ. At the close of the parables Christ set a standard for these men. "Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasures, things new and old." (13:52) Now, for the first time, these men had fulfilled this standard by bringing forth something new, a new concept of Christ Jesus.

The chosen twelve had built a new base from which their lives would operate, not a base of their own understanding, similar to the base the Pharisees had built, but the base of the revelation of God. It seemed that as they got away from the surroundings of Judaism, and went into Caesarea Philippi that God came to be King in their lives.

What was the result of this change? It meant that God could deal with the disciples in a new manner, for, now that God was able to reveal the Son of God to them, He could reveal much more to them in the future.¹ This was just the

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1. Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 164

beginning for them. However, added ability entailed added privileges, for these men were now to be given an ability to adapt themselves to God's plan that few others would have.

H. Summary

Christ had sent the twelve out and they had returned. Upon their return a problem in their own outlook and spiritual perception had come to the fore. They had failed to put the proper emphasis upon an inner relationship with God.

When the disciples returned from their mission they gave some indication that they were putting too much of their emphasis on values other than the purely spiritual. During the feeding, storm, and lesson on defilement Christ in different ways tries to show these men that a direct relationship with God will overcome any external factors, and that without this direct relationship, no matter what action may be taken, the situation can not be brought to an adequate conclusion in the eyes of God. The disciples, though, show great difficulty in comprehending this fact. At the second feeding he tries to show them that they are not progressing, in that they have not learned the lesson of the first feeding. But there is no definite sign that they even learned this lesson. Finally, when they forget the loaves, Jesus brings them to a realization that they are putting other things so far ahead of a spiritual basis,

that they are losing the perspective that a kingdom citizen should have. He must spend all this time with this one problem, because He must build His next step upon this realization within His students. This is to act as a building stone. Immediately when they face this fact, they are ready to realize that Christ must have a unique relationship with God, because He is unique in His ability to bring God's solution to every situation. With the establishment of this before them, Christ can now go on and show them the means by which He will solve the basic problem of man's nature, his alienation to God.

What then was the outlook of the situation? Christ now had a group of men who had been through the valley of the shadow of Pharisaism and had been brought out by Him. He had a group that was willing to worship Him as the Son of God. He had men who had obviously grown from their original status at the time of their call to men who now were able to receive God's revelations. Christ's unique personage had affected these men to the extent that they also had become somewhat unique.

Truly, fishing had taken on a new meaning for them and for the first time they were really beginning to understand the phrase "fishing for men" and were ready to become sincere fishers of men, because they were following the mind of Christ. With disciples such as these Christ could build a church against which Satan would not prevail.

CHAPTER III

TRAINING IN RELATION TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST

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A. Introduction

The events of this chapter begin near the northern most extent of Christ's travels, well outside of the borders of the Jewish nation. Christ commences this section with the cold harsh announcement that he must be killed. (16:21) From this point the action moves in stern procession to Jerusalem, where the event itself takes place, but suddenly on the way climaxes in Galilee, the area of the inception of the training of the twelve.

The incidents involving the transfiguration, the action taking place outside of Jericho, and the discourse on the Mount of Olives were included because of the part they played in Matthew's Gospel. The other incidents were included because they are found in at least two other gospel accounts, and it is felt that they fill a necessary part in the complete narrative.

The training of this period evolves out of the necessity to adjust the outlook and understanding of the disciples to the oncoming fact of the death of Christ in the light of his overall message. It also calls upon them to consider what action they will take in the light of this fact. This is the final period of their training, and an inadequate response here would nullify all that had preceded.

It is believed that this training covered a period of at least six months, and probably longer. The fact is that Christ could have easily covered the distance to Jerusalem in the space of a few weeks if he had desired to. The factor that accounted for the gradual rate of approach may well have been the resiliency with which the disciples refused to adjust to the fact of Christ's death and the lesson which it involved for them, both as a group, and as individuals.

This was the climactic hour of history; God had come down to die for his people, but his people must be ready to acknowledge both the event and its significance.

B. The First Announcement of Death. 16:21-28.

1. The Training.

"From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed." (16:21) Christ shows deliberate assurance in the above quote for in no sense did he discuss the possibilities with His followers but rather informed them of the eventuality.¹ He named the scene and the characters involved. He indicated that His death, far from being accidental or due to natural causes, would come only at the culmination of suffering caused by others. By changing His set course of action,

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 217

the nature of His message and His plan for bringing about the Kingdom, Christ could have avoided this early death, but He knew "...that He must go unto Jerusalem." (16:21)

It seemed beyond reason that this man who had finally brought to His group the realization that He was the Son of God, should deliberately choose a course which He realized would end in physical death for Him. The explanation for this dilemma was found in the little word 'must.' Jesus had gone out with the singular purpose of spreading the message, "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (3:2, 4:17, 10:7) The time was coming when the opposition would make an all out attempt to stop this message but Christ realized that this was God's will for Him and the fact that it would lead Him to His death did not deter Him from His purpose.

Christ, however, did not end His message at the point where He, who was the only solution to the world's problem, allowed God to lead Him to His death. God's solution to the seeming dilemma was shown in the closing words of His statement, "...and the third day be raised up." (17:23) When Christ claimed that the grave would not have dominion over Him, He proclaimed a declaration of independence from the eternal effect of sin.¹ Death was suddenly changed from defeat to a harsh necessity on the road to victory. The

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1. Cf. Romans, 5:12-21

forces of the opposition might make His death necessary but they would accomplish no real victory by their action, for Christ's resurrection would set all their efforts at naught.¹ He offered them hope.²

Deviation from this course would produce catastrophe. "And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall ~~never~~ be unto thee." (16:22) Peter received the harshest rebuke applied to any believer mentioned in the Gospels, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." (16:23) Any alternative of action on Christ's part would have meant that Satan would have been having his will satisfied rather than God's will. The two perpendicular courses, the desire of men versus the desire of God, met with a violent result in the God-man, Christ Jesus, and a cross was formed. There was only one way to resolve that cross, and that was for its owner to die upon it, thus causing man's desires to submit and run parallel with God's will.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (16:24) Christ's death was not to be without purpose in the training of the disciples. One who came to God Christ's way, and it was the only way, must be

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 217-218
2. Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 177

willing to adopt the outlook of Christ and be able to react as Christ reacted.¹ This would include the willingness to suffer a death similar to the death Christ suffered, a death to one's inner instinct to preserve the self in its present form at all costs, a death that might result in physical death as well.² This self-denial was not called for, merely for self itself but "...for my sake..." (16:25) This self-denial is thus given meaning for it is in recognition of the worth of the control of a higher self, namely God.³

The death to self on Christ's behalf was to lead to victory and it would have the same result for the disciples. "For whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it..." (16:25) As any other course of action would mean failure for Christ, so the same would apply to the behavior of the disciples, "...whosoever would save his life will lose it." (16:25) Such self-denial was to have wonderful results, it was even to enable the disciples to see God reign,⁴ especially in their own hearts.⁵ (16:28)

3. The Relation to Previous Experience.

The statement, "Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρύσσειν καὶ λέγειν" began Christ's ministry. (4:17) Now we find this incident beginning, "Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς δεικνύειν τοῖς μαθηταῖς." (16:21) From the start of His ministry Christ had

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 183
2. In this connection see John 12:24
3. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 219
4. In this connection see John 3:35-36
5. Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 188-189

moved toward an established goal, the recognition of Himself as the Messiah, the Son of God through whom this reign of God could become an actuality. This was not just a new fact that Christ had brought before the disciples, it was the inception of a whole new period in His ministry.¹ Christ now moved from proclaiming and teaching, activities designed to bring about repentance and the Kingdom of Heaven, both of which were concepts that came out of Hebrew history,² to the second point in His message and brought to the minds of the disciples a fact which was absolutely novel to their experience and thinking, the fact that the Messiah, who would be the Son of God, would have to die to accomplish His mission.

The reason for this change in mission, or seeming change, is found in the addition of the title "Christ" to His name of Jesus. Broadus writes:

This phrase occurs nowhere else in the gospels except in the beginning of Matthew (1:1), [1:18] and in Mark (1:1) and in John (17:3). It is here very appropriate in opening a new section of the gospel, and when the disciples have just formally recognized Jesus as the Christ.³

Once these men had realized who was in their midst, the next step was for them to realize that God had stepped into history in the person of His son, they must come to realize what this involved on God's part and that His full work was not merely proclaiming, but actual participation. They knew that God would establish His kingdom, but until this

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1. Cf. John A. Broadus, Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, p. 363. See also Morgan, op. cit., p. 216
2. In this connection see: Thayer, op. cit., p. 97, 405
3. Broadus, op. cit., p. 363

point they had not known how it would come to pass. The victory, which they were so sure of, lay on the other side of a cross; a grave stone must be rolled away to attain it. The one whom they had just recognized as a unique individual now revealed to them His unique destiny.

Why didn't Christ start off His ministry, immediately after the temptation, by announcing this fact? The answer is found, in part at least, in Peter's response. (16:22) If the very disciple who had just led the group in their acknowledgement of His unique appointment and divine essence, now could not comprehend the announcement Christ made of His death, what would have been His response at an earlier date, regarding the same? What would the reaction of an ordinary man have been, one who never knew of Christ's unique nature? One can infer one possibility by considering the response men gave when in the midst of His healing, Christ claimed power to perform an act that was interpreted by the crowd as raising another from the dead and, "...they laughed him to scorn." (9:24) If Christ had announced this fact earlier to the crowd and to his disciples, think of the confusion of thought in their minds and the ridicule of the mob for them because they followed and believed. They had been having a difficult time as it was to get a correct concept of that which should have been learned as a result of God's revelation in the Old Testament. It was strictly out of the question to expect any good teacher to present a lesson to pupils who were ill prepared, before the base had been well taught, step by step, concept by concept. After they had

acknowledged Christ's position and therefore had reason to accept Him as supreme authority, He could announce this fact to them.

3. The Response.

With this lesson, for the first time the disciples really reversed their response and truly rejected the teaching. Before they may have failed to comprehend the message Christ delivered to them, but now they comprehended well enough to realize that they wanted no part of such training.

Bruce touches upon the strongest reason for this sudden contrast in their attitude toward the words of Christ:

The grave communications made by Jesus were far from welcome to his disciples. Neither now nor at any subsequent time did they listen to the forbodings of their Lord with resignation even, not to speak of cheerful acquiescence or joy. They never heard him speak of his death without pain; and their only comfort, in connection with such announcements as the present, seems to have been the hope that He had taken too gloomy a view of the situation, and that His apprehensions would turn out groundless. They, for their part, could see no ground for such dark anticipations, and their messianic ideas did not dispose them to be on the outlook for these. They had not the slightest conception that it behooved the Christ to suffer. On the contrary, a crucified Christ was a scandal and a contradiction to them, quite as much as it continued to be to the majority of the Jewish people after the Lord had ascended to glory. Hence the more firmly they believed that Jesus was the Christ, the more confounding it was to be told that He must be put to death. 'How,' they asked themselves, 'can these things be? How can the Son of God be subject to such indignities? How can our Master be the Christ, as we firmly believe, come to set up the divine kingdom, and to be crowned its king with glory and honor, and yet at the same time be doomed to undergo the ignominious fate of a criminal execution?' These questions the twelve could not now, nor until after the Resurrection, answer; nor is this

wonderful, for if flesh and blood could not reveal the doctrine of Christ's person, still less could it reveal the doctrine of His cross.¹

But, nevertheless, no matter what their background and inner natures told them, if their devotion to their master and teacher had been what God desired of them, they would have accepted what He told them simply on the grounds of His authority. The Son of God came to instruct men and to be obeyed, not to be instructed by men and obey them as the result would have been if Christ had listened to Peter. These men were little ready for death unto self, for Christ's sake. They still considered self more of an authority than God.

But through all the darkness that these men find hard to leave, a faint light shines. They followed Christ. He may have given them news that they interpreted as an announcement of certain failure; He may have called one of Satan; but these men stayed with Christ. They took all their hopes of a Messiah and a Kingdom and even of a personal relationship to God, and making of them one heap, placed them upon this man who they now are convinced is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." (16:16) If He is a fraud or a failure they will fail with Him. In spite of winds of confusion their anchor held.

C. The Transfiguration and Following Incidents. 17:1-23

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1. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 177-178

1. The Training.

Christ's external appearance at the transfiguration was only a sign of His internal glory and peace. He stood on "...a high mountain apart....Moses and Elijah talking with Him." (17:1-3) He shared companionship with these two. Moses, who epitomized the law, had been transfigured after God's revelation had been delivered to him, and Elijah, who epitomized the prophets, had not known death as other men but had been taken into Heaven alive, both went into the mount of the old covenant to receive the word of God concerning their mission. Now they stand with Christ discussing with Him His mission¹ and testifying to the correctness of Christ's statement concerning His future.

This experience has a message for the disciples as well as for Christ, for when Peter called out, "...Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt I will make thee tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah;" (17:4) the Father in Heaven silenced him with the words, "...This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (17:5) It was not the purpose of the disciples to figure out what the adequate response should be; it was for them to wait for Christ to inform them and then to carry out His training.² They were to use their eyes and ears as well as their mouths until "...They saw no one, save Jesus only." (17:8)

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1. Cf. Luke 9:31

2. Cf. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 195-7

The disciples found this extremely difficult. Jesus said, "...Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead." (17:9) They were unable to accept His words for they thought that surely the event they had witnessed on the mountain was the immediate precursor of the external establishment of the Kingdom.¹ Therefore they asked, "Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?"² (17:10) Jesus showed them that it was not the prophecy that was in error, but the contemporary interpretation of it. (17:11-12) He showed that man could not expect God to adapt His plan to meet man's misconception concerning it, but that it was for man to recognize God's plan when it developed before him and accept it.

It was at the foot of the mount that Christ met His greatest failure on the part of those He was ministering to. His disciples could do nothing to help when there came "...a man, kneeling to Him and saying, Lord have mercy upon my son: for he is an epileptic..." (17:14-15) Morgan catches the heartrending impact on the Christ, who had to come down from the mount of glory to minister to the needs of sinful men, as he writes:

There was nothing that would touch that boy. At last they brought him to the disciples of Jesus, but they were not able to deal with him. That is the picture of the age. The King, ready for His Kingdom, passed down the mountain into the valley, and found Himself confronted by that helpless boy,

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 221
2. In this connection see: Mal. 4:4-6

by that helpless father, by that helpless age, by those helpless disciples. Then there broke out of His heart the great wail, 'O, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?'¹

The disciples asked, "...Why could we not cast it out?" (17:19) Christ told them it was because of their "ὀλιγοπιστίαν" (17:20) The actual meaning of the word is faith of an infinitesimal or diminishable amount, or faith of an extremely temporary duration.² In contrast the faith which had the nature of the mustard seed was one that even though small, was alive and growing, and would eventually blossom into an enormous full-grown plant. (13:31-32) One difference between Christ and the men who had talked with Him was that their glory had faded but His would continue to grow. Christ told the disciples that they lacked a living growing faith with a continual flow of fuel, they must continually be replenished. They must acquire the true faith from this one who was the source of faith.

At the conclusion of their rebuke came the repetition of the dreadful announcement of death. (17:22-25) Christ tried to show the disciples that the reason for their poor response was that they had not learned their lesson. They responded improperly on the mount, they asked the wrong question on the way down, they could not heal or could not understand their lack of power to do so, because they were not willing to accept Christ's training regarding His death,

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 225

2. Cf. Thayer's Lexicon, op. cit., p. 443

See also Moulton and Milligan: Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 445.

and regarding the necessity of their own self-denial.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

There is a direct connection between Christ's announcement of His death and the transfiguration.¹ Matthew indicates the significance of the time element, "and after six days..." (17:1) Just as the baptism, the temptation, and the arrest of John had inaugurated the beginning of Christ's ministry, now the announcement of His death and the experience of the transfiguration (in which the Father gave explicit approval to Christ's procedure both in His own words, and in the testimony made by the presence of His representatives) start a new phase. (17:3, 17:6, 17:12, 4:11)

Peter, as the spokesman of the twelve should have realized that addition of the three words, "...hear ye him," was due to the fact that Christ had not been heard in the way that He should have been, either previously or on the mountain. (17:5) The disciples should have contrasted this response to their response of silent faith they made beside the sea of Galilee when Christ first approached them.

When Christ told the disciples of their little faith, they should have remembered the other times He had spoken with them concerning this particular response.² (17:20) They had found themselves at trouble at sea because their spiritual adjustment to God was not adequate to overcome

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1. Cf. Erdman, op. cit., p. 135

See also: Bruce, op. cit., p. 190

2. In this connection see: J. Hickie: Greek and English Lexicon of New Testament, p. 130

their physical situation. (8:26, 14:31) Although there was not the roll of water beneath their feet there was once again the fact that they were spiritually at sea and unable to find a foundation to provide them the ability to adjust as they did in the storm at sea, for they were not adjusted to the will of God. The failure to accept Christ's teaching on denial was as blameworthy as the fear they demonstrated in the storm at sea.

When Christ repeated the announcement of His death to them, the disciples should have remembered the lesson of the feeding which Christ repeated so that they might learn it and connected the similarity of repetition and realized that the announcements were related one to the other for the purpose of their training. Christ was telling them that until they could accept the fact of His coming death, they would not know success or further progress toward their goal.

3. The Response.

Consider how their response typifies a lack of harmony with God's plan; on the mount, their spokesman spoke out of turn and was rebuked; on the descent, they asked the wrong question; at the bottom, they met with a failure to heal, the one activity they had been proficient at, and could not understand their failure; and when Jesus states, concerning Himself, "...and the third day he shall be raised

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up" they disregard entirely the fact that this would be the most astounding thing that had ever occurred and could come about only as the result of God's miraculous redemptive working in history. (16:23) Concentrating only on the announcement of death, instead of rejoicing at the message of Christ because it must be from God, "...they were exceedingly sorry." (17:23) These men were following their old thought pattern rather than the mind of Christ.

But in spite of all this darkness that remains, the bright spot shining through has doubled in scope. First of all the disciples are coming to Christ with their problems, they are not just following but now are approaching Christ. (17:10, 17:19) Then, in regards to His statement on the way down from the mount, "then understood the disciples..." (17:13) The word used is the identical word that was used in the parable of the leaven. (16:12) These reactions indicate progress, and progress indicates the beginning of an acceptance of the lesson on self-denial, by the disciples.

It seems that these men were at least beginning to be suspicious that more of their conceptions about the program of God's work than they realized might be out of line. Christ had, at least, driven a wedge into their certainty. It may have been that this wedge was stronger and deeper than appearances showed, and that deep within themselves, the disciples did not wonder if all their messianic conceptions were built on sand, while the real base of rock stood in their midst giving them the true picture.

D. A Lesson Concerning Humility. 18:1-20:16.

1. The Training.

"In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

(18:1) Morgan says:

This is a greater question than it appears, for as a matter of fact the actual word used is, 'Who then is the greater of them in the kingdom?' What they really asked was, What is the condition of greatness in Thy kingdom? They said in effect; Greatness in our kingdom is manifested by some high office, dignity issues in notoriety. If you rob us of our ideals, what is Thy ideal of greatness? In consequence of His strange prediction of the Cross they were completely baffled and perplexed.¹

"And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (18:2-3) In turning to a little child, He reached to a level of humble equality,² in that all could potentially become like a little child; therefore all could simultaneously be the greatest.

Again Morgan writes:

Everybody is great inside; there are no little souls inside the kingdom. Thus he swept away any incipient desire for caste, or class, or gradation, that lurked within their question. He had said on another occasion, 'Among them born of women there is none greater than John the Baptist; yet he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' Christ had a majestic conception of his own kingdom.³

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 228
2. Cf. Rice, op. cit., p. 179
3. Morgan, op. cit., p. 229

Christ treats this humility as an absolute necessity for entrance into the Kingdom. (18:3) Morgan goes on to analyze the point at which a child's humility begins:

It is the level of imperfection, perhaps that is where most men stumble, the little child is the symbol of imperfection, waiting for correction and instruction, in order to develop. No man can enter the Kingdom except upon this level. Jesus Christ did not say in order to enter My Kingdom you must be perfect. When we have entered He will say as one of the severest things, 'Ye shall be perfect, as your...Father is perfect.' But the condition for entrance is imperfection. That does not mean that the condition for coming is hopeless imperfection. A little child is not forevermore troubling about imperfection. The child subconsciously knows it and in the knowledge of its imperfection yields itself to instruction, and correction, if it have a true child nature. It is the level of simplicity. In the child we have all the things that are elemental. Complexity is not yet. All the powers of its being express themselves freely, readily, naturally; there is no guile. But the final thing is that the child is plastic, submissive. It was a Roman Catholic Prelate who said, 'Give me the children until they are seven, I care not what you do after.'¹

Then, in five steps, Christ dealt with the way in which this humility touches all of one's behavior. He went into how this humility leads one to a feeling of equality, and to a tendency to reach out and try to help others rather than condemn them. (18:5-14) Then He showed that this humility leads one to realize they are a subject of the divine forgiveness of God and must forgive others in return. (8:15-35) The next point was that this humility

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 229

leads one to realize that their hard heart is not to be the ultimate authority, but God's perfect will. (9:3-13) He also showed that this humility leads one to a basic relationship to God entirely upon God's plan and not on a self-styled system. (9:13-30) Finally He taught that with this humility one will trust the will of the Father, above all natural logic of men. (20:1-16)

In all of this Christ is driving toward an ultimate goal. The final result of a childlike humility would be the acceptance of the discipline of the Father in Heaven.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

Christ had been talking of death and the disciples came and asked Him concerning the greatness in the Kingdom. Their mind was evading the issue of death; they were trying to build their own philosophy in such a way that it would be adequate and yet not encompass this dreadful doctrine. Thus they turned their thoughts to their position in the kingdom which they felt certain was about to be established.

There were good reasons that they came with this outlook, for they had found that Christ was a better Messiah than they had ever expected. (16:16) They had seen Him transfigured. They had heard that the Kingdom would be set up in their lifetime. (16:27-28) They had found that the prophecies concerning the Messiah were being fulfilled without many taking notice of the fact. (16:13) These twelve had been especially close to Christ in the position of apostles, ones whom He had particularly picked to follow Him. They naturally expected the chief subordinate offices

in whatever government Christ set up. What was more, three of their group had been especially singled out by Christ to accompany Him on the Mount, and they no doubt, expected to receive the top places of the twelve.¹

Christ, however, gave the conversation quite a twist from what they were expecting, for He first warned them that their real concern must be entrance rather than position in the kingdom. (18:3) Then He showed them that their real problem was still one of self-denial, and that when that was solved the problem of greatness would take care of itself. For basically death and humility are merely two different forms of self-denial. In neither is the self preserved as the basic unit upon which value rests. When the over-balanced sense of importance placed by sinful human nature upon the self is removed and placed in its rightful place upon God, then one automatically becomes both humble and willing to die, for Christ's sake.

The disciples were searching for their place in the Kingdom, yet they forgot the picture Christ had drawn of the Kingdom citizen, in the Sermon on the Mount. If they had remembered they would realize the sameness of that person and their qualities of behavior to that of a child and its personality. One then became a Kingdom citizen, by turning from the sand within one's self and reaching out to Christ, building upon that rock. One who would do this

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1. Cf. Bruce, op, cit., p. 200

denied his own ability and recognized the way of Christ as being the only way. (7:13)

3. The Response.

The disciples came to Christ expecting different degrees of commendation, they found an entirely different greeting. They received no mention of achievement in the past, only of sacrifice that lay before them. The fact that they were to be the group who would bind men together for the Kingdom or separate them from the Kingdom did not impress the disciples at this moment and would not until they had mastered their lesson. (16:19) They would be in a position of importance but the positions would not be in offices of high places, which they so obviously hoped, but out on the firing line where men who must be reached were, and where the cross of Christ would be. Those who were expecting a path of roses found instead a rocky summit in its place. The fact that, after Christ was well into His teaching of the lesson, the disciples rebuked little children, that were brought to Him, proved how little they were ready to accept this doctrine. (17:13)

But in spite of all this the signs of light were growing stronger in the midst of the darkness, for when Christ showed that salvation was possible because of God and not because of man, the disciples made their one valid claim on any position in the Kingdom when they responded, "Lo, we have left all and followed thee..." (19:25-27) Christ indicated that this would be taken into account.

(19:28-29) It seemed that this cry was not so much the demand of a haughty heart but the wail of one who realized that his security was not within himself and that he must depend upon another greater than he for his security. It is only when man realizes that he is utterly unable to stand alone that God can take over and rule within his life.

E. The Third Announcement of Death. 20:17-34.

1. The Training.

Once again there is the announcement of this hated doctrine of death, and once again Christ includes the fact of the resurrection as part and parcel of the event. The announcement was still only for those who acknowledged Him as Christ. "He took the twelve disciples apart." (20:17) The truth, however harsh, must be absorbed by this group. Morgan writes:

It is manifest that He had a clear understanding of what lay before Him at the hands of lawless men. Mark gives the minuteness of His description. There is not a perhaps in it, or a peradventure, or a maybe; not a single word that will allow us to think that Jesus was speculating as to the future.¹

Once again the disciples were seeking to establish a worthwhile position for themselves in the Kingdom. They were again being motivated by the wrong desire. These two brothers were with their mother and came feeling that they deserved a place of honor. (20:20-21) However, Christ

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 244

promised them a far different reward than the one they requested. They were disciples, and could expect to receive a disciple's reward. (20:23) But, as to the reward they sought, it was not the kind of a reward that was bestowed, it was acquired. Morgan writes:

Christ said, Not upon the basis of favour will men get into office in My Kingdom; they will be put into office according to fitness, and that within the will of God. When God prepares an office for a man, he also prepares the man for the office; and there is perfect fitness.¹

As they left Jericho, Christ had an opportunity to demonstrate to them, in an object lesson, that God could only raise a man's status as that man counted upon God's revelation, and God's established plan in contrast with the outlook of society. "And behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou Son of David." (20:30) These men recognized to some degree the position that Christ occupied, for they not only gave Him the messianic title, but it is recorded that they followed Him.² (20:31) To stop for these two blind beggars would not help the prestige of Christ, for all were in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, where a climax would occur. Christ showed His men that God had a different outlook on things.

To care for these who needed was the basic thing in the eyes of God, this was where there was a climax. If

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 247
2. Cf. Erdman, op. cit., p. 165

Christ had not come to meet the needs of the helpless, there was no need of going further toward Jerusalem. The highest place was not attained by riding into Jerusalem as king, this was merely an external sign that the highest had been attained. The highest was obtained by going out and bringing the hitherto unfelt power of God into the lives of men who were not in step with life according to God's plan, and adjusting these men so that they would play the part in life that God intended them to play.¹

The one who came to God with merely the repeated cry, "...Lord, have mercy upon us..." (20:31) gave God more opportunity to better his position than the one who comes and says, "...Command that these,...sit...on thy right... and...left..." (20:21) This proved to be true in the incident of the blind beggars who needed help.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

The confession was by now far behind, an established incident in history, and the entry into Jerusalem, the city of the king was close at hand. By this time a large crowd had gathered around the person of Christ.² (20:31) They remembered the deeds He had done in the past, and in the physical realm they felt there was little limitation of His power. Here, also, was a potential spiritual leader. The thought must have passed through the minds of

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 248

2. Cf. Robertson, op. cit., Ch. XXV

all, "Who could make a better king?"

Therefore, failing to realize that once again they were in their old rut, the disciples established their 'me-firster' party, as the group that should definitely benefit on the spoils system. All of the members were good 'me-firster' at heart and were working hard trying to live up to their title, within the party as well as without.

(20:20-24) The disciples moved in on the kingdom of heaven like buzzards move in on a dying animal, each one trying to be the nearest he can safely be when the hoped event occurs, so that he can swoop down for the best and the most. They seemed to have little realization that they were actually moving in on the body of Christ,¹ although He had taught specifically that because of His bodily death the Kingdom would come to its fullness. (16:21-28)

Christ had encountered a wall in the disciples' response, that was proving stronger to move than the wall He had encountered at the incident of the feeding. The examples of first being last, found only contrast as it was placed beside the response of the twelve. No last about it, they all wanted first place and that was all there was to it.

The disciples had forgotten one of the characteristics Christ had sought to develop in them from the very beginning. They had forgotten that in their outlook they

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1. Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 281

they were to be a distinct group; the concepts of the mob were not to be adequate for these men. They wanted to be in places and positions of authority, and so Christ intended them to be, but He showed them the change in their life that would be necessary for this to be possible. (20:25-27) Christ expected them to serve rather than to overlord, because this was the purpose of the Kingdom citizen and was most surely what He was doing. (20:28) Unfortunately the disciples had not yet realized that they must be the leaders in bringing this concept to the world.

3. The Response.

It is not difficult to see that the disciples were wrong. They tried to gain the wrong kind of favor through an accomplice; (20:20) they were too sure of themselves, of their own worth and ability;¹(20:22) they were not a united band with the single will of Christ leading them on, but instead, each was trying to establish his own will. (20:24) These men were not concerned with death or self-denial, wanting no part of it. They demonstrated the resistancy of human nature to change.

Yet, under the surface they may have felt the power of the love of God, reaching into their individual hearts and moving them at the very depths of their being. This desire for high position may have developed out of an unseen sense of insecurity that came from suddenly finding that the

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1. Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 283

old concepts that made up the self were inadequate to meet the plan of God, and that the self must die with the old concepts in order that a brand new self might arise with an adequate adjustment to the program of God. It seemed implausible that these men could be so sure of Christ's messiahship that they realized their position in the Kingdom would come as a result of their relationship with Him and yet, at the same time, could completely ignore the teaching of His death which He stressed most strongly.

F. The Entry into Jerusalem. Ch. 21.

1. The Training.

Christ came into Jerusalem to a crescendo of excitement.¹ "...all the city was stirred..." (21:10) The expectations of Christ's followers seemed to be fulfilling. But in Heaven above, one was watching in a far more detailed manner, the fulfillment of the expectation of Himself and His Kingdom. The purpose that had brought a nation out of bondage, through a sea, and across a barren wilderness was coming to its realization in a greater way that day, than any of the mob, including the disciples, realized. (21:5)

From the viewpoint of the world the entrance would not show its royal quality.² G. Buttrick wrote:

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 259

2. Ibid., p. 259

Christ was a new kind of king. King Saul towered in physical strength and military prowess; King Solomon in wealth and wisdom. The throne of Byzantium was set with jewels, the throne of the Moguls with priceless peacock feathers (token of pride); and many a Napoleon has waded through blood to dominance. But Christ was meek. He needed the lowly ass, the service of the unknown friend to whom the disciples were sent, and the friendship of his followers. He rode on an animal that was the symbol of quietness, not on a warhorse; palmbranches, not spears were his escort; the songs of children, not the shouts of soldiers were his welcome. When he died, a reed his scepter. But he was kingly. There is command in every move recorded in these verses. The root meaning of the word king is, 'the one who is able.'¹

Christ was not trying to establish His own reign but the reign of His Father above. His purpose, as ever, was a spiritual one and not material; thus He did not go to the royal palace and provoke the revolt that all expected to occur, but to their surprise, He went where He felt that He belonged, to the temple.² It was here, He knew, that the Kingdom must be established if it were ever to be established in Judaism, and He endeavored to establish it. (21:12,14) He tried to restore God's plan that had been lost. (21:15-17)

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

In the minds of the twelve, the Kingdom was coming to a fast reality.³ This they thought must surely be the manifestation of the spiritual reality.⁴ It seemed that His

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1. G. Buttrick, The Interpreters Bible, Vol. VII, Matthew-Mark, p. 501
2. Cf. J. Exell, The Bible Illustrator, p. 468
3. See also: Broadus, op. cit., p. 429
4. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 249-250
4. In this connection see: Mark 11:8-10

miracles, His victory over the power of Satan, His teachings, all pointed toward an assumption of power at this time. (21:9)

But in the mind of Christ, and in the outlook of the apostles, the days of the future were to be viewed in far different light, for Christ realized that regardless of the outward signs, He was coming to die. He knew that the teaching which He had given concerning His death would only be rushed toward fulfillment by this event. As there was only one road to the Kingdom for the disciples so there was only one road for Christ, and now He was rounding the final bend in that road, for within a few days He would say of His journey, "...It is finished."¹

3. The Response.

The disciples were enthused over the entrance and followed Christ's bidding closely. (21:6) It seemed that this was what they had been waiting for, that the teaching regarding the death had been a mistake, and they were more than ready to proclaim Christ as their King.

Nothing is said here of the subject of death, but by the close of the incident much thinking in relation to this topic may have been done by the twelve, for at the close of the day that should have been the inauguration day, "...he went forth out of the city..." (21:17) The King had gone to the temple as His throne room and had left His

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1. John 19:30

capital without a crown. The thought may well have burned itself across their minds at the close of the day, that while the pattern of the day had not been as they expected, it seemed to have been as Christ expected, and if so, that His chief expectation, His death, might also soon come to pass. This may have accounted for their silence.

G. The Olivet Discourse. 23:37-26:2.

1. The Training.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her, How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (23:37-38)

This is not so much a case of God leveling wrath against Judaism as it is a case of Judaism cutting away from God's love, and suffering the natural consequences. If a plant were suddenly to remove itself from the light of the sun, no one would have to kill it, the plant would have brought about its own end. The truth was so plain that the disciples came to Christ and said, "...What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (24:3)

Christ answered this twofold question with a three-part answer. First, He showed that the end time was not yet or in the next few weeks, but that certain basic movements must occur. (24:4-31) Three of these movements would be tribulation, false prophets, and the spread of the gospel. Finally when the actual end came, heralded in by the enthronement of wickedness, the first two movements would climb

to a fever pitch, and then suddenly the Christ would come in glory.

On this account He gave them two warnings. The first was to watch. (24:32, 25:13) Bruce analyzes it thusly:

The general lesson for all in this discourse is: 'Watch, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.' The call for watchfulness is based on our ignorance of the time of the end, and on the fact that, however long delayed the end may be, it will come suddenly at last.... The importance of watching and waiting, Jesus illustrated by two parables, The Absent Good Man and the Wise and Foolish Virgins.¹

The second warning is concerned with the type of response that is expected. (25:14-46) In the parable of the talents, Christ warns that the Father is concerned that we do our very best because of our knowledge of His nature. In the parable of the nations He shows that a man will be judged by His activity and life rather than His words. Finally, Jesus makes this statement, "Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified." (26:2) What Jesus said to them amounted to this, "You are asking about how to recognize the coming of an event that can't possibly come yet, because God has much to accomplish in the way of anticipatory events. I will tell you about an event that will take place in forty-eight hours, that you have repeatedly been told was coming, that is of immediate and vital importance to you, and yet you continue to ignore the fact that you must be ready to

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 338

meet it. You want a Kingdom, so do I, so does the Father, and in good time there will be a Kingdom, but this death of mine is a part of the establishment of it, and unless you react to this event as Kingdom citizens there is no need for you to ask about the coming of the Kingdom because if you do not become a part of this event, you will never become a part of the Kingdom when it comes."

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

In the previous three chapters, the dispute with the Pharisees and other religious leaders of Judaism had finally come to a climax, with Jesus the complete victor. "And no one was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." (22:46) He then leveled the devastating "woe chapter" (Ch. 23) at the Pharisees, showing them that they stood in direct opposition to the true work of God. Christ had gone to the temple to give Judaism its last opportunity to adjust to the plan of God. He had been met with every form of dialectic and insinuating question that could be mustered against Him by the aggregate forces of corrupt religion. When He had shown the falseness and pretense behind each, He threw out His one great question, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" (22:42) They had been unable to give Him more than just a rote answer that fell from lips trained in such answers, without their realizing the meaning behind it. When Christ showed that, although this was correct, it was not enough, they were helpless. Religion that

is built upon tradition alone is impotent. It cannot adjust its mistakes nor change to meet a changing situation. Religion must be built upon a living experience, an experience of an equivalent nature to the one that produced the tradition. If Judaism had been such a religion, it would have incorporated the Son of God as a part of the contemporary experience that God desired it to have. Judaism was unable to do this; Judaism was through. "And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on His way..." (24:1) God walked out of the life of a nation, and most of the people never even realized He had gone.

The disciples had come expecting Christ to begin a new Judaism, a Judaism that was purified and vital, but a Judaism nevertheless. What was more, they expected it to be done now. They were rudely disappointed. The Kingdom was not here yet, there were things still to be accomplished. What was most surprising to the disciples was that the Kingdom would be a universal one, but would never have a center like the temple, at least none was established now.

But if the former news was difficult to bear, the announcement that followed shook them to their souls. (26:2) They must now take a stand on the issue of Christ's death, for time had suddenly run out. Before, they had always been able to put off this issue by deciding they could face it, if and when it proved to be a reality when they came to Jerusalem. Now they were in Jerusalem and Christ was about to die, and they were little nearer to an adequate adjust-

ment of the fact than they were six months ago. They were as a group who had travelled along a road, passing several signs telling them the bridge ahead had been washed away, and yet thinking little of what they would do when they came upon the situation. Now, they had arrived at the spot and they must quickly make a decision. In two days the Son of God would be killed by men. Where would He go? What should they do?

3. The Response.

What happened in the minds of the disciples between the time Jesus really made it clear to them concerning the coming events and the feast day of the passover, is not recorded. (26:2-3) What may have well been the most thrilling of all human psychological battles between the forces of good and evil, never found its way into print. The disciples made their decisions in silence, a silence that indicates the loneliness of these decisions. Until now they have responded as a group; they have been taught as a group; and generally they have agreed sooner or later in the responses made. Now, they have been told that the position each will hold in the new Kingdom will depend greatly upon the decision that is made by each at this time. During these days they must decide upon what course of action they will take, upon what plan that they must make. Will they trust the plan of Christ, or will they trust their own? Those who trust Christ's plan must die to themselves,

for they now put their security on another self, one who will be on the other side of the grave. This was to be their hour of decision.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to
decide
In the strife of truth with falsehood; for the
good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, off'ring each
the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes on forever 'twixt that darkness
and that light.¹

H. The Failure of Judas and the Crucifixion of Christ.
26:6-27:50.

1. The Training.

In the incidents leading up to Christ's betrayal by Judas, Christ had continually laid before His disciples the fact of the certainty of His death. (26:12,20,28,32,35, 42) There could be no doubt that this night, the night of the last supper, Jesus expected to be betrayed. No longer did the disciples doubt the correctness of Christ's predictions and so they, too, were very concerned about His betrayal. (26:22-25)

It is notable that once Judas explicitly set upon his course of action, that Christ not only excluded him from the group but drew a sharp contrast between the group and Judas. At the table, before the supper, Christ informed Judas that He knew that he would betray Him. (26:25) He

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1. James R. Lowell, "Once to Every Man and Nation" taken from Carl F. Price, Hymns For Worship, p. 361

then sent Judas out of the circle; thus Judas was absent from the meal and experiences following. Immediately after Judas left, Christ gave His death a more complete meaning, giving the disciples a more complete picture. Christ's death was not to affect Christ alone, but was going to act upon men to release them from the bondage of sin. (26:28)

When Judas came to the garden to identify Christ, he came with violence. (26:47) Christ forbade the disciples to use violence and force. Judas had tried to destroy the contrast between Christ and himself by trying to force Christ to come down to his level, instead of being willing to rise to Christ's level. When he failed he found he had actually heightened the contrast, and he ended his earthly existence in that state. (26:3-5)

Christ at no time lost control of the situation.¹ In the garden He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legion of angels?" (26:53) In the temple Christ said, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power." (26:64) At the palace He identified Himself in the eyes of Pilate as the rightful King of the Jews, to the effect that the inscription bearing that title was placed upon His cross. (27:11-12, 23-24, 37)

It is worthwhile to note that Christ was killed by the forces of opposition who could not stop Him any other

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1. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 297

way and tried death as a last resort. Pilate did not want to kill Christ. (27:23-24) The Jewish leaders were stung to fury because Jesus replied in the affirmative when He was asked by them if He was the Son of God. (26:63-64) He was opposed because He was the Son of God, who came to provide salvation.

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

Matthew seems to have related the incident of the meal at Bethany out of relation to its chronological context.¹ John places it during the week before the entry. Broadus, although of a contrary mind, admits that most follow John's order.² If so, why did Matthew disarrange this incident? Was it to show the relation between the incident and the action of Judas?³ While his betrayal of Christ did not follow immediately, it was the outlook expressed by Jesus at that time which sealed the event, just as the feeding of the five thousand led inevitably to the confession. Because of the personality and outlook Judas had acquired, he could not help but react against this attitude of Christ's.⁴

What relation did the explicit betrayal incident in the garden have to the relationship between Christ and Judas? Judas said, "Χαίρε παππί." (26:49) or in a free translation, (the best of everything to the great and honorable teacher).⁵ Christ then addressed Judas with the word

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1. In this connection see: Morgan, op. cit., p. 296
See also: H.E. Dana, A Life of Christ, p. 72
And: Halley, op. cit., p. 425
2. Cf. Broadus, op. cit., p. 518
3. Cf. Morgan, op. cit., p. 296
4. In this connection see: John 12:3-8
5. In this connection see: Thayer, op. cit., pp. 550, 663

"ἑταῖρε ", saying, "Do that for which thou art come."

(26:50) The word "ἑταῖρε " means "my close friend" and is used only twice elsewhere in the New Testament and both times in Matthew.² (20:13, 22:12) Considering these two references carefully it appears possible that aside from the permanent teaching value of the incident, a direct warning to Judas may have been involved.

It seems possible that Judas may have come to Christ saying, "As a teacher you would have received my every devotion, but don't claim that you are divine and must die in order to gain victory over sin and death, for I feel that you have overstepped when you make this claim." Christ replied, "I have given proof of my divinity, even to you. You came into the group willing to accept me, on faith, without question. You have no right to expect a different pattern, later. You want to enter God's household without coming by way of God's plan of procedure and it can't be done. You would not submit to God's will and so you might as well finish what you are doing."

Although perhaps Judas was not aware that he had been excluded from the covenant, it had been done, even before the actual betrayal took place in the garden. Perhaps, therefore, it could be said that Judas excluded himself from the covenant when he left the disciples with Jesus in the upper room. For it was after Judas had gone that Jesus

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1. In this connection see: Thayer, Ibid., p. 254

offered the disciples the cup.

The final lesson to be learned from Judas' behavior is that mere realization of a mistake is not enough. It is how one reacts to that mistake that is most important. While Judas realized that he had made a great error in the concept of Jesus Christ, we find no record of Judas ever attempting to return to Jesus. He returned the coins, but to the evil ones to whom he had attached himself. Judas followed the pattern of Ahitophel, when the ideological self lost its goals in life, the physical self suffered extermination. What he had prized most, he had lost. (16:25)

3. The Response.

The eleven disciples had set themselves a standard and they had failed to meet the standard they had set. (26:35, 56) Christ, however, had set a different standard for them. (26:31) They would fail now but they would still be sheep, for their inner intentions would be to serve Him. When they succumbed to temptation they would realize they had erred and would truly hate their sin. (26:73-75) The disciples had finally taken a realistic outlook concerning Christ's death. Concern had now replaced the response of doubt. They now wondered what relation their existence had to Christ's death. (26:22) The eleven had now placed their security in Christ and His plan for them in the future, even to the extent of self-negation. (26:35) Christ realized that these men loved Him even to the extent that they now thought they would be willing to die with Him. For this

sincere intent Christ accepted the eleven disciples as His sheep. They had entered the fold with their shepherd. They might stray, they might encounter obstacles and danger, but their sense of security lay in the fact that they now had a shepherd whom they fully trusted. (26:29-35)

They might be scattered for a short time but He had promised to meet them again after the third day, even though He had to come from the other side of the grave. And they knew He would keep His promise.

What a contrast in response is presented by Judas! For three years Judas had been doing the things that the other disciples did. He had been on the Mount with them and had heard the Sermon, he had gone on the preaching mission with them, he had stood with them in Caesarea Phillipi when they recognized Christ as a unique individual. Until now Judas had either refused to believe the things he didn't want to believe or he had not declared his true feelings, for suddenly, when Judas fully realized that Christ had predicted truly as far as events were concerned, he broke loose in a full-fledged rebellion with the intent of destruction. (26:14-16) In trying to destroy Jesus, however, he only destroyed himself.

Judas was not willing to die to himself. He had a conception of what he expected from Christ and of how he thought he should act, and he would not change that conception even though God had showed him the true concept for the past three years through the constant companionship of His Son. Natural man is sinful and must pass away to allow a

new man to come to life.¹ Judas would not allow this to happen but insisted on retaining the old man. G.A. Glover writes regarding Judas:

Judas saw the world through the darkness of his own mind, and the world responded to what he was. Because his heart was black, the sun's radiance was dimmed.²

In another section he adds this interesting picture:

Judas may have been moved by vindictiveness, political astuteness, disillusionment, greed, or a combination of these motives; or some other factor may have been responsible for the betrayal. The sinister fact remains that Judas was a traitor.³

Since darkness can never stand in the presence of light, it was not unnatural that Judas finally reacted violently to Jesus. He went out to destroy that which he once embraced. Death was a pattern Judas could not accept and when it became obvious that there was no alternative with Jesus, he decided to join another group and play the game with them.

I. The Resurrection and the Post-Resurrection Appearances. 27:51-28:20.

1. The Training.

Never in history has there been a day of victory of fulfilled promises and expectations as that first Easter morn. In the temple there was a rent veil signifying that

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1. In this connection see: Corinthians, II, 5:17
See also: Galatians 6:15 and Colossians 3:10
2. G. A. Glover, With the Twelve, pp. 250-251
3. Ibid., p. 251

God had now come to dwell in the immediate presence of His people. (27:51) On the hillside an angel sat upon a stone that had been rolled away from an empty tomb. (28:2-3) A group of women who worshipped the crucified Christ were rushing along the road to find the disciples to inform them of events, when they met the Christ and He greeted them with, "All hail" and they worshipped Him. (28:9) His living presence now witnessed His every teaching. The disciples followed Him to Galilee as they had been instructed. Some came doubting but they found the Christ they were seeking and worshipped Him. (28:16-17) Now Christ tells them of His new power and glory, of His new position with all men. (28:18) Christ had fulfilled His every teaching, He had met His death and born His cross on Calvary, and now the spiritual power had once more shown its superiority and authority over the physical and He walked among them, a new man who manifested power and victory over sin.

Now, because of His victory and power, the disciples were to act. (28:19) A free translation from the Greek would be that His resurrection was to result in evangelism on their part. Once more they hear the call to fish repeated, the call to which they had so readily responded three years before when Christ called them from the shores. Many things had happened during those last three years, some affording them better equipment for their work, but now Christ gives them the relation between His authority and their work. (28:20) His new promise afforded them their best equipment

yet, for if the Master Fisherman would be with them always they need no more.¹

2. The Relation to Previous Experience.

This glorious resurrection day was the day God had been waiting for throughout the ages. It was the day when He for the first time had come to an adequate relationship with all people. It was the day when Christ could say, "All hail." (28:9) It was the day upon which every beam of the light of God in the law and the prophets was focused so that it might shine in all its radiance. If there was ever a day in history that was God's day more than another day, this was it.

It was a climatic day for the disciples also. Yet it was difficult for them to stand alone upon their newly acquired legs. They came into Galilee, remembering the words Christ had spoken. (26:32) They were conscious of the fact that the man they were to meet had been crucified, buried, and now had arisen from the grave. They found themselves wondering if this could be. It was against all material law. The winds that beat around Peter as he walked upon the waves were felt once again as fresh doubt arose once more. The old background of material thinking was again beating upon the minds of some of the eleven. But the man who could save them from the storm at sea, and still the waves, could give them unlimited power. Because they had been willing to

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¹ Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 534

die to their own selves they could now be a part of this new power, for it could now flow from their Master through them to the people. They were now ready to respond as they should have at the feeding. Christ was telling them that their training was completed and that now they would have the power, through Him, to be the fishermen that He had planned for them to be when He first came to them and picked them for His own.¹

3. The Response.

These men had come to Christ in Galilee; some had come doubting, but they had come. Their teacher had instructed them to do so. (26:32) These men had cast their lot with Christ, they were now followers of His in the fullest sense of the word, doubts did not stop them now. Christ had said that He would be in Galilee after the third day and they went to Galilee to be with Him. They were to be followers and history was to prove that they would be followers to the end.

When they had accepted Christ's pattern of death to victory, they had in a sense adapted it to themselves. They had died to the strongest of their old basic conception and had allowed God to replace it with a new concept. Christ had responded with power of the spirit over the material many times and had always been victorious. He had taught

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1. E. Bruce, op. cit., p. 536

these men that complete obedience to God's will made this possible, death of their own will and self and acceptance of a new self empowered by the spirit, through Jesus Christ. They had now seen the demonstration of this power of victory of the spiritual life over sin and material death. They had accepted the plan of God, even before Christ died, and now, even though they were as children with a new concept, they believed in it and wanted it for themselves. At times their response had been a weak response, at other times it had been in error, but now they had responded as they had been asked, coming to Galilee to be with Christ and to learn His exact and explicit will for them in the future.¹

Christ would not have promised them this power if He had not intended to give it. (28:20) Therefore, these were now men who had for the first time in their lives opened themselves in the way that God had been waiting for. They were men who had yielded themselves sufficiently to the will of God that this will could now become manifest through them because of the power of the Holy Spirit.

J. Summary

In the incidents of chapter three Christ taught His disciples that He must die in order for God's Kingdom to come. Because of the disciples' tenacious clinging to their material background it was difficult for them to ac-

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¹ Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 537

cept these teachings. They could understand a material kingdom and wished that they might be a part of such, but death meant pain and sacrifice and they did not wish for this. They thought of separation with death and understood no other pattern, yet. Because of these woeful feelings about death they refused to allow a place for the possibility of their master's death in their thinking and for some time failed to heed much that Christ taught them. It was not until they entered Jerusalem and found that their new material kingdom did not materialize that they began to respond with serious thought concerning the death of Christ. When they were no longer engrossed in their own self position they were free to review some of the thoughts Christ had brought before them and a slight change occurred in their response.

Finally when the disciples realized that events were developing as Christ had taught and not as they had speculated, they realized that their response had been wrong and that they could expect Christ's death to become a reality. Now they had a choice they must make. Would they choose Christ's plan or would they continue to trust in their own security?

One chose to try and save his ego and position and ended losing all, even physical life.

The eleven responded adequately enough that God could give them a new concept in the place of their old one. They had died to self to the extent that He could

now work through them. The world would always present doubts to them but when they had the living Christ in their midst, with all authority even in the life of the individual, doubts would cease to occupy these minds that were now centered around the task of discipling others.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

It is to be noted that Christ comes "to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," before he begins the separate training of the twelve. (4:17)

The first chapter dealt with Christ's call and early training of the twelve in regards to the nature of the Kingdom, especially in its affect upon their situation, and with their response to this training. Christ picked those who were willing to follow Him at any cost in order to learn to fish for men. Christ taught these men the nature of the Kingdom, first in regards to its relation to them as individuals, and then in regards to its universal implications. The disciples showed an agreement with what they understood of Christ's message, but the lack of faith that is evidenced in the miracle section shows that there was little incorporation of these truths into their own lives in a way that would affect their everyday reactions. Christ gives them an extensive series of demonstrations that faith, in, or spiritual assurance of, the nature of God is the factor that can resolve every unfavorable material

situation. The disciples were sufficiently impressed to remain with Christ in spite of the opposition of the Pharisees, which would mean alienation from their native religion. What is more, at the close of the chapter we find indications that they were following the message of Christ close enough to be praying for laborers to be thrust forth by God, which laborers they were soon to become because of their adjustment to God's message.

In the second chapter Christ, by way of a test, gives the disciples a chance to demonstrate in a practical situation how much they have been affected by the teaching on the Kingdom, and how much benefit they are able to bring into the lives of others because of the benefit Christ has brought into their lives. When they return, they emphasize material before spiritual benefit. Christ then goes into a lesson plan, covering a wider scope, but emphasizing especially that all adjustment to God is based upon a spiritual contact with God, and that outside of adjustment to God, there can, of course, be no adequate adjustment to the present world. When the multitudes come He gives them a chance to apply this principle, but they can see only the material situation, and fail to contact it with a relationship to their spiritual Father. He then indicates that this is the precise nature of the Pharisee's failure, and that this has made it easier for some outside of Judaism to come to God than for all that are within its borders.

When there is no great grasp of understanding He tries to show them at what point they have failed by repeating the feeding incident in a Gentile group. The disciples should have analyzed the point at which they failed in the earlier situation and have made restitution here; but such was not the case. Instead, it seems that they are becoming more fixed in their pattern of incorrect response. Finally, when they forget the loaves in crossing the sea again, Christ is able to show them that they are becoming like the Pharisees in their outlook, rather than like a Kingdom citizen; they are not acting as though a spiritual contact with God as the Father is the factor that determines everything in life. With this realization they are ready for the next step - the realization that Christ's unique adjustment to, and effect upon, life could only come from a unique relation with God as "the Son." (16:16) The former fact had to be established within their minds before the latter could be brought home.

In the third chapter Christ moves immediately from His unique relationship to the next logical step - His unique mission. Self-denial to the point of death is the true and final means of establishing the Kingdom. God's will rather than our will must be the controlling factor. The disciples were far from pleased at this teaching and showed no desire to adjust to it. Throughout the journey to the cross, Christ breaks through their objections

one by one. At the mount of transfiguration, He shows that they should be listening to Him, rather than vice-versa. In the next lesson He shows that they are seeking the highest honors rather than humbling themselves to their Heavenly Father as they should be. In the incident outside of Jericho, He demonstrated that this should issue forth in service to others rather than in self advancement. Even in His entry He emphasized the will of His Father rather than any selfish will of His own. Through all of this the disciples become more and more silent as the finality of Christ's teaching makes its impress upon them, and finally, at Olivet they come once more hoping for the Kingdom, only to meet the cross in all of its immediacy, only two days away. Now they are forced to decide upon a course of action. The time has come in God's plan for them to choose. Eleven accept God's higher plan even though they could not understand it or see how it could lead to victory. One rebels and betrays, refusing to accept a will that has such a great contrast with his own. He would not die to his own will; nor would he respond to this teaching of Christ, and at this point his training stops and he is excluded. The result of all this is that the one, in seeking to maintain his own status and individuality, ends up by destroying that which he prized most, his own self, while the eleven who gave in to a higher self, realized the dream of their original call to

service, for now, in all reality they became the fishers of men they had been told they would eventually be. By following Christ's training to its conclusion, they had acquired the ability to take other willing followers down the path they had trod.

B. Conclusion

Christ had a definite plan in mind as to the steps in His training of the twelve. At no time did He leave one lesson to leap to another merely because the disciples were experiencing difficulty with the lesson at hand. Instead, he built each new teaching on what had gone before, and until they had responded to one point in the teaching, he would not go on to another. At certain points in the training He gives indications that certain attainment has been made and that in view of this attainment He is progressing to a different step. (10:1, 16:17) Finally, at the close of the training, He gives indication that He now considers their response of such an adequate nature that He can give them authority to train others. Christ refused to leave any student at the halfway mark of the training, but persisted until, no matter how unresponsive the student, a response was ultimately drawn from him. Christ always strove toward the ultimate reaction of His disciples, never accepting an immediate reaction as final if it did not characterize their overall outlook. Because of this

insistence of Christ that the twelve take an ultimate stand on His teaching we find that such is eventually the case. The training of the one ended in complete rejection, and that of the eleven in acceptance. And their lives showed the mold of the master, thus fulfilling the definition of teaching given by Du Bois, "Teaching is enabling another to restate the truth in terms of his own life."¹

In all of Christ's emphasis upon what He wished to accomplish in the way of objectives, it is worthy to note ~~note~~ that His procedure and method was perfectly adapted to the needs of the students. He was not merely stating axioms and demanding that they conform to these, but He was working for the incorporation of spiritual understanding and acceptance that would eventually show itself in changed individuals. Thus He never went faster than the disciples were able to keep up. ² If a response was not forthcoming, Jesus went about removing the barriers that were holding it back. He more completely identified Himself with His pupils than any other teacher ever has. He used whatever means best fitted the lesson at hand, whether it was illustration, question and answer, personal


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1. Patterson Du Bois, The Point of Contact in Teaching, p. 124
2. Cf. C.F. McKey, The Art of Jesus as a Teacher, p. 98
See also: F.P. Graves, What Did Jesus Teach?, p. 57

demonstration, or problem situation. He geared the use of His method to the points of contact at which His students would be most likely to respond.

One final factor to be noted is that in the training of the twelve all other factors were treated only as they had bearing on the situation of the disciples. In some cases, such as in Ch. 23, Christ deals primarily with another group, and another situation. But these points in Christ's ministry are almost universally concerned with the response of another group or individual than the twelve. Political, economic and social factors were treated only as they had a direct bearing on the response desired from the twelve.

Therefore, in consideration of these factors, and of the entire body of this thesis, it seems that the response of the twelve was one of the primary variable factors, if not the primary one, in governing the progress of their training by Jesus Christ.



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