

Slowly her hands crept up to his face and clasped it as she said, "I have held the great King as wax in my hands and have laughed when he bowed before me, but to you I gave my heart. And bitter has it been, and yet proud was I of you that I could not make you tell me of your love. Will you kiss me now and promise me that you will give me death before that wild mob reaches me?"

Gently he drew her close and held her so while the clash of steel and furious yells drew slowly nearer up the narrow stairs, and they knew that life for them was of the length of but a few precious moments.

Suddenly she released herself from his arms and began drawing off her jewels and golden bracelets.

"Perhaps they will not touch me dead if I have no jewels upon me, and even were I dead I would shudder at their vile hands." So there in that high room with the hideous yells of that blood-crazed multitude beating upon their ears he helped her untwine the bright jewels from her hair, the soft dark tresses he had often longed to touch; strip the armlets of gold, set with priceless gems, from her slim, round arms, and loosen the golden anklets from her slender ankles.

When they had finished and piled the glittering treasure near the door, he loosened the heavy gold armband he wore, engraved with the cross and star, and smiling down at her clasped it around her arm.

"Will you wear my jewel of gold in death?" he asked, "for I give it to you even as I have given you my heart—for eternity"; and stooping he laid his lips on hers.

From without came a wild yell of triumph, and a mighty crash against the heavy door caused it to give and splinter. Another yell, another crash, and the upper part of the door gave way, showing the dripping spears and maddened faces of those who sought her life.

"Now, beloved," she cried, and as the mob surged in, with one swift stroke he did as she had asked him, and turning laid her limp body on the wide divan. Then with a wild, pealing cry and flashing sword he leaped into that seething, clutching mob.

Slowly the picture faded, the wild yells grew fainter, and Mary found herself before her glowing fire, holding the armband of beaten gold upon which could still be deciphered the cross and star.

Esoteric Bible Studies

BY CORINNE S. DUNKLEE

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST JESUS

V.—*Early Ministry, Calling of the Twelve, and Sermon on the Mount.*

Before every important step Christ went for a time into the silence of the desert. He knew that His work was to be accomplished within the short space of three years. He therefore deemed it necessary to choose the twelve most advanced of His followers to carry on the work of disseminating the new religion when He had gone. The Sermon on the

Mount, His most complete public utterance, was given immediately after this.

After trial, conflict, and such mighty temptation as man never knew He returned from the Wilderness to share with men the great spiritual power which was His. The physical body of Jesus He held as a tool in His hand. Every feeling and emotion was subservient to the mighty force of His spiritualized will power, coupled with the great radiance of His love. He returned to the world to bring the powerful new

message of Christianity, which is to redeem the earth and its humanity. Through the absolute dominion over Himself, through His perfect self-control He performed works which the world terms miracles. The fundamental tenets of His teaching we find in His words, "The Kingdom of God is within you." We must find it first within ourselves and then we shall find it externally in others and all things about us. *The path of seeking must be the way of love.*

From the multitudes who surrounded Him He chose His inner circle, the twelve disciples. Certain ones among these men had received preparatory esoteric instruction from John the Baptist, and so were ready to continue their preparation as disciples when the great Messiah called to them. These chosen disciples were not ignorant fishermen as many have supposed. They were men whose esoteric training and attainments proved them to be ready for receiving and teaching the deeper truths of the Christian religion.

Andrew was the first chosen, yet he never became one of the innermost circle. He is chiefly known through the bringing of his famous brother Peter to Christ. The supreme privilege of life is to be able to carry the message of the spirit to others. James and John were both quiet and reserved, but possessed of a great intensity which caused the supreme Teacher Himself to call them the Sons of Thunder. This same intensity accounted in part for the martyrdom of James, who was the first of the disciples to follow His Master to the cross. A similar intensity when softened by divine love placed John at the head of the disciples in spiritual attainment.

Philip has been termed the sordid and commonplace because he was so slow in accepting the divinity of our Lord. His inseparable companion, Nathanael, was the mystic or dreamer whom Christ Jesus promised at first sight that he should see the wonders of heaven, meaning through Initiation, a promise which

was gloriously fulfilled in the later life of Nathanael. Matthew was the fifth and last of the disciples chosen separately. The others were called out just prior to the giving of the teachings contained in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount occupies the same place in the New Testament that the Ten Commandments do in the Old Testament. The Ten Commandments are external laws which man was taught to obey under the whiplash of fear. The Sermon on the Mount contains the law of love which man must learn to inscribe upon his heart and write upon his forehead, to use the familiar phrase of St. Paul. The general theme of this sublime message is LOVE, and the thoughts there expressed by the Master formed the ground work of His teaching and of His living. Humanity in general has not begun to live these great spiritual precepts *because we have not learned that the greatest spiritual power is love.* Christ Jesus, the Lord of Love, demonstrated this power in His every word and deed while upon the earth. We can only follow in His steps as we too learn to live the life of love.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself"; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"; "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"; "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." All of these admonitions require the cultivation of the transcendent power of love for their successful accomplishment. Christ explained to them that in order to attain unto this sublime state of perfection they must learn to cultivate the active qualities of humility, sympathy, compassion, purity, together with an intense desire for righteousness, and bravery and courage even to suffer martyrdom for righteousness' sake. How well those twelve whom He had chosen to be nearest Him learned to follow these divine precepts which He gave them on that midsummer day, we learn, when we find that with the possible exception of John and Judas each one followed Him to His martyr's death upon the cross.

They learned to know literally the meaning of the words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you," has been called the impossible commandment. It requires an utter renunciation of self, complete self-mastery, and the awakening and functioning of the power of love as the dominant keynote of the life. This is a high ideal, and only those wholly consecrated and dedicated to spiritual living can begin to live up to it. We call ourselves Christians and ours a Christian land. Here Christ Jesus gives us the standard by which to measure our Christianity. "But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," means to resist not evil. When wronged, endeavor not to think of yourself but only of what course it is best to pursue for the benefit of the one who has wronged you. If he should be punished, never let it be done in a spirit of revenge, but always in love and with justice tempered with mercy.

"And if any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." This means literally benevolence, helpfulness. "Give to him that asketh thee"; not necessarily money but understanding, loving kindness. Help a man to help himself. It has been said, "A beggar is a challenge to the highest that is within us." Help to lift him above and beyond the condition of beggary. Teach him to find that divine power within himself, the most priceless of all gifts, and he will never know again the limitations of beggary.

"Of him that taketh thy goods, ask them not again." There can never be a quarrel if only one person fights. Settle all difficulties out of court if possible, and when they are finished be sure there is no bitterness else there is added causation for this and future lives.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so

to them." This is the most precious of all the sayings in this sublime sermon on the Mount, the standard of living the Christ life. *We may only call ourselves Christians when we really live the Golden Rule.*

"Give and it shall be given unto you." If we fill our consciousness with only truth, beauty, love, harmony, only the same shall return unto us. Their vibratory power is built into the archetype in the Second Heaven, and gives back to us exactly what we put into it.

"God is love, yet God is law." The Sermon on the Mount is found in its most complete form in the gospel of Matthew, chapters five to seven inclusive. These chapters should form the daily study and meditation of the esoteric Christian student. We hear much of the second coming of Christ. *He will return when humanity has learned to put into practical demonstration in daily life these great spiritual truths. Only then shall we be ready to "meet Him in the air."*

The raising of the daughter of Jairus, healing of the demoniac boy, stilling the storm, and multiplication of the loaves and fishes are among the important works of the Master at that time. Each one holds a deep esoteric meaning pertaining to the way of Initiation and the awakening of a larger spiritual consciousness. The Bible is the supreme book and Christ Jesus the supreme Teacher of occultism.

The Golden Age

The Golden Age we will revive,
 Each man will be a brother;
 In harmony we all shall live,
 And share the truth together.
 In virtue trained, enlightened youth
 Will love each fellow creature,
 And future years shall prove the truth
 That man is good by nature.
 Then let us toast with three times three
 The reign of Peace and Liberty.

—Robert Burns