

Verse 14. Thayer says to persuade means "to win one's good will." Pilate was a wavering sort of governor as had been shown in this case, and they felt sure they could influence him to let the soldiers off without punishment. Another thing, they said *if this come to the governor's ears; there is no proof that he ever heard the report.*

Verse 15. This foolish report was circulated among the Jews which is very significant. They were the ones who wanted to believe it and pretended to do so. There is no account of any knowledge of it among the people in general.

Verse 16. The women were told by the angel (verse 7) to give the disciples the word, and in verse 10 Jesus gave them the same message. Hence this verse reports the journey to Galilee, the very mountain spot for the meeting having been designated. Eleven disciples were in the group because Judas had taken his own life before the crucifixion of his Lord (chapter 27: 5).

Verse 17. All we can say of this *worship* is that what they did comes within the definition of the word as given at chapter 2: 2. Thayer defines the original of *doubt*, "to doubt, to waver." It indicates a frame of mind that might be expressed by a familiar saying, "it is too good to be true."

Verse 18. In the Authorized Version the word "power" comes from two Greek words, with only a few exceptions, which are *DUNAMIS* and *EXOUSIA*. There is a partial blending of these words in their meaning so that they are used somewhat interchangeably, but each has its main or proper meaning. According to Thayer the first word means, "strength, ability, power; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature." He defines the second word, "power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission." For convenience the first may be defined as "personal strength or ability," the second as, "the right or privilege bestowed on one." The word in this verse is *EXOUSIA*, which means that God bestowed upon Christ full right to rule over his kingdom.

Verse 19. *Teach* is from *MATHETEUO* and is defined by Thayer, "to make a disciple; to teach, instruct." Its main application is to bring persons into a relationship with Christ that they never had before. *All nations* is equiva-

lent to "every creature" in Mark 16: 15. The Mosiac system was given to the Jews only, while the Gospel was given to both Jew and Gentile. To do this teaching among all nations would require ability to speak in every language, and none but the apostles had that ability. It is a perversion of scripture, therefore, to apply this commission to preachers of today. *In* is from *eis* which means "into" as used here. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are a unit in the Godhead and hence "name" is singular. Whoever is baptized into one is baptized into all three, therefore one baptism is all that is necessary and right. The scripture in no place presents this as a formula to be spoken by the administrator of baptism, and when he says these words he is merely announcing to the hearers what he is doing.

Verse 20. *Teaching* is from *didasko* and means to instruct in general. The ones to be instructed were those that Christ had commanded. In order that no mistake would be made, the Comforter (Holy Spirit) was to be sent to "bring all things to their remembrance" (John 14: 26). *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* The authority of the apostles was to be in force to the end of the world. Christ is not with them in person any more than he is with all Christians in person. But the words of the apostles are written in the New Testament and they are as binding on us now as if they were here in person and as if Jesus also had remained on earth in person. So there can be no successors to the apostles in this world because they are still in their own proper place of authority under Christ and will be until the end.

MARK I

Verse 1. Mark was not one of the apostles, but was inspired to write an account of the life of Christ. He is mentioned a few times in the New Testament which will be noticed as we come to them. *Beginning of the gospel* is his introduction to the story of Christ, indicating the point in the history at which he was to begin his book.

Verse 2. This verse states the beginning point that was referred to in the preceding verse, that it was the time when Jesus was ready to start in his public work. But since that was to be preceded immediately by the work of the forerunner, John the Baptist, the author opens his story with

several verses about that great man. This verse cites a prophecy in Malachi 3: 1, referring to John the Baptist as a messenger to go before the face of Christ to prepare the way for him.

Verse 3. See comments on Matthew 3: 1 for the explanation of *wilderness*.

Verse 4. *Baptism of repentance* denotes that baptism was caused by sincere repentance. (See Matthew 3: 7, 8.) *For* is from *EIS* and means in order to remission of sins.

Verse 5. *All the land of Judea* means that people came to John from all that country, not that every person was baptized. *Confessing their sins* was the verbal evidence that they had repented, and submission to baptism was the active evidence.

Verse 6. See the comments at Matthew 3: 4 for explanation of this verse.

Verse 7. This is John's first mention of the one who was to follow him. The reference to shoes is an allusion to the customs of that time. Loose sandals were worn in foot travel and upon entering a home they were removed and taken charge of by a servant. By way of illustration John regarded himself as unworthy even to unfasten the shoes of the one *mightier* than he.

Verse 8. *With* is from *EN* and means "in," referring to the element in which the persons were baptized. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was to be performed by the one coming after John and that was Christ. He was to give the Holy Ghost (Spirit) in overwhelming measure to his apostles to "guide them into all truth" (John 16: 13).

Verse 9. The preceding eight verses concludes the introduction referred to in verse 1. This and the next verse includes both John and Jesus, which will be all that Mark will record directly of the work of John, and any reference that may be made to him will be as a matter of history. *In those days* denotes that while John was to come before Jesus, yet their introduction to the world was to be virtually at the same time. Jesus came from Nazareth where he had lived since the return of his parents with him from Egypt (Matthew 2: 23). The reason for his baptism is explained in Matthew 3: 13-15.

Verse 10. If Jesus came *up out of* the water, then he had gone *down into* it. That was made necessary for the body to be baptized which was done by immersion. He (John) saw the

Spirit descending upon him (Jesus). John had been previously told that he would see such a thing take place (John 1: 33).

Verse 11. The voice from heaven was that of God, who openly recognized Jesus as his Son after he had been baptized, and he also added the important truth that he was *well pleased* in his Son.

Verse 12. Having been recognized formally as the Son of God, Jesus would not enter into his work until he had been tested. The word *spirit* always comes from the same Greek word, whether good or evil spirits, human or divine spirits, are meant; the connection here shows it means the *Holy Spirit*. Driveth is from *EKBALLO* which Thayer defines at this place, "to command or cause one to depart in haste." This is virtually the same in meaning as Matthew's statement that Jesus was "led up of the Spirit" (4: 1).

Verse 13. This verse gives a general summing up of the different things that took place with Jesus in those forty days: for the details see Matthew 4: 1-11. *Gospel of the kingdom* means good news that the kingdom of heaven was about to be set up.

Verses 14, 15. *Time is fulfilled* means the predictions of the start of the kingdom of God as to time had been fulfilled. On that ground Jesus commanded them to *repent and believe the gospel*. Why did he put repentance before belief? A fuller statement on the same subject is in Acts 20: 21. The work of John and Jesus was among the Jews only. They were still under the Mosaic system in which God was the only personality they were supposed to serve. But they had become slack toward God and were obligated to repent on behalf of Him, then come with clean hands to the new system and believe the Gospel. It was like telling a debtor to pay up his old debts before asking a new creditor to accept him.

Verse 16. This Simon was Simon Peter according to Matthew 4: 18, who, with his brother Andrew, was the first man called from his secular occupation to travel with Jesus bodily over the country and to be with him constantly.

Verse 17. Using their own occupation as a basis for his figures of speech, Jesus compared the proposed work of these men with what they had been

doing. They were still to be fishers, but were to fish after men with the bait of the Gospel.

Verse 18. They could not use their temporal nets in the new business and hence had to forsake them. Their interest was indicated by their *straightway* forsaking the nets.

Verse 19. James and John were the ones elsewhere called "Zebedee's children."

Verse 20. All of these men were only required to come along with Jesus. No initiation act was required of them because John had already baptized them. We know that he was to prepare a people for Christ, and Jesus accepted these men as they were which shows that they had been made ready for his service. John had but one method of preparing men for Christ which ended with baptism. So we must conclude these men had been baptized by John the Baptist to await service under Christ.

Verse 21. Capernaum was a city on the shore of Galilee, and Matthew 4: 13 tells us that Jesus made it his dwelling place. He entered the synagogue on the sabbath because there would be people there whom he could teach. For more information about synagogues see the information offered in connection with Matthew 4: 23.

Verse 22. This verse is explained at Matthew 7: 28, 29.

Verse 23. The man with an *unclean spirit* was possessed with a devil. This subject is considered at length at Matthew 8: 28.

Verse 24. Of course we must understand that the devil did his talking with the mouth of the victim which is signified by the expression "possessed with the devil." Note that references to this devil are in both the singular and plural numbers. That is because though there might be a legion of them within a man (chapter 5: 5-13), there would be one as spokesman. The devil knew Jesus because he had once been with him in heaven but was cast out because of sin (2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6; Luke 10: 18). It was not surprising, then, that they did not want anything to do with Jesus.

Verse 25. *Jesus rebuked him* and not the man, for the being possessed with a devil was an affliction and not a fault. The devil not only was commanded to come out of the man, but to make no remarks about the situation.

Verse 26. *Cried with a loud voice* may seem to contradict the statements in the preceding paragraph. No, this cry was forced from the victim by the injury which the devil inflicted on him as he was coming out.

Verse 27. People had been known to be possessed with devils for some years, but until the time of Christ no one was able to expel them. And notice that it was not done by any bodily contact, but solely by the authority of Jesus which was so great that when he commanded the devils they obeyed. No wonder the people were amazed and started to talk about it among themselves.

Verse 28. An event like the casting out of devils without any apparent means would be reported by everyone who heard about it. As a result the fame of Jesus spread at once throughout Galilee which was the district in which Capernaum was located.

Verse 29. Jesus and the first four disciples whom he called entered into the home of Simon and his brother.

Verse 30. Simon Peter was a married man for mention is made of his wife's mother. This does not harmonize with the doctrine of Rome which denies the right of marriage to all of the clergy. It is replied that Peter left his wife so that he could be qualified to serve in the capacity of head of the church. That also contradicts the scripture, for 1 Corinthians 9: 5 tells us that he was leading his wife about with him, and that was in Paul's day. *Anon they tell him of her* means they told him of the case of sickness as soon as he entered into the house.

Verse 31. The only physical thing that Jesus did was to lift up the woman with his hand. But that act alone would not have recovered her, for any man could have done that. And the encouraging act of lifting her from the bed did not merely give her an imaginary impulse as a "shot in the arm" might cause, but she was able to minister to the group which would require something more than nervous will power.

Verse 32. This verse includes regular diseases and also the being possessed with devils which shows there was a difference between the two kinds of afflictions. The presence of devils sometimes caused diseases similar to those to which mankind was always

subject, but such cases could be cured only by casting out the devils.

Verse 33. Jesus was still in the home of Peter and his brother where he had healed the mother of Peter's wife, also had recovered others of their afflictions. This caused such a stir throughout the city that great crowds gathered at the door.

Verse 34. *Divers diseases* means many kinds of diseases. *Suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.* These devils would not have deserved any credit for proclaiming the divinity of Christ; that is, it would not have been an act of faith but of knowledge. They made such a declaration once and were rebuked for it (verses 24, 25), and Jesus still was not willing to be upheld by such characters.

Verse 35. Jesus was human as well as divine, and therefore he preferred to be alone with his Father at certain times. There is a foolish theory that Jesus and God are one in person. If that were true, to whom did he pray in that solitary place? The theory breaks down under the weight of its own absurdity.

Verse 36. Jesus was not allowed to be alone very long. Since he went out there a *great while before day* it is reasonable to say that as soon as it came the usual hour to arise, Peter discovered his absence and he took his group and went in search of him.

Verse 37. They did not know exactly where he was for it says *when they had found him*. They told Jesus that all men were seeking for him, but the motive for their search is not revealed by the text.

Verse 38. The main purpose of Jesus in his personal ministry was to preach the good news of the kingdom. The working of miracles was one of the "side lines" of his mission, performed to give testimony to the genuineness of his teaching. Because of that he stated that they should go into other towns to preach, and that he had come out into the world for that purpose.

Verse 39. The Jews would be gathered in their synagogues to read the Scriptures and perform other acts of worship. That gave Jesus an opportunity to preach the good news, then back up his authority by casting out devils or other miraculous works.

Verse 40. Leprosy was an incurable disease and a man afflicted with it was

required to live apart from society (Leviticus 13: 45, 46). This leper had been convinced by the other miracles of Jesus that he could also heal him of leprosy if he was willing.

Verse 41. Leprosy was contagious only by physical contact, therefore when Jesus touched the leper he proved his faith in the power that the Father had given him. In connection with the physical contact he also uttered the word of cleansing.

Verse 42. *As soon as he had spoken* the man was cleansed from his leprosy. This denotes that his physical contact would not have been necessary as far as the healing was concerned. We should note that Jesus did not require a period of time for his accomplishment but did it *immediately*. Modern so-called faith healers must have an indefinite period, telling their patients that "it takes time," and that if their faith "holds out" they will be healed. This proves that all such "faith-cure" persons are frauds.

Verse 43. The next verse will show what this charge was and why it was given.

Verse 44. Leprosy was incurable by any natural means, but it could be cured by miracle, such as the case of Naaman in 2 Kings 5. And when a Jew had been cured of the disease physically, he was still required to perform certain services for his ceremonial cleansing which included the offering of sacrifices and other materials. That is what Jesus meant that this man should *offer for his cleansing*. (See Leviticus 14: 1.)

Verse 45. This verse indicates why the man was told not to report his case to any man. The people were so worked up over it that they interfered with the work of Jesus and caused him to go into desert places which were those not populated.

MARK 2

Verse 1. Jesus did not remain in the desert indefinitely, but returned to Capernaum which was his last residence. Of course he would not escape the knowledge of the crowd, for the word passed around that he was in a certain house.

Verse 2. The crowd filled the house to capacity and then kept coming until they could not all get in hearing distance of the door. But to all who were within that limit Jesus did his preaching.

Verse 3. The palsied man was brought to the place, which shows he was helpless and had nothing to do with the affair as far as the text states.

Verse 4. The *press* means the crowd that had gathered about the door. Matthew records this event but says nothing about their going down through the roof. In Luke 5: 19 they are said to have made an opening through the roof by taking up the tiling. Houses were made with flat roofs which were covered over with roofing tile. These could be taken up without any damage to the building just as many styles of roof tiles can be handled today. After making this opening through the roof, they let the couch bearing the sick man down right into the immediate presence of Jesus.

Verse 5. Jesus saw *their* faith; nothing said about the faith of the patient.

Verses 6, 7. These scribes were reasoning in *their hearts* but Jesus knew what they were thinking, for he always knew what was in man.

Verse 8. Jesus let them know that he knew what they were thinking about.

Verse 9. *Whether is easier* means to ask them which would be easier for him to do, for if he had authority from God he could do the one as readily as the other.

Verses 10, 11. Jesus demonstrated his power to perform miracles of the invisible kind by doing the visible. He told the palsied man to arise and carry his bed.

Verse 12. Again the result of Christ's word was *immediate*. When the man arose and carried his bed in their presence the people were amazed and declared they had never seen such a deed before. A more detailed discussion of this case is at Matthew 9: 2.

Verse 13. The *sea side* was that of Galilee where Jesus spent a great part of his time. The crowds were generally interested in his teaching and followed after him for that and also for the physical benefits obtained by his hands.

Verse 14. This man was Matthew Levi, one of the apostles and writer of the book with that name. *Receipt of custom* means the place where taxes were received, and this identifies him as a publican. Jesus told Levi to follow him which he did without any preparation further than what John

the Baptist had done. (See chapter 1: 20.)

Verse 15. These *publicans and sinners* were not some special sects as were the Pharisees and Sadducees, but were people who were regarded as being in the lower ranks of society. They were thus classed especially by the Pharisees who made such a claim of righteousness. (See comments at Matthew 9: 10 about the publicans.)

Verse 16. These self-righteous people were not fair enough to speak to Jesus directly, but satisfied their envy by attacking his disciples. Eating with another in old times was regarded as a strong recognition of social rank, hence this particular criticism was hurled at Jesus over the shoulders of his disciples.

Verse 17. If these critics were as righteous as they claimed, then they did not need the presence of Jesus any more than a man in health would need a physician. It is the sinner who needs the services of a Saviour and that would call for the attention that Jesus was giving to these "sinners." This does not mean that Jesus regarded the Pharisees as righteous men, but he was merely using their own claims against them.

Verse 18. Fasting was never commanded as a general practice, but it was customary to do so in times of distress or anxiety. John the Baptist was dead and his disciples were fasting in his memory. *They* (the Pharisees) came and criticized the disciples of Jesus for not fasting.

Verse 19. This verse has reference to some customs in connection with marriages. *Children* is used figuratively and refers to some invited guests who took pleasure in the presence of the bridegroom. After the wedding he would leave and these special friends would lament his absence which would be appropriate.

Verse 20. This verse applies the illustration to the disciples who were destined finally to mourn the absence of their Lord. (See chapter 16: 20).

Verses 21, 22. The lesson here is one of doing things in an appropriate manner and at the proper time. A full treatment of the whole parable is given at Matthew 9: 14-17.

Verse 23. Deuteronomy 23: 24, 25 gave the Jews the right to make personal use of the grain in the field but not to take any away. Thus no complaint could be made for their eating

this corn which was a small grain such as wheat or rye.

Verse 24. The Pharisees pretended to object because they were doing this on the sabbath day. But Jesus will show them that one law is no more sacred than another.

Verse 25. *Have ye never read* implies that they had read that account, but were ignoring the event for the time being because it would condemn them for inconsistency.

Verse 26. The bread that David ate was that which had been on the table in the tabernacle for seven days, then was set back for the use of the priests. But it had served its religious purpose and therefore it was no desecration of it for David to eat it, especially as it was an emergency.

Verse 27. *The sabbath was made for man* means the day was set aside for man's benefit in providing him a time for relaxation from labor. But since the use of food is as important as rest, it is right to provide that food even if it must be done on this day in an emergency.

Verse 28. No law is any greater than the authority behind it. Christ and his Father worked together in giving to man the law of the sabbath, therefore this Son would have the right to adjust that law to any condition suggested in his wisdom.

MARK 3

Verse 1. *Withered hand* means that something had shut off the circulation from that member and it had pined away for lack of moisture, rendering it useless.

Verse 2. The Pharisees were always pretending to be zealous about the law, though they did not keep it themselves. Jesus was performing his good deeds on every day of the week, but they knew they could not object to what he was doing, hence they pretended to be offended because he did some things on the sabbath day. So they had their eyes set upon him with a wicked interest, hoping he would heal this man on that day and thus give them a pretext for accusing him.

Verse 3. Jesus knew their thoughts but proceeded to heal the man.

Verse 4. Before going further with the case, Jesus anticipated their accusation with a question they were not expecting. He put the matter on the basis of doing good or evil, saving life

or destroying it, and asked them which should be done on the sabbath day. They would not answer because either way they answered would have condemned them.

Verse 5. Another word in Thayer's definition of the Greek for *anger* is "indignation," and it means that Jesus was greatly agitated over the hardness of their hearts. However, it did not keep him from performing the good deed for the man. He was told to *stretch forth his hand* which shows that his arm was not affected. As soon as he stretched forth his hand it was cured without any bodily contact from Jesus that we know of.

Verse 6. Having been defeated in their attempts to convict Jesus under the law, the Pharisees decided to try some other plan, which was to get him to say something that would set himself against the government. For the account of how they did this and my comments on it, see at Matthew 22: 16-21. The *Herodians* were some Jews who were favorable to Herod's family relations and the Romans.

Verse 7. Jesus went to the Sea of Galilee and that drew the crowds after him again, both from the immediate vicinity and Judea.

Verse 8. Jerusalem was in Judea, but the writer thought it good to specify some of the important centers of population in that district as well as others. *Idumaea* was the same as Edom, a country east of the Jordan. *Tyre* and *Sidon* were important cities of Phoenicia, a country bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. The fame of Jesus reached into all these places and people came from them to see him.

Verse 9. *Small ship* means a small boat that could take Jesus from the pressure of the crowd, and yet permit him to be seen and heard by the people.

Verse 10. This verse explains why the people thronged about Jesus.

Verse 11. *Unclean spirits* is another name for devils that afflicted the people.

Verse 12. See chapter 1: 34 on why the unclean spirit was forbidden to preach Jesus.

Verse 13. Jesus called these men out of the group of disciples following him.

Verse 14. This is the appointment of the twelve apostles. They were expected to *be with him continuously* ex-

cept as he would send them out on missions.

Verse 15. The word *power* is from *EXOUSIA* which means authority primarily, and Jesus bestowed it upon his apostles. In so doing he enabled them to heal sicknesses and cast out devils which would make their authority effective.

Verse 16-19. There are three of the Gospel accounts that give the list of the twelve apostles. The persons are the same but the names not always, since some of them had more than one name. For the sake of space the reader is asked to see the complete treatment of this subject at Matthew 10: 4. *Which also betrayed him* was said prospectively as the betrayal of Jesus had not yet taken place.

Verse 20. Jesus was kept so busy teaching the people and administering to their afflictions that there was no opportunity for him and his apostles to have their meals.

Verse 21. *His friends* is rendered "those belonging to him" by the "Englishman's Greek New Testament," and that agrees with the marginal reading that says "kinsmen." When they said *He is beside himself* they meant they thought he was carried away with the intensity of the situation. But Jesus continued his teaching and good work in spite of the apparent protest of his relations.

Verse 22. The scribes are explained at Matthew 13: 52. They would not deny the fact of his casting out devils, but pretended to believe that he got his power for the work from Beelzebub (Satan).

Verse 23. The foolishness of their theory was shown by this question. Even a wicked being like Satan would not be working against himself.

Verses 24, 25. The same point is made by supporting a kingdom that divided itself into opposing groups, for such a kingdom would soon be overthrown by the internal strife.

Verse 26. This is the same as verse 23.

Verse 27. The illustration is this. A man must overthrow another in order to plunder his house, and to do that he would have to be stronger than the man of the house. If Satan casts out Satan, then we have the foolish conclusion that Satan is stronger than Satan which is so absurd that no reply was possible.

Verse 28. This verse takes in every

manner of sin that could be named except the one that will be designated in the next verse.

Verse 29. To blaspheme means to speak violent and evil things against another; it implies things said with the intention of insulting or injuring another. To be guilty of such a sin against the Holy Ghost (Spirit) meant to be without a chance of pardon.

Verse 30. The sin against the Holy Ghost was charged against these Jews because *they said he hath an unclean spirit*. This narrows the subject down to one item, thus ruling out all human efforts to imagine something that "surely is the 'unpardonable' sin if ever there was one." For a complete discussion of this subject see Matthew 12: 24-28, and the comments that are made upon those verses.

Verse 31. *There came then*. Verse 21 tells of the "friends" of Jesus who wanted to take charge of him but were not able to do so. Whether these family relatives were the ones meant in the former verse I cannot say, or perhaps they were anxious to attempt what the other relatives failed to accomplish. At any rate, they came as near as they could and tried to get the attention of Jesus.

Verse 32. The multitude tried to help them get his attention by telling him that it was his mother and brethren who wanted to talk to him.

Verse 33. The reply of Jesus was not intended as a slight upon his family but a mild rebuke for the crowd. It is as if he had said, "why should my mother and brethren be allowed to alter my work of salvation?"

Verse 34. Jesus prepared to point out the persons deserving more attention just then than his family relatives, and called attention to the crowd that had gathered closely about him, to whom he had been preaching the truth.

Verse 35. The same person (notice it is in singular number) could not be both sister and brother at the same time. The idea is, then, that doing the will of God is more important than being the fleshly relations of Christ.

MARK 4

Verse 1. This chapter corresponds with Matthew 13.

Verse 2. A parable is the placing of one thing beside another for the purpose of an illustration. The reader should see the precautionary com-

ments offered at Matthew 13: 3 as to the right use to make of the parables.

Verse 3. *Hearken* means a special call to attention.

Verse 4. Seed was sown by hand only, in Bible times, and that would make it natural for it to fall into various places as the parable shows. *Wayside* was a beaten path where the ground was hard so that the seed could not find any opening to bury itself.

Verse 5. The soil over the *stones* would be scarce and the seed would soon use up all the strength in the ground, and that would force it to spring up at once toward the sun and atmosphere for sustenance.

Verse 6. However, the full strength of the sun would be too much for the tender plant because it did not have a completed root, as a result it would be scorched and die.

Verse 7. These *thorns* were a plant defined in the lexicon as "a bramble-bush, brier." The plant was not in sight when the sowing was done, but at the growing time it sprang up and choked out the good seed, it being a harder plant.

Verses 8, 9. The good ground brought forth various amounts of the good seed which was the only difference; the quality was the same in all.

Verse 10. *Asked of him the parable* signifies they did not understand the meaning of it. See the comments on Matthew 13: 11 as to why the apostles needed to have the parables explained to them aside from the crowd.

Verse 11. *Them that are without* refers to the people who were not disciples. This also is explained in the comments referred to in the preceding verse.

Verse 12. This unusual language means that the people did not use the opportunities they had been given to grasp the truths of Heaven. That refusal to open their eyes and ears to the things offered them is likened to a man who has eyes and ears, but refuses to use them for fear he will see and hear things that will condemn his manner of life.

Verse 13. The parable of the sower is so natural that the apostles should have seen the lesson in it. The question of Jesus is a mild rebuke and implies that they should bestir themselves a little more and not lean so heavily on him for instruction.

Verses 14, 15. Jesus loved his disciples, and notwithstanding their apparent dullness he wished to give them the information they desired. *The sower soweth the word* is very brief, but it indicates that the things that happened afterward were no fault of the sower. As seed remaining on the surface of the ground would soon be picked up by the birds, so if men do not take the good seed into their hearts, Satan will have a chance at it and will soon take it away with his many subjects of worldly interests.

Verse 16. These people were more enthusiastic over the newly-found subject than they were serious. Hence what they did was done somewhat in the spirit of excitement.

Verse 17. Excitement is momentary and such an interest is not very deep-seated. When the real test comes of facing the attacks of worldly enemies, such people become offended which means they stumble over the word.

Verse 18. As far as the text shows, these people gave attention to what was said and understood it. If they failed to produce any fruit from it the reason was something else besides not knowing about the value of the word which they had heard.

Verse 19. This verse explains why the word did not produce a crop with these people even though they understood it. *Cares of this world* denotes that concern and anxiety that some people have over the things of this life. They give so much attention to those things that it crowds out their consideration for the word. *Deceitfulness of riches*. Many people think that if they can accumulate a large amount of wealth that it will bring them happiness. But they are being deceived, for the so-called pleasures that can come only through money are temporal and at best are uncertain. Solomon says of this, "For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Proverbs 23: 5).

Verse 20. The good ground illustrates those who not only *hear* the word but also receive it; not only that but go to work with it to make it reproduce. The different amounts that were produced merely denotes that some good people have more ability to produce than others, but the Lord asks us only to be faithful and do what we can.

Verse 21. In purely temporal or ma-

terial things, men will act with better judgment than they do in things moral and spiritual. A man would not make a light for the accommodation of his guests, then put something over it that would prevent them from benefiting by it. Neither should we allow some careless conduct keep our possible influence for good from being seen by those about us. (See Matthew 5: 15, 16.)

Verse 22. All evil deeds will some day be exposed by the Lord. Our good deeds, therefore, should be permitted to be a benefit to others, and not be lost upon them by some unwise conduct on our part.

Verse 23. This verse means for men to make use of their opportunities to hear the truth as the Lord provides it for them through his servants.

Verse 24. The admonition as to what we hear is connected with the statement about the measure. The thought is that the more and better attention we give to what is said to us, the more benefit we will receive from what is said.

Verse 25. To take from one which he does not have is explained at Matthew 25: 29.

Verse 26. This short parable has an important lesson. What we do becomes an influence that lives and acts even when we are not aware of it. How necessary it is, then, that we guard our every act.

Verse 27. *Knoweth not how.* We do not understand how God makes things grow in the material kingdom, yet it makes its development notwithstanding our lack of that knowledge. Likewise, our work in the kingdom of God will have its reward in its proper time and in the Lord's own way even though we cannot always understand how it is.

Verse 28. This shows that everything in God's creation is accomplished by growth.

Verse 29. The lesson should be grasped that it takes faith and patience to accomplish the desired results in the service of the Lord. (See Galatians 6: 9.)

Verse 30. These questions were asked to get the attention of the hearers.

Verse 31. According to historical information the mustard seed that was produced in Palestine was the smallest of all those that grew in that country.

Verse 32. The physical growth of the little seed is like that which is

expected to be made in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. From small beginnings the work of the Lord may grow on until it is of service to many around us.

Verse 33. *As they were able to hear it.* Jesus did not wish to deliver his teaching in greater amounts or depths than they would be able to grasp. (See John 16: 12.)

Verse 34. This verse is explained at Matthew 13: 11.

Verse 35. The multitudes sometimes were so great that it made a hindrance to the work of Jesus. He never actually refused to serve them when in their midst, but would move to other parts of the country. Thus he told his disciples they would pass over to the other side which meant the other shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 36. Jesus dismissed the multitudes which is the meaning of the phrase *sent them away*, for they would not all depart. *They took him* denotes they would not leave him entirely alone, but some of them found the *other little ships* nearby. Just how far they tried to accompany him is not stated. Doubtless most of them remained on the same side of the sea until he returned, for verse 21 states that when he came back "much people gathered unto him."

Verse 37. After starting across the sea a violent storm arose. *It was now full* is a figure of speech meaning that the boat was filling, and unless something could be done it would soon be literally filled and sink.

Verse 38. Jesus was asleep which shows that the water had not yet reached to him as he lay on a pillow. In their fright they awoke him and cried for him to rescue them.

Verse 39. Jesus was more severe in his language to the storm and sea than he was to the disciples. He rebuked both storm and waves and commanded them to *be still*. Both of them were dumb objects and could not render intelligent obedience, hence their response proved the authority of the Master to rule as his wisdom directed.

Verse 40. The disciples were intelligent beings and hence Jesus gave them a mild rebuke, charging them with having little faith.

Verse 41. One meaning of the original word for *feared* is, "To be filled with awe and amazement." They wondered what manner of man it would be

who could regulate dumb objects of creation with his mere word.

MARK 5

Verse 1. Gadarenes (also called Gergesenes) was situated near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and it was there that Jesus went ashore.

Verse 2. The *tombs* were caves in the rocks that were used for the burial of the dead. They were generally open so that persons could enter and leave them as occasion suggested. It was at this kind of place that the Lord met the man with an *unclean spirit*.

Verse 3. *No man could bind him*. The effect of being possessed with an unclean spirit (devil) was not always the same. Sometimes it produced great prostration, at others it caused insanity, and in the present case it brought abnormal strength together with manifestations of insanity at times.

Verse 4. Attempts were made to bind this man but the chains would not hold. No man could *tame* him means he could not be subdued because of his strength.

Verse 5. This shows that he was not only unnaturally strong, but he was vicious and wild and showing the traits of an insane man.

Verse 6. However, it was the outward or human part of this creature that was performing the things described and that was because he was possessed of this devil and had to do as the evil spirit directed him. The devil himself was perfectly intelligent, for he caused the man to run and meet Jesus and perform some act of respect that is called *worship*. (See the note on that subject at Matthew 2: 2.)

Verse 7. *What have I to do with thee* is the same as asking Jesus what he is about to do. To *adjure* means to put a person under oath, which would be an unauthorized act on the part of the devil. The demand was that Jesus would not torment him.

Verse 8. This verse explains the demand of the preceding verse. If the devil is required to leave the man he may have to return to his former place in Hades which would mean the torment that he adjured Jesus not to inflict upon him.

Verse 9. The pronouns *he* and *we* are not the same in grammatical number. That is because one devil was the spokesman for the others. It is orderly for one or more beings interested in

the same thing to let one do the talking. The apostles observed that practice according to Matthew 17: 4; Acts 2: 14.

Verse 10. Speaking on behalf of the other devils, he requested Jesus not to send them *out of the country*. That was the main point of interest, not so much the idea of remaining in the man. (See the comments on verse 8.)

Verse 11. The swine was one of the unclean beasts under the law of the Jews, but we do not know whether they were interested in them commercially or not.

Verse 12. *All the devils besought* denotes the same thought set forth in verse 9 concerning a spokesman who represented the others.

Verse 13. The devils did not gain any advantage by entering the swine, but Jesus granted their request without volunteering any information. Whether they were suffered to enter other human beings or had to return to their former place in Hades we are not told.

Verse 14. The feeders saw what the swine did, but the text does not state if they knew what caused it. What happened when the people came out afterward, however, shows that they understood that Jesus had something to do with it.

Verse 15. The mentioning of seeing Jesus and the man at the same time indicates the people connected Jesus with the whole event. *They were afraid*. This man had defied all attempts to subdue him even with a chain, now he was seen sitting quietly and in his right mind. The situation was so overwhelming that it filled the people with terror and confusion.

Verse 16. The feeders explained what was done and what happened to the swine.

Verse 17. No harm had been done to the unfortunate man, hence the only conclusion possible is they were afraid some more of them would lose their swine.

Verse 18. It was natural for the man to make such a request as this verse states.

Verse 19. Jesus had more important things for the man to do, and that was to tell the good news to his friends. He was to relate it in connection with the thought that the Lord *had compassion* on him.

Verse 20. Decapolis was a district east of the Jordan, and it was in that

region that the grateful man spread the news of his recovery which caused the crowd to gather.

Verse 21. Jesus returned to the western shore of Galilee, and, as usual, the crowds began to gather about him, doubtless with various motives.

Verse 22. *Ruler* is from ARCHT-SUNAGOGUE, and Thayer's explanation is, "It was his duty to select the readers or teachers in the synagogue, to examine the discourses of the public speakers, and to see that all things were done with decency and in accordance with ancestral usage." *Fell at his feet* manifested great respect and much anxiety.

Verse 23. The simple ceremony of laying his hands on the daughter would not have been necessary had Jesus seen fit to accomplish the cure without it, but the request was the ruler's way of indicating his faith in the great Healer.

Verse 24. It was nothing unusual for the crowds to follow Jesus, but the statement is added that they thronged him. That is an introduction to the event that is to follow soon, especially as to certain parts of it.

Verse 25. This woman was afflicted with a chronic hemorrhage of 12 years' standing.

Verse 26. This verse is one of the passages that are perverted into meaning just the opposite of their real teaching. The woman had grown worse in spite of her being treated by physicians. The fact is used by many "drugless healers" to prove that physicians are useless, even though Jesus said in Matthew 9: 12 that the sick need a physician. But the very statement that this woman had not been benefited by the physicians is proof that others had been helped by them.

Verse 27. This woman touched the garment of Jesus on the same principle that the ruler wanted him to touch the body of his daughter.

Verse 28. *For she said* means that she said it to herself.

Verse 29. The woman obtained the relief she sought and it was *straightway*. That was the manner of miraculous cures and not a requirement that much time be given as in the case of the fraudulent "faith-cure" workers of today.

Verse 30. *Virtue* is from DUNAMIS and is one of the words for "power." It says that Jesus knew of the virtue going out of him, not that he felt the

loss of the power. He knew it because he had divine knowledge of what was being done. His question was for a test of the woman, but the disciples thought it was for information.

Verse 31. *Thou seest the multitude* means that the whole crowd was touching him (see the comment on verse 24), and it seemed strange to them to ask such a question.

Verse 32. Jesus was continuing his test of the woman's trust in him.

Verse 33. The woman thought she had unintentionally committed some wrong. She came trembling and prostrate before Jesus and told him the truth.

Verse 34. The statement Jesus made to the woman denotes that it was not the contact with the garment that cured her, but the faith that was manifested by the act. *Go in peace* was said to assure her that she had not done anything wrong.

Verse 35. One miracle is no harder to perform than another but these people thought there was a difference. There are some things the Lord cannot do because they are not right, but no miracle is impossible merely because it is too hard.

Verse 36. Jesus overheard the word that was brought to the ruler, and he gave him an assurance of favor if he continued to have faith.

Verse 37. The group had neared the ruler's house when the message of death was brought. Jesus stopped the crowd at that place and permitted the trio of apostles to accompany him, the same ones specified on other occasions (Matthew 17: 1; 26: 37).

Verse 38. When Jesus arrived at the house a tumultuous crowd had gathered and the people were weeping and wailing as was the custom upon a death in a home.

Verse 39. *Not dead, but sleepeth*. This is figurative language, and the reader is cited to the comments on this subject at Matthew 9: 24.

Verse 40. They laughed at Jesus because they did not understand the two kinds of language. No reason is stated for putting the group out of the house, but it was appropriate to treat the people so in view of the hasty and undignified attitude they showed toward Jesus. He then took the parents of the girl, together with the three apostles, and entered the room where the body lay.

Verse 41. Jesus took the damsel by

the hand because it was his plan in this case. However, that fact alone was not the power that was to bring the dead to life, otherwise any man could bring a dead person to life again.

Verse 42. The girl was twelve years old and hence was able naturally to walk after her illness was gone. The astonishment was caused by the fact that a dead person had been brought back to life.

Verse 43. The Lord permitted Mark to record this case in his Gospel, hence there was nothing wrong in the case being known. But it was the practice of Jesus to be humble and not glory over his miraculous deeds, so he gave instructions frequently that people should not spread the report of what they had received.

MARK 6

Verse 1. *Open country* means that where Nazareth was located (Matthew 4: 13). The reference cited tells that Jesus adopted Capernaum as his residence and many of his mighty works were done there, but he occasionally paid a visit to his boyhood home. Let it be noted that his disciples (apostles) followed him to Nazareth.

Verse 2. *From whence hath this man these things.* Jesus had lived in this town until he was thirty years old and they were intimately acquainted with him. It had been but a little while since he went away, and when he came back and they saw his deeds and heard his teaching it was somewhat puzzling to them.

Verse 3. The remarks in this verse were said by way of assuring themselves of the identity of Jesus. A peculiar trait of the human mind has produced a well-known saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt." The citizens seemed to think that one with whom they were so intimately acquainted would be unable to accomplish such a great work. (For comments on *brethren* see Matthew 12: 46.)

Verse 4. In this verse Jesus merely states the fact commented upon in the preceding verse, without expressing any opinion on it either for or against.

Verse 5. *Could* is from *DUNAMAI* which Thayer defines, "to be able, have power," and he explains his definition, "whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances (emphasis mine, E. M. Z.), or by permission of law or custom." The words emphasized explain in what sense

Jesus could not do much in this place; the circumstances were unfavorable. The fact that he did heal "a few sick folks" shows it was no lack of ability in Jesus.

Verse 6. Jesus was divinely inspired and knew all that was in man, hence nothing could surprise him that was done by human beings. The word *marvel* means that Jesus took special note of the gross unbelief of the people of Nazareth and decided to go elsewhere to do his work.

Verse 7. This is sometimes referred to as "the first commission," in contrast with "the great commission" of chapter 16: 15, 16. The wisdom of working in pairs is shown by the plan Jesus used in this case. Paul frequently had one or more brethren with him as he went out into the field. *Power* is from *EXOUSIA* which means authority or right. It was fitting to use such a word because the unclean spirits were intelligent beings and could logically be addressed by commands.

Verse 8. The staff was a walking stick and would be needed from the start, hence they were permitted to provide that. A *scrip* was the same as a modern lunch basket. They were supposed to be given their necessities by the people among whom they worked on the ground that "the workman is worthy of his meat" (Matthew 10: 10).

Verse 9. Sandals were needed immediately, like the walking stick, therefore they were permitted to provide that before starting, and one coat was placed on the same basis.

Verse 10. They were to make only one house stop in each city.

Verse 11. Shaking off the dust was an old custom practiced to indicate a feeling of disgust against a person or place; I have no information as to its origin. *More tolerable . . . in the day of judgment*, not afterwards. To use some everyday language, some people will have a harder time in getting past the judgment than others. The reason is that some have more and better opportunities than others.

Verse 12. *They* means the twelve apostles who went out under the commission as stated in verse 7. Matthew 10: 7 tells us also that they preached the news that the kingdom of heaven was at hand and that repentance therefore was necessary.

Verse 13. They cast out devils by the power or authority that Jesus gave

them (verse 7), and performed the other miracles by the same means. Anointing with oil is connected with healing the sick. The significance of that is expressed by one writer by saying, "Its use implied that God was the healer." That is correct, but it does not explain how it does so. The idea is that oil of olives is no active medicine and could not effect a cure of sickness alone. The conclusion would be, then, that a greater power was working in connection with the oil. (See James 5: 14.)

Verse 14. This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. His remarks about Jesus are explained in the note at Matthew 14: 2 on "transmigration."

Verse 15. The writer interrupts his story of Herod to report what some others were saying about Jesus. The same is given in the conversation Jesus had with the apostles when they came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16: 13, 14).

Verse 16. This verse repeats verse 14 with the added statement that Herod beheaded John.

Verse 17. The persecution began with the imprisonment of John which was spite work, caused by Herodias whom he had unlawfully married, she being the wife of his brother.

Verse 18. John told Herod it was not lawful for him to have this woman. The law that he violated by that marriage is in Leviticus 18: 16; 20: 21.

Verse 19. John's rebuke especially angered Herodias who would have killed John if she could have done as she felt about it.

Verse 20. The original word for *feared* has a twofold meaning, depending on the way it is used. This entire verse shows a friendly attitude toward John hence it means that Herod respected him. It was this kind of fear that was in the way of the wicked designs of his wife. But as vicious a person as she can plot and accomplish her wickedness by indirect methods as we shall see.

Verse 21. *Convenient* is defined, "seasonable, timely, opportune." The verse means that Herod's birthday furnished a convenient time for the woman to carry out her plot.

Verse 22. Herodias knew the lustful character of Herod, a character that explains his willingness to take his own brother's wife unlawfully, and she therefore conceived a plan to capture him. She instructed her daughter

to go into the party and dance before the eyes of the men. It is not reasonable to suppose that Herod was a judge of "art" so that the performance of the girl impressed him from that standpoint. Besides, if that were his motive, just an expensive personal gift would have been all that she would have expected. The eastern dances were of a licentious character, displaying the figure in a way to appeal to the lustful eyes of the witnesses. Herod's baser nature was so inflamed that he exceeded all the customs and promised to give the girl anything she might ask.

Verse 23. The man was so overcome in his passion that he did not stop with a mere promise, but backed it up with an oath, and also specified the maximum limit to which she could go in her wish which was the half of his kingdom.

Verse 24. The damsel had accomplished the satanic effect that her mother planned, and she then went to her for further instructions, and was told to ask for the head of John the Baptist. This verse states the wish in general terms and the next will be more specific to suit the horrible designs of the revengeful woman.

Verse 25. Following her mother's instructions the girl came back into the presence of Herod and requested the head of John *in a charger* or large dish. By having the head in this way the wicked woman would know that she had been successful in her plot.

Verse 26. The king was sorry because he knew that John was a righteous man. But his pride of position under the eyes of the guests, together with a false notion of the sacredness of oaths, prevailed over his better judgment and feelings.

Verse 27. The executioner went to the prison and beheaded John, which was done with a sword, that being before the days of other mechanical means.

Verse 28. The head was brought in a large dish and given to the girl. That would seem to make the deal regular since she was the one who had earned the gift by her immoral performance. Of course she could do as she pleased with the award, hence she gave it to her mother who had plotted the affair.

Verse 29. *His disciples* means the disciples of John. All that was left for them to do was to give respectful and loving attention to the headless body.

I have been unable to find any information on what became of the head of this righteous man.

Verse 30. The apostles made this report under the commission of verses 7-13.

Verse 31. The crowds were so dense that it interfered with their meals. The people kept coming and going until Jesus instructed his disciples to get away for a while.

Verse 32. They slipped away from the crowd and took a boat for a desert place.

Verse 33. But they did not escape from the eyes of all the people. They saw and recognized Jesus and were determined not to let him get entirely from them. They could not follow him in boats, but went on foot with such speed that they were at the place ahead of him and met him as he landed.

Verse 34. *When he came out* denotes when he left the boat and came ashore. The compassion of the Lord was always one of his ruling principles. His opinion of this mixed throng that had come out of all cities is compared to a flock that has been deserted by the shepherd. Such a group of people would furnish the kind that was hungering and thirsting after righteousness (Matthew 5: 6), hence it says *he began to teach*.

Verse 35. The disciples finally became concerned about the comfort of the multitude. It was a desert place, which merely means it was not inhabited and hence contained no markets of any kind where food could be purchased.

Verse 36. They suggested that Jesus dismiss the people that they might go into the villages *round about* to buy some food, for they had not brought any such supplies when they came out there.

Verse 37. The disciples did not understand how Jesus meant for them to feed them.

Verse 38. These few loaves and fishes would not supply even a taste for all the multitude, but the lesson should be gathered that the Lord expects man to do what he can in accomplishing desired results.

Verse 39. *Sit down by companies* means to form groups for the orderly passing of food. *Green grass* does not grow where there never is any moisture, so the desert does not mean an infertile spot.

Verse 40. *By hundred and fifties*. This was according to the uneven condition of the land, making it more convenient to have smaller groups in some places and larger groups in others, adapting the size of the groups to the surface conditions.

Verse 41. Jesus blessed the bread by giving thanks to God for it. The reason for breaking the bread was the same for breaking it in the Lord's Supper, and that was only because more than one person was to partake of it. Jesus handed the pieces of bread to the disciples so they could serve the multitude.

Verse 42. Jesus did not satisfy their hunger by performing a miracle on their appetite, for it says they were all *filled*. The miracle was in multiplying the bread as it was being passed through the crowd.

Verse 43. Another proof that no miraculous effect was given to the bread so as to satisfy the hunger, is the fact that they found all these scraps left after the meal.

Verse 44. *Five thousand men*, and Matthew 14: 21 adds "besides women and children."

Verse 45. Bethsaida was a town of Galilee, and Jesus gave his disciples instructions that they were to return by boat to that region, while he remained to dismiss the people so they could return to their homes.

Verse 46. Having sent the multitudes away, Jesus retired to a mountain to pray.

Verse 47. The boat had been making its way for several hours until evening overtook it. Still later in the night a severe wind came down upon the sea, blowing against the boat so that the rowers were having difficulty with the vessel. Jesus saw the situation and went to their rescue the *fourth watch* which was 3 A. M.

Verse 48. While it was night, it was possible to discern a form coming towards them and they were frightened. They thought it was a *spirit* which is from PHANTASMA which means some kind of disembodied being with a visible form.

Verses 49, 50. The familiar words, "It is I; be not afraid," assured them of their safety.

Verse 51. The presence of Jesus in the boat had a quieting effect on the storm. The disciples were baffled by the event and overwhelmed by amazement.

Verse 52. *Heart was hardened* means it was stunned to the extent of inaction, forgetting for the time being that Jesus had only a few hours before fed the thousands.

Verse 53. Gennesaret was a narrow strip of country on the east shore of Galilee.

Verse 54. *They* means the people of Gennesaret who had seen Jesus before and knew about his great works of compassion on behalf of the unfortunate.

Verse 55. The people began at once to gather up the sick folks and carry them in beds to wherever they knew that Jesus was pausing.

Verse 56. *Streets* is from a word that means marketplaces, not an ordinary thoroughfare as one might think. They were centers where people in all the walks of life gathered, and they expected Jesus to be there a part of the time. When he did come he was requested to let the sick people touch his clothing. Such a request was a sign of their faith and Jesus rewarded it by healing them of their diseases.

MARK 7

Verse 1. The Pharisees were a religious sect of the Jews, and the scribes were those whose business it was to copy the law of Moses and expound it unto the people. Both of these groups were constant foes of Jesus because he rebuked their hypocrisies.

Verse 2. These people were always watching to find a cause of complaint. They thought they had found something when they saw the disciples eating without washing.

Verse 3. This did not refer to ordinary cleansing but to a tradition of the elders.

Verse 4. The tradition required that they wash their hands as a ceremony under certain conditions, regardless of whether the act was necessary or not.

Verse 5. They based their criticism on the fact that the disciples had disregarded the tradition of the elders, not that they had gone contrary to the rules of sanitation.

Verse 6. Jesus directly called those people hypocrites and said that Esaias (Isaiah) had prophesied about them. They spoke one way and their heart was interested in another.

Verse 7. Regardless of the apparent goodness of the worship that is offered to God, if it is based on the command-

ments of men the worship is vain or useless.

Verse 8. A person would have the privilege of maintaining his own notions about such things as ceremonial washing of hands and service vessels, provided that was as far as it went. But these people exalted those practices above the commands of God, even to the extent of substituting them for the divine law.

Verse 9. *Full well* applies to the truthfulness of the statement and not to what the Pharisees were doing; truly, ye reject, etc. *That ye may keep* denotes they could not keep such traditions as theirs in the way they desired without disregarding the commandments of the Lord.

Verse 10. The kind of traditions Jesus was condemning is specified in this and a few following verses. First, he cited one of the positive commandments God gave through Moses, that a man should honor his parents. And this honor included the obligation of administering to their needs.

Verse 11. *Corban* is defined in the lexicon, "a gift offered to God." These Pharisees pretended to have put their money into the Lord's treasury instead of using it to provide some benefit for their parents.

Verse 12. On the pretense that they had put their money into the treasury, they claimed exemption from considering their parents as dependents.

Verse 13. In the aforesaid practice they made their traditions more important than the inspired law that had been delivered to them by the hand of Moses.

Verse 14. Jesus next turned his attention to the people in general. He wished them not to misunderstand what he had said about washing the hands.

Verse 15. He did not mean to belittle the importance of cleanliness. The Pharisees were dealing with the subject in a ceremonial way only, as if the soil on one's hands would cause some moral or spiritual bad effect. Jesus was denying that and then stating what would in reality defile one. This is as far as he went in his explanation to "the people." (See the reason why at Matthew 13: 11.)

Verse 16. This means for every man to use his opportunities for hearing the truth.

Verse 17. After getting to themselves, the disciples asked Jesus to

explain the parable to them. He did so as explained by the note cited at verse 15.

Verse 18. Jesus repeated the statement about the outward filth entering a man.

Verse 19. The reason it does not defile a man is because it is not retained, but is eliminated from the body along with other waste matter. A *draught* was similar to our modern sanitary stool.

Verse 20. The mere fact of its coming out is not what defiles a man. The idea is that such things as will soon be named are what makes a man defiled, and the issuing forth of them reveals what the defilements are.

Verse 21. The things named in this and the following verse are not done "on the spur of the moment," but are the deliberate intentions of the heart, and that is why they are said to defile a man. *Adulteries* can be committed first in the heart (Matthew 5: 28). Fornication is virtually the same in the eyes of the Lord, but human laws make a difference and the scripture condemns both so there will be no doubt. *Murder* is taking human life unlawfully after it has been premeditated which is done in the heart.

Verse 22. A man does not *steal* accidentally but plans to do it. *Laciviousness* is filthy desire and they are begun in the heart. *An evil eye*. Thayer says, "Since the eye is the index of the mind, the following phrases have arisen," then he includes the one italicized. *Blasphemy* is wicked speech that is prompted by the heart.

Verse 23. These things defile a man because they corrupt his heart and then his life through the manner of conduct they induce him to practice.

Verse 24. Jesus left the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee and went on across the country to that lying near the Mediterranean Sea in which were the cities of Tyre and Sidon. He wished to have some privacy and entered into a house for that purpose. *Could not be hid*. Jesus did not wish to be always performing miracles to accomplish his purposes, but often took the same course that other men would take under the same circumstances. In the present case the shelter of a house was not enough to hide him.

Verse 25. This woman's daughter had an *unclean spirit* which means was possessed with a devil. This daughter was *young* and ordinarily would not be unrighteous in her man-

ner of life, but the possession of a devil was an affliction and not a fault.

Verse 26. In the time of Christ all persons who were not Jews were regarded as Gentiles whatever their nationality might be, hence this woman being Greek is rendered Gentile in the margin. By nation she was a Syro-phenician which is a compound word meaning a mixture of the Phoenician and Syrian territories. The writer mentions this as an explication of the attitude that Jesus at first maintained in testing her faith.

Verse 27. The Greek word for *dog* is not the one ordinarily used for that animal, but one that Thayer defines as "a little dog." It refers to a creature that would be like a child's pet and allowed to play about the table while its master was eating. The crumbs that fell would not be denied the dog and the circumstance was used for an illustration. Jesus purposely used that story to suggest the humble speech the woman made.

Verse 28. The woman did not resent the comparison, but was willing to accept the temporal healing of her daughter as crumbs, and leave the bread of the Lord's teaching to the children of his Father's family, namely, the Jews.

Verse 29. The woman said just what Jesus wished her to say, and as a reward he assured her that the devil had been driven out of her daughter.

Verse 30. She found it as Jesus stated upon her return home. After such an experience as the girl had suffered (Matthew 15: 22 says she was "grievously vexed"), she would be somewhat prostrated, so the mother found her daughter lying on a bed.

Verse 31. Decapolis was a region on the east side of the Jordan. So Jesus left the western part of Palestine, crossed the country and over Jordan and on to the coast of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 32. This man was suffering with a bodily ailment of his hearing, and that had caused him to be defective in his speech. People learn to talk from childhood by hearing others, and if they cannot hear they may not learn to talk.

Verse 33. This physical contact was the plan that Jesus saw fit to use in this case, not that he could not have healed the man otherwise.

Verse 34. EPHPHATHA is a Greek word and the King James translators retained it in the text, then gave the definition of it which is the same that

is in Thayer's lexicon, namely, "be thou opened." *Looking up to heaven* indicated that he was looking to God for cooperation as he always worked as a partner with his Father.

Verse 35. As usual, the cure was *straightway* and not a prolonged affair.

Verse 36. *Charged them tell no man*. Jesus did not want the people to think that he was working miracles just with the motive of becoming famous.

Verse 37. The proof these people had that Jesus did all things well was the fact that visible changes came to the man with whom they were so well acquainted.

MARK 8

Verse 1. Jesus did many of his works through cooperation with his disciples.

Verse 2. The compassion of Jesus was caused by the lack of food among the multitudes. That would be emphasized by the motive that had kept them there for three days, which was that they might hear the teaching He was giving.

Verse 3. For comments on this verse see those on Matthew 15: 32.

Verse 4. It is strange the disciples forgot the occasion of chapter 6: 35-44.

Verse 5. Jesus never had to ask questions for information (John 2: 24, 25), but he often asked them as a means of drawing the disciples into the matter at hand, to let them feel a sense of responsibility concerning the welfare of others.

Verse 6. They were to sit down for the sake of orderliness. The bread was first handed to the disciples who then *did set* ("place near"—Thayer) the bread before them.

Verse 7. *He blessed* is equivalent to "gave thanks" in the preceding verse.

Verse 8. Having the baskets of scraps left denoted that their being filled was not just an imagination. This is especially significant in view of the fact that they had been fasting for three days and must have been very hungry.

Verse 9. Matthew 15: 38 says this many men besides women and children.

Verse 10. After dismissing the people Jesus got into a boat and came to the region of Dalmanutha, a town on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 11. It is honorable to ask questions for information, but the Pharisees asked them as a temptation of

Jesus, thus acting in their usual hypocritical manner.

Verse 12. *Sighed deeply* means Jesus made a deep groan over the perversity of those people. He did not consider them worthy of much attention. In Matthew 16: 4 he did tell them about Jonah, but that was not what they really wanted.

Verse 13. Leaving the crowd, Jesus again recrossed the sea.

Verse 14. They were about to enter a region where public markets were scarce at best, which ought to have prompted the disciples to make special provision for it. Jesus knew they had forgotten about it and used the circumstance to test them.

Verse 15. The disciples knew that the Pharisees and Herod were in an unfavorable light with Jesus, but they did not grasp the comparison that was made to leaven.

Verse 16. "A guilty conscience needs no reproach" is an old saying, and it about describes the state of mind the disciples were in. There was scarcely any connection between what Jesus said and the fact of their having forgotten to take bread.

Verse 17. They had done their reasoning to themselves but Jesus knew about it and rebuked them for their dullness of heart which almost amounted to unbelief.

Verse 18. This verse means they did not use their faculties to arrive at just conclusions, even when they had visible facts on which to base their reasoning.

Verses 19, 20. To show that it was not a lapse in their memory, Jesus specified that part of the previous feedings that especially demonstrated the greatness of the miracle (the amount of scraps left) and they remembered both instances.

Verse 21. Jesus rebuked them with a question as to their understanding. Matthew 16: 12 states that the disciples then did understand what Jesus meant by leaven.

Verse 22. The request for Jesus to touch the man showed their faith in his power.

Verse 23. Jesus anointed the man with saliva and touched his eyes.

Verse 24. Men looked like trees walking to this man; that is, he saw that much but the vision was indistinct.

Verse 25. Jesus next touched the man's eyes and he saw clearly. This

circumstance has been referred to by some as an answer to our claim that miraculous cures were instantaneous. But it is no valid argument, for Jesus just saw fit to perform two miracles, and each was instantaneous. To be like the modern so-called miracles, the man should have been receiving repeated treatments and the sight returning gradually, little by little, until he could see clearly. Instead, as soon as Jesus touched the man's eyes the first time he could see objects. Had nothing more been done he would always have seen that well. So that each of the miracles was complete and instantaneous.

Verse 26. See the comments on Mark 7: 36 for the present verse.

Verse 27. The origin of the name Caesarea Philippi is explained at Matthew 16: 13. The question Jesus asked his disciples was for the introduction to the more important subject of the faith they had in him.

Verse 28. These opinions were based on the doctrine called "transmigration," which is explained by a note at Matthew 14: 2.

Verse 29. *Whom say ye* was addressed to all the apostles, but Peter usually was the spokesman and he made the confession of faith on behalf of the others.

Verse 30. This charge was not like the one in verse 26 and others as it had nothing directly to do with his miracles. It meant that it was not time to "release" the fundamental claim of his divinity to the whole world.

Verse 31. It was near enough to the end to introduce the sad information of how Jesus was to be treated by the Jewish leaders. This one verse covers the persecution, death and resurrection of Jesus. But it seems that Peter noticed only the bad part of it and overlooked the glorious assurance of the resurrection. Doubtless that was because he was still under the delusion that Jesus was to set up an earthly kingdom, which he could not do if he died a violent death.

Verse 32. With that error in mind Peter spoke against the prediction of Jesus.

Verse 33. Satan accomplished his purpose in the garden by contradicting the saying of God. Peter contradicted the statement of Jesus and hence he called him by that name. *Savour'est* means to be interested in a thing, and Jesus meant that Peter was

interested in a temporal kingdom instead of the spiritual kingdom of God.

Verse 34. *Cross* is used figuratively and means that following Christ requires one to make sacrifices. Many things must be denied to a man who tries to serve Jesus.

Verse 35. Two kinds of life are considered in this verse. The passage would read that whoever seeks to save his temporal life at the expense of righteousness will lose his spiritual life. And of course the opposite is true of the man who puts spiritual things above everything else.

Verse 36. *Profit* means to obtain from an investment more than was put into it. If a man buys the whole world with the price of his soul he will be a loser, for the price paid is many times more valuable than the thing purchased.

Verse 37. This verse has the same thought as the preceding but with a different figure. It is compared to a man pawning his soul for the pleasures of this world. When he would wish to redeem his soul from the "pawn shop" of the world he will not be able because the things of the world will then be gone out of existence.

Verse 38. *Whosoever therefore*. Since a wasted life will have nothing with which to redeem the soul, it is folly to disregard Jesus (be ashamed of him) in this world. Such a man will be disregarded by Jesus when he is in his presence and that of his angels.

MARK 9

Verse 1. This statement of Jesus denotes that the kingdom of heaven was not yet set up, and also it was to come in the lifetime of some men then living. Since all of the people living then are dead, we know that the kingdom of heaven has been in existence for centuries and that much teaching on that subject today is false.

Verse 2. *Six days after* the conversation of the preceding verse is what is meant. These are the three apostles whom Jesus frequently took with him on special missions. To be transfigured means to take on another appearance.

Verse 3. White raiment indicates purity and heavenly splendor. A *fuller* is a cleanser of cloth and no man in that occupation could put a garment into the condition of whiteness that appeared upon the body of Jesus.

Verse 4. *Elias* is the same as *Elijah* of the Old Testament who went to

heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2: 11) and hence never died. Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament and died (Deuteronomy 34: 5). Peter, James and John had not died and were therefore still in the flesh. So at this event the three states of man were represented, the fleshly, the intermediate and the eternal.

Verse 5. Peter had a feeling of hospitality and wished to provide for the guests, which indicates they had the appearance of men who could be cared for in earthly housing.

Verse 6. *Wist* is an obsolete word meaning he knew not what to say, or, he did not realize what he was saying. *Sore afraid* means they were exceedingly amazed.

Verse 7. The announcement from the cloud was like the one heard at the baptism of Jesus except it had the words, *hear him*. The earthly work of Jesus was virtually completed and the authority of the Son of God over Moses and the prophets was thus announced in this important assembly.

Verse 8. The purpose of the visit of the special guests was accomplished, and when the apostles rallied from their amazement they noted the absence of Moses and Elias.

Verse 9. This vision was so special that the public in general was not yet ready for its announcement. (See the comments on chapter 8: 30.)

Verse 10. The restriction Jesus placed on them which was connected with the resurrection confused the apostles. They discussed the subject among themselves and then decided to ask Jesus a question.

Verse 11. The apostles did not realize that *Elias* was used figuratively only.

Verse 12. Jesus affirmed the prediction that *Elias* was to come *first* and *restore all things*, which means to get things in readiness for Christ.

Verse 13. Jesus then explained that the prediction had been fulfilled. This matter is explained in more detail at Matthew 17: 10-12.

Verse 14. *Came to his disciples* means the ones Jesus left waiting while he was in the mount. The scribes were generally at hand with their critical questions, and when they could not approach Jesus they contacted his disciples.

Verse 15. *The people* means the crowd in general who were usually in a favorable frame of mind toward

Jesus. Their attention was called to him and they were *greatly amazed* or surprised. But they were favorably impressed by his sudden appearance for they came and saluted him.

Verse 16. Jesus asked the scribes why they were questioning the disciples. As far as the text goes they never answered the question put to them by Jesus.

Verse 17. One of the multitude (not one of the scribes) announced to Jesus that he had brought his son unto him. That denotes that he came with his son expecting to meet Jesus. But as he was not with the disciples the father had turned the case over to them. A *dumb spirit* is stated because it had that effect on the boy. We know it does not literally mean the devil that was dumb for when Jesus commanded it to come out (verse 26) it *cried* which shows the spirit itself was not dumb.

Verse 18. These symptoms were the effects this particular spirit had on the boy. The possession of evil spirits did not always work the same, the reason for which is not made known in the text. The father then stated that the disciples could not cast the evil spirit out of his son.

Verse 19. This charge of faithfulness was meant for the disciples (Matthew 17: 20).

Verse 20. These terrible symptoms were the results of being possessed with a devil. The devils knew Jesus and feared him, but as a desperate piece of vengeance when this one saw Jesus he overcame the boy and inflicted the injuries mentioned.

Verse 21. This son had been possessed with the devil most of his life.

Verse 22. The child evidently would have lost his life had it not been for friends.

Verse 23. *All things are possible* as far as the Lord's power is concerned, but he does not bestow that power unless the case is regarded worthy, and that point is frequently (not always) determined by the degree of faith manifested.

Verse 24. *Believe* and *unbelief* seem like opposite terms. The man said he did believe, so the request meant that his faith should be made stronger.

Verse 25. Jesus did not want the commotion to become too great so he did his work promptly. The devils are intelligent beings is the reason the Lord could command them.

Verse 26. The spirit *cried* which shows it was not dumb, but it had produced dumbness at times in the boy. Having suffered these attacks from early childhood the boy was exhausted when the devil was cast out so that he appeared to be dead.

Verse 27. Jesus then cured the boy of his weakness so that he arose.

Verse 28. The disciples were baffled over their failure to cast out the devil, and when they had a chance alone they asked Jesus to explain this failure.

Verse 29. The account that Mark gives is very brief. For a fuller treatment of the subject see the text and my comments at Matthew 17: 20, 21.

Verse 30. This verse means that Jesus wished to have as much privacy as possible. His public work was about over and it was unnecessary to meet the public as he had.

Verse 31. Jesus warned his disciples of what was coming, and the same things had been prophesied in the Old Testament.

Verse 32. The language of Jesus was plain and he used words that were in common use. The reason the disciples did not understand them was their delusion of an earthly kingdom they thought he was going to set up.

Verse 33. Jesus did not need to ask questions for information (John 2: 25), but this was his way of bringing the subject before the disciples, for he knew they had been disputing about it as they were going to Capernaum.

Verse 34. *They held their peace* because they felt ashamed as well as surprised that he could read what had not been intended for him even to hear. They had an earthly form of kingdom in mind that Jesus was to set up, and were contending among themselves about who should be in the highest position as a member of it.

Verse 35. True greatness is the subject of this speech of Jesus. In earthly kingdoms it is usual for men to seek prominence and try to become great from the standpoint of authority over others. In the kingdom of heaven it is just the opposite of that. One reason is that this kingdom is an absolute monarchy, and in such a government any attempt of the citizens to attain to greatness in the nature of authority must be interpreted as an infringement upon the king.

Verse 36. This child was small for Jesus took him in his arms, after he

had placed him in full view of the apostles.

Verse 37. Receiving a little child in the name of Christ means to do so because of the comparison between them. A man who will do that is bound to have a humble attitude, and humility is what constitutes true greatness in the kingdom of Christ. *Receiveth not me, but him, etc.* This denotes the close association between Christ and his Father. No person can obtain any favor from one of them if he ignores the other.

Verse 38. We notice that no denial was made as to whether the man actually was casting out devils. The complaint was that he was not walking along bodily in the same crowd with Jesus and the twelve. John did not understand that only the apostles were required to "be with him" in that sense. (See chapter 3: 14.)

Verse 39. The fact the man was actually casting out devils proved that he was a true disciple. Had he been a mere pretender he would have failed as did the men reported in Acts 19: 13-16 who were brought to such shameful defeat.

Verse 40. There is no actual neutrality with regard to matters pertaining to Christ. A man may not be very active in an unrighteous life, but unless he is active in the service for Christ he is counted as being "on the other side" (Obadiah 11).

Verse 41. This is to be understood in the same light as verse 37.

Verse 42. When a man becomes like a little child he is then classed as a *little one* in the sense of the word here. This is evident from the truth that he can be *offended* which means to stumble or do wrong, and that is possible only with a person of responsible age and mentality.

Verse 43. *Offend* means to cause to stumble or do wrong. The hand is a valuable member of the body and is used to illustrate anything one might be cherishing but that causes him to do wrong. One would give up the hand if it became diseased and endangered the whole life of the man. Likewise, we should sacrifice any practice or associate however dear, if our spiritual welfare should be endangered by it. A description of *hell* as it is defined in the lexicon may be seen with comments on Matthew 5: 30.

Verse 44. All of the illustrations that are ever used here or elsewhere as to the duration of punishment, must

be interpreted to mean that the unsaved will be in punishment that will be conscious and endless. *Their worm dieth not* is commented upon by another writer in better language than I can produce as follows: "The awfully vivid idea of an undying worm, everlastingly consuming an unconsumable body." The reason the worm will not die is that the body will not be consumed, even though in the midst of an unquenchable fire, and hence there will always be something to keep the worm alive.

Verse 45. The foot is used instead of the hand, otherwise the lesson in this verse is the same as that in verse 48 on the subject of making self-denials.

Verse 46. *Worm dieth not* is explained at verse 44.

Verse 47. This is the same lesson as in verses 43 and 45.

Verse 48. See verse 44 for the explanation of this.

Verse 49. *Salted with fire*. Here we see fire used figuratively for salt. Salt, through its preserving qualities, tends to perpetuate an object brought into contact with it. It is thus connected with the fire of perdition because of the perpetual duration of that fire. Salt is used with the idea of perpetuation in Numbers 18: 19.

Verse 50. Just as salt is used to illustrate the perpetuation of the punishment of the wicked, so it also can preserve and perpetuate the good qualities of man. Jesus exhorted the disciples not to let the salt of their good lives lose its strength. They could have *peace one with another* by using the salt of brotherly love.

MARK 10

Verse 1. *Arose from thence* refers to Capernaum where Jesus had been teaching, and started on the journey toward Jerusalem. *By the farther side* is the same as saying *by way of* that region; the route traveled was along the eastern side of the Jordan. As usual, the crowds gathered about Jesus and he taught them.

Verse 2. In Matthew's account of this conversation (chapter 19: 3) the Pharisees add the words "for every cause." Mark says they asked the question for the purpose of tempting Jesus. They hoped he would say something that would disagree with the law and thus give them an occasion for accusing him.

Verse 3. Instead of answering di-

rect, Jesus asked them to repeat the law of Moses on the subject of the question they professed to have in mind.

Verse 4. They stated the law correctly as far as they went, and that law may be seen in Deuteronomy 24: 1.

Verse 5. Jesus did not deny their citation but explained the reason for the law; the people were not in the favorable attitude for the strictness of enforcement, and as an emergency some tolerance was extended to them.

Verse 6. Jesus also informed them that it was not always that way, and his teaching soon indicated that a return to the original ruling would be required after the kingdom of heaven was set up. The original order was that God made them *male and female*; singular on both sides, not male and females.

Verse 7. *For this cause* means for the cause soon to be stated, a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The word *cleave* means that he should join his body with hers in the fleshly relationship.

Verse 8. The result of that cleaving was to be that the two bodies would become one in the flesh. Not only would they be one flesh at the time of the union, but it was to be permanent, for it says they would be *no more twain, but one flesh*.

Verse 9. It says that God joined these two, and that was because the ordinance was authorized of God. The fleshly union made them one and the unfaithfulness of either would be the way that the union could be *put asunder*.

Verse 10. The disciples wished to have further information.

Verse 11. The wish was granted by the statement of this verse. The simple fact of divorcing a wife does not constitute adultery, but the remarriage to another (except when the wife has been unfaithful, Matthew 19: 9) does.

Verse 12. The same rule applies to a wife that does to a husband.

Verse 13. It is natural for people to want their children admired and even to be fondled. These children were brought to Jesus for that purpose, and it is not any surprise that such a desire would exist, especially in view of the importance of this great "friend of man." The disciples evidently thought that Jesus had more important things to do than to notice children.

Verse 14. Jesus overheard the objections of his disciples and concluded it was an appropriate time to give them a lesson touching the principles of his kingdom soon to be set up. *Of such* should be noted, for it is very significant. Little children were not to become members of the kingdom, for they do not need it. The point is that the spirit of those who are acceptable members of the kingdom of heaven must become like that of a little child.

Verse 15. *Receive the kingdom of God as a little child* means they must become as the child in spirit, otherwise they will not be welcomed into the kingdom.

Verse 16. Jesus then gave an example of his own teaching by taking the children in his arms and bestowing upon them a caressing touch. *Blessed them* means he pronounced his good wishes upon them.

Verse 17. The teaching of Jesus had given the impression that something special would be required in order to have eternal life. No doubt this man (who Matthew says was young, chapter 19: 20) sincerely desired eternal life, but he had no idea what he would be required to do in obtaining it.

Verse 18. *None good but one* is explained at Matthew 19: 17.

Verse 19. These six commandments of the Decalogue are the ones that pertain to man's dealing with man. Jesus knew that in this man's case the extra law he would give would also be in that class.

Verse 20. The man claimed to have kept all of these and Jesus did not deny it.

Verse 21. A part of Thayer's definition of the original for *love* is "to regard the welfare of." Knowing the situation with the young man, Jesus considered that his spiritual welfare was at stake. He decided to show him what would be necessary to assure him of that welfare, which was to dispose of his riches.

Verse 22. The man's attachment to his riches was the occasion of this grief.

Verse 23. *How hardly shall they . . . enter the kingdom of God.* The reader should see the comments covering this whole event at Matthew 19: 20-27.

Verse 24. The words *trust in riches* gives the key to this subject, which is expressed also by Paul in 1 Timothy 6: 17, and is virtually the same as "the love of money" in the same chapter and verse 10.

Verse 25. This needle is explained in the comments cited in verse 23.

Verse 26. The disciples were taking a purely physical view of the subject.

Verse 27. With God all things are possible as far as power is concerned.

Verse 28. *Have left all* meant they had literally left their homes in order to travel with Jesus in his journeys through the country.

Verse 29. Many things had to be left behind if they went with Jesus in this kind of a journey, for they would have been encumbrances to the work.

Verse 30. *Now in this time* refers to the life on earth with these apostles, but after their bodily association with Jesus had been fulfilled. They were to have their homes and families for their personal use again (such as Peter rejoicing his wife, 1 Corinthians 9: 5), but would be required to endure persecutions for the sake of their religion. *World to come* means the age after the judgment in which the righteous will enjoy eternal life.

Verse 31. This important language is commented upon at Matthew 19: 30.

Verse 32. Jesus had told his disciples that he was to be mistreated (chapter 8: 31), and they seemed to think he should not voluntarily go to Jerusalem. When they saw that he was even foremost in the journey they were amazed. Although they followed along after him they were under a feeling of terror.

Verse 33. Instead of trying to lessen their fears by painting the picture in some favorable colors, Jesus repeated what he had said to them before. *Deliver him to the Gentiles* was to be because the Jews could not execute the death sentence.

Verse 34. Jesus usually included the resurrection in his predictions of his death.

Verse 35. This request was for the sake of James and John, but Matthew 20: 20, 21 states that their mother made the plea to Jesus.

Verse 36. The Lord knows what we need or want before we ask him, but he desires that we ask him (Matthew 6: 8).

Verse 37. This request was based on their idea of an earthly kingdom.

Verse 38. The disciples did not realize what was involved in their request. They thought only of the glory that was supposed to come upon those in positions of authority in the kingdoms of the world. The cup and bap-

tism that Jesus mentioned were figurative, referring to the trials that were in store for those who were associated with Christ in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 39. Without realizing what it meant, the disciples indicated they were ready to accept the cup and baptism. Even in a spiritual kingdom, such a cup and baptism as Jesus meant were to be expected, hence he told them they would have that experience.

Verse 40. *Is not mine to give* is explained at Matthew 20: 23.

Verse 41. The other apostles were displeased with James and John. It evidently was because of their desire to be seated above the others in places of authority.

Verse 42. Jesus found it necessary so many times to explain the fundamental difference as to true greatness between his kingdom and those of the world. In them the strongest are the ones who exercise the rule of authority and domination.

Verses 43, 44. It was to be the opposite of that in the kingdom of heaven. In it the truly greatest citizens will be the ones who render the most service to others.

Verse 45. The principle of service as a sign of true greatness was practiced by the Son of man notwithstanding he was to be the king. He devoted his life on earth to service unto others, then crowned that service by giving his life for the benefit of the whole world that all might be saved who would serve him.

Verse 46. Jesus came to Jericho after crossing the Jordan on the way to Jerusalem. As he and his disciples with a great number of other people were leaving that city, they passed a blind beggar sitting by the wayside.

Verse 47. This man had been asking for the necessities of life only, for he did not expect any of the people to be able to do anything for his blindness. But the fame of Jesus had reached his ears, and learning that he was passing by it prompted him to ask for a more important favor.

Verse 48. The crowd thought the blind man was interrupting the work of Jesus, but he was made more persistent by the attempt to quiet him.

Verses 49, 50. Whoever was given the command to call the blind man gave him a kindly greeting. Upon information that Jesus had heard his plea he arose and went to him. He

cast away his outer garment that he might move more easily.

Verse 51. Jesus knew the nature of the man's affliction, but wished him to express his request as an indication of his faith. (See comments at verse 36).

Verse 52. For the sake of his faith the Lord granted the unfortunate man his sight. Notice that it was *immediately* as all truly miraculous cures were done.

MARK 11

Verse 1. The mount of Olives was near Jerusalem (Acts 1: 12) and the towns named were on or near the mount. They are mentioned to indicate how "nigh" they were.

Verse 2. Jesus usually traveled on foot, and being so near the city he would not change his mode of travel just from being tired. But he wished to prepare for the fulfilling of a certain prophecy by procuring this animal. He instructed his disciples to bring him a colt tied in a nearby village, one that had never been "broke to ride."

Verse 3. They were given the authority to take the colt, equipped with the all-sufficient explanation to its owners that *the Lord hath need of him*.

Verse 4. They found the colt tied at an intersection of two streets, or rather, where they came together as "a fork in the road."

Verse 5. The inquiry was made of them that Jesus had anticipated. It was quite natural to ask for an explanation when others besides the owners were taking possession of this untrained colt.

Verse 6. Their explanation was accepted as Jesus said it would be.

Verse 7. *Brought the colt . . . he sat upon him*. Jesus rode the mother of the colt also although Mark does not say so. For an explanation of this subject see the comments on Matthew 21: 5.

Verse 8. When a dignitary was approaching, it was customary to make a carpet on which he might proceed. These people did so with the materials at hand, namely, their outer garments. Some found the *branches* or leaves of palm trees to use for a carpet.

Verse 9. *Hosanna* is defined in the comments on Matthew 21: 9.

Verse 10. *Our father David*. These people were Jews who had come to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover. They were acquainted with

the prophecies that David was to have a descendant who was to sit on his throne and here recognized Jesus as that person. (See Psalms 132: 11).

Verse 11. This verse mentions only in general terms the visit of Jesus to the temple. In Matthew 21: 12, 13, is the account of his casting out the moneychangers, and it is also mentioned in verse 15 of this chapter. Having purged the temple, Jesus went out to the nearby village of Bethany to stay over night.

Verse 12. In the morning they returned from Bethany and Jesus became hungry.

Verse 13. See the comments at Matthew 21: 19 for the explanation of the fig tree.

Verse 14. *No man eat fruit of thee* is the curse pronounced upon the fig tree.

Verse 15. This verse describes what is referred to at verse 11 and in the passage in Matthew. The chronological order of the events is not quite the same in Mark as it is in Matthew, but the facts are the same so that no contradiction exists.

Verse 16. This verse means Jesus stopped all commercial activities in the temple.

Verse 17. The place where this saying is written is Isalah 56: 7. Jesus called it a *den of thieves* because they were taking advantage of the situation to charge undue fees for their transactions; they were profiteering.

Verse 18. The scribes and chief priests *feared him* in the bad sense of that word. They were afraid of an uprising among the people if they did any harm to Jesus.

Verses 19, 20. On the return to Jerusalem they observed the fig tree that Jesus had cursed. So completely did this "curse" affect the fig tree that it had withered from its top to its roots.

Verse 21. Peter called the attention of Jesus to the fig tree, evidently in a manner that indicated his astonishment.

Verse 22. The first reply of Jesus was that it requires faith in God.

Verse 23. No miracles were performed by Jesus or his apostles for the mere gratification of curiosity, or just to make a show of power. If any good reason appeared for removing a mountain in this way it could be done, for one miracle is as easy as another as far as power is concerned.

Verse 24. Even miracles that are right and needed cannot be performed without the proper degree of faith. (See Matthew 17: 19-21.)

Verse 25. The word *stand* does not refer to the posture of the body, but is a term that applies to the established practice of praying. Besides, the things Jesus instructs to be done in connection with praying to God are just as necessary in any other position of the body as they are in that of standing.

Verse 26. The duty of forgiving others in connection with our plea for pardon, mentioned in this and the preceding verse, is taught in Matthew 6: 12-15.

Verse 27. The old foes of Jesus were these men who met him in the temple.

Verse 28. *These things* means the driving of the moneychangers out of the temple.

Verses 29-33. For an explanation of this passage see Matthew 21: 24-27.

MARK 12

Verse 1. See the comments at Matthew 13: 3 as to the right use of Parables. For other comments as to the householder see Matthew 21: 33.

Verse 2. *At the season*. It takes time to produce fruit, hence the householder did not expect any products until the proper time when he sent a special servant for them.

Verses 3-5. This refers to the mistreatment that the Jews showed to the prophets and other righteous teachers who were sent among them by the Lord.

Verse 6. Jesus was a Jew who was sent to that nation as the rightful heir of all his Father's possessions, and he should have been received with great respect.

Verse 7. Being the heir, if he could be removed there would seem to be no one to claim the property, hence the workers planned to make away with him.

Verse 8. The wicked workers carried out their plot and slew the son of the householder, which refers to the treatment that Jesus was soon to receive at the hands of the wicked Jews.

Verse 9. According to Matthew's account (chapter 21: 40, 41), this answer to the question of Jesus was made by the Jews. Having in mind some literal case of an earthly vineyard, they answered correctly, not realizing that their own answer would

condemn them for their wicked attitude towards the servants of God.

Verses 10, 11. Jesus began opening their understanding of the parable by referring to a prediction in the Old Testament.

Verse 12. They doubtless were aware of this statement and must have begun to see the light that was exposing them. But they were restrained from doing anything to Jesus because of their fear of public sentiment that was favorable to him.

Verse 13. *Herodians* were a family party among the Jews who favored the Romans. This is described more extensively in the comments on Matthew 22: 16.

Verse 14. After some expressions of pure flattery these hypocrites came out with their question. They had the delusion that the kingdom which Jesus was soon to set up would be a temporal one, and hence a rival of the Roman Empire. In that case he would logically disapprove of any financial support of Caesar. If they could get him to say so, they would have a basis for accusing him of being an enemy of the lawful government.

Verse 15. Knowing their hypocrisy, Jesus did not answer directly by "yes" or "no," but asked to see a piece of money.

Verse 16. The coins of about all countries have the image of some important person on them, and also some saying or motto is inscribed thereon. Jesus took the critics by surprise by asking to whom the coin belonged. They answered correctly that it was the property of Caesar. Incidentally, this very coin was the kind that was used in paying the tribute to Caesar's government.

Verse 17. Anyone would have to say it is right to give back to a man that which is rightfully his. They just had said the coin belonged to Caesar, so it was natural that Jesus would tell them to give it back to him. In so doing they would be performing the very thing they asked Jesus if it was lawful to do. *They marveled* means they were amazed and so stunned that they had nothing more to say.

Verses 18-23. To save space let the reader see comments on Matthew 22: 23-28.

Verses 24, 25. For the explanation of this paragraph see Matthew 22: 29, 30.

Verse 26. *Book of Moses* is so called

because God inspired him to write it. God declared himself to be the God of these patriarchs whom the Sadducees professed to love.

Verse 27. God is not a God of the dead (which these Sadducees as well as everyone else admitted), yet these patriarchs had been in their graves for centuries. That proves there is something in man that lives after the body is placed in the grave.

Verse 28. In Matthew's account of this conversation (chapter 22: 34-40) it is stated that the purpose of this question was to tempt Jesus, while the present passage says nothing about that. Instead, the latter part of the conversation indicates a favorable attitude toward Jesus. Both phases of it are true and explainable on a reasonable basis. After the scribe put the tempting question to Jesus, the reply was so unanswerable that he was drawn over to the better view of it and brought forth the good remarks reported of him. The question asked of Jesus was unfair because no one of God's commands is any more important or greater than another.

Verse 29. The one great difference would be the contrast between God and man. Logically, then, a command to love God would come first in the sense of priority.

Verse 30. This command requires that God shall be loved with all the powers of man.

Verse 31. The preceding command is first in priority, but the second one is like it in the sense of authority that is back of it.

Verse 32. The scribe was affected by the answer of Jesus and verified it. He went farther and stated the reason why we should love the Lord wholeheartedly, and that was because there is only one God.

Verse 33. The scribe summed up in this verse what constitutes the entire Decalogue, in that he cites the two commandments on which all the law and prophets hung (Matthew 22: 40). The reason he assigned for his conclusion was that it was better than burnt offerings. A man might offer whole droves of animals for the outward show, but not actually be moved by genuine love for God or man.

Verse 34. The kingdom of God had not been set up when this conversation took place, hence no actual distance could exist between it and any person as to specific items required

for entrance into it. But the scribe expressed a principle of life that was so different from that of the Pharisees, that Jesus meant he was advocating ideas that were much like what would be required of persons in the kingdom when it did become a fact on earth. This conversation silenced the critics so that none of them asked Jesus any more questions.

Verse 35. Many of the Jews admitted that Christ was an actual descendant of David according to the flesh, but denied that he was divine or related to him spiritually.

Verse 36. Jesus then quoted Psalms 110:1 where David referred to him as "my Lord."

Verse 37. The question put to them was how Christ could be both a son of David and also his Lord. *Common people* has been referred to from a sentimental motive as if it was a contrast between the humble folks and the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. We may say these people were of that type if we offer our remarks as a comment, but the word does not mean that. It is from *POLOS* which means "the masses."

Verse 38. *Long clothing* was worn to attract attention and obtain special salutations in public such as the market places where many people resorted.

Verse 39. *Chief seats* means the front pews that faced the audience, and uppermost *rooms* at feasts means the highest seats, those that gave an advantage of display.

Verse 40. *Devour widows' houses* means they took advantage of them to obtain their property. For more detailed comments on this verse see the comments on Matthew 23:14.

Verse 41. This money was a voluntary offering made for the upkeep of the temple. The rich cast in *much* in actual count of the money.

Verse 42. This widow cast in *two mites* instead of "one" as generally stated.

Verse 43. Jesus stated in literal language what he meant comparatively.

Verse 44. Jesus explained his statement to mean that the widow made the sacrifice in that she gave all that she had. The rich gave much and yet had much left and hence did not make any sacrifice.

MARK 13

Verse 1. The Jews admired the temple because of its apparent firmness, being remodeled and reinforced

through forty and six years of work (John 2:20).

Verse 2. Notwithstanding the seeming indestructible form of the building, Jesus predicted that the time was coming when it not only would be wrecked, but the destruction would be so great that all the stones would be scattered out over the ground.

Verse 3. The mount of Olives was near Jerusalem (Acts 1:12), and Jesus went from the temple to that place and sat down. The usual trio of disciples, Peter, James and John, was joined by Andrew, and they asked Jesus privately for information.

Verse 4. The subject matter of this and the remaining verses of the chapter is the same as that in Matthew 24. It has been dealt with in much detail at that place and the reader is urged to consult those comments. In view of saving space, the comments in the present chapter will be brief and the reader may supplement the information obtained in this chapter with the more exhaustive remarks in Matthew.

Verse 5. The false prophets would purposely confuse the destruction of Jerusalem with the second coming of Christ, and he warned his disciples to beware.

Verse 6. It was known that a great person to be hailed as the Christ was predicted by the prophets, and these impostors would take advantage of the disturbed conditions to make a claim to the prophecy before the readers of the Old Testament.

Verse 7. These *Wars* were the conflicts going on in the northern parts of Palestine and Syria between the Romans and Jews and other people.

Verse 8. The Roman Empire was made up of various small nations, and they were set in motion of war activities against each other by the general disturbance between the Romans and Jews. *Beginnings of sorrows* is commented upon in Matthew 24:8.

Verse 9. *They shall deliver you up* refers to the false teachers who were to come among the people. When the disciples resisted they were persecuted and put to death.

Verse 10. By the time the wars ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel was preached in all the countries of the world. (Romans 10:18.)

Verse 11. The apostles were assured of moral and spiritual victory even though they were brought before the

courts. The things necessary to be said would be given them by inspiration from the Father.

Verse 12. These family troubles would be caused by the fact that some of the members would be true followers of Christ and others would not. (Matthew 10: 34-37.)

Verse 13. *All men* would hate the true disciples for the same reason that their own family relations would turn against them. *Endure unto the end* means to the end of the turmoil caused by the Jewish wars.

Verse 14. *Abomination of desolation* means the Roman army that was a heathen group. *Standing where it ought not* refers to the territory of Jerusalem which was considered as holy ground. *Flee to the mountains.* (See Matthew 24: 16.)

Verse 15. Houses had flat roofs and the buildings joined one against the other. The roofs were used in much the same way that a veranda is today. If a man was on the roof of his house when he saw the Roman army, he should go from one roof to another until he reached the wall of the city and then get down and flee.

Verse 16. The man in the field should not wait to recover anything.

Verse 17. A woman in the condition described here could not travel very well.

Verse 18. Winter would be a difficult time to travel, hence the prayer suggested.

Verse 19. See particularly the long historical quotation at Matthew 24: 21.

Verse 20. The elect means the people who had elected or chosen to serve the Lord. For their sake the Lord was going to bring an end to the Jewish wars.

Verse 21. The scene is changed here and Jesus is talking about his second coming. The disturbances of the Jewish war about Jerusalem would give a pretext for the false prophets to say it was the end of the world, and would announce some certain person to be the Christ who was predicted by the prophets.

Verse 22. *Signs and wonders* would be in the form of some kind of trickery, and even the elect (verse 20) would be deceived were they not warned beforehand.

Verse 23. This verse is to emphasize the warning already given.

Verses 24, 25. This paragraph is explained in detail at Matthew 24: 29.

Verse 26. *Then* means that after the long period of the Dark Ages which is the subject of the preceding paragraph, the next great event which the Lord was considering in this broad space of centuries was the second coming of the Son of man.

Verse 27. This verse denotes the day of judgment, when the heavenly reapers, the angels, would gather up the people of God from all over the world.

Verse 28. Jesus interrupts his main subject to make an illustration. People judge the nearness of summer by the appearance of the fig tree.

Verse 29. The presence of the Roman army and other conditions would indicate that the things predicted of Jerusalem were about to be fulfilled.

Verse 30. The original word for *generation* is defined, "all of the people living at one time." The persons living when Jesus was speaking would not all be dead before *these things* (the destruction of Jerusalem) would be fulfilled.

Verse 31. It was intended that the universe was to pass away, but the sayings of Christ were to hold firm until they had been fulfilled.

Verse 32. The verse corresponding with this in Matthew 24: 36 says nothing about the Son directly. Our present verse specifically mentions him and hence the comments here are to be more decisive than the ones at the former passage. But whether the Father has seen fit to tell him about it since then is another question.

Verse 33. If we are always watchful and living right, it will not matter when he comes, for we will be prepared to meet him with joy.

Verse 34. This short parable has the important lesson of the necessity of being faithful to the trust bestowed upon the servants of Christ.

Verse 35. The periods named are parts of the 24-hour day when people are usually the least active. That would be the special reason for being watchful.

Verse 36. *Coming suddenly* shows that the second coming of Christ will not be a drawn-out affair. That is taught also in 1 Corinthians 15: 52; 1 Thessalonians 4: 16.

Verse 37. The duty of being watchful is on the shoulders of everyone.

MARK 14

Verse 1. *After two days.* See the comments on Matthew 26: 2 on this unusual circumstance. *Passover and of unleavened bread.* The Passover was a day on which all leaven was put out of the houses, and the seven days following had the same restrictions.

Verse 2. The Jews were more concerned about the condition of society than they were about the killing of Christ, even though it might have been on a holy day.

Verse 3. See the comments on Matthew 26: 7 for the explanation of this verse.

Verse 4. The word *some* has specific reference to Judas (John 12: 4).

Verse 5. Judas pretended to be concerned about the poor, but his real motive was covetousness (John 12: 6).

Verse 6. *Good work* is explained at length at Matthew 26: 12.

Verse 7. *Poor with you always* denotes we will always have poor people with us.

Verse 8. *She hath done what she could* is a significant statement. No special amount of service is required of us but we are expected to do what we can for Christ.

Verse 9. This means that the deed of this woman would become a part of the Gospel record and hence would be mentioned wherever the sacred book went.

Verse 10. Judas was peeved because the ointment was "wasted" on Jesus and he conceived the idea of counteracting the deed through the cowardly betrayal.

Verse 11. By the transaction for money at the expense of the freedom of Jesus, the traitor hoped to "recover" what he thought was lost by the act of the woman.

Verse 12. It was the *first day of unleavened bread* for Jesus and his apostles. See again the comments on Matthew 26: 2.

Verse 13. The pitcher of water was merely an item by which the disciples were to contact the right man, who would be going to a certain house.

Verse 14. The man with the pitcher seems to have been used as a guide for the apostles. When they followed him into the house they were to speak next to the householder and ask to be shown the guestchamber to be used for the Passover.

Verse 15. The Lord had caused the

householder to have a room reserved for their use.

Verse 16. The preparation for the feast was done by the apostles.

Verse 17. Let it be noted that the twelve (apostles) were still with Jesus.

Verse 18. The prediction as to the one to betray Jesus was not made yet.

Verse 19. *They began . . . to say . . . Is it I,* which includes Judas, for had he not joined in the inquiry, his silence would have been significant.

Verse 20. The *dish* means the vessel containing the flesh of the lamb used in the Passover. It was customary to dip a piece of bread in the broth and then eat it. Jesus did this at the same time with Judas so as to answer the question they all had asked.

Verse 21. Judas refused to repent after his dark deed and therefore he went to perdition (John 17: 12). This is why Jesus said it would have been good for him not to have been born.

Verse 22. The events of this last night are not all given in any one place, and the ones that are given are not in chronological order. See the note and references on this point with the comments at Matthew 26: 20. I shall now comment on the verses as they appear in the present chapter. Jesus *blessed* the bread by giving thanks for it. He broke it as an act of decency because more than one person was to eat of it. Otherwise the breaking of it has no religious significance to us.

Verse 23. Instead of "blessing" the cup he *gave thanks*, which shows that the two terms mean the same and that nothing supernatural was done to the "emblems."

Verse 24. The Old Testament used the blood of beasts, while the blood of the New Testament is that of Christ. *Shed for many* which means the whole world, although many will reject its benefits through unbelief.

Verse 25. The passage cited at verse 22 shows that our present verse was spoken while they were still engaged in the Passover feast.

Verse 26. According to Thayer and Robinson this *hymn* was a Psalm of David.

Verse 27. *To be offended* denotes that one falters or stumbles in his devotions. The prediction quoted is in Zechariah 13: 7.

Verse 28. Jesus always included his resurrection in the predictions of his

death. He not only was to arise but would come into the presence of his apostles again.

Verse 29. Peter was always sincere in his general principles of life, but he was rash and did things from impulse as he did in this declaration.

Verse 30. Jesus was specific and predicted Peter's third denial would be before the second cock crowing.

Verse 31. This pointed prediction only caused Peter to be more positive in his assurance of faithfulness, even to the point of dying with Christ. The emphatic attitude of Peter seemed to stir up the others so that they agreed to the same promise of loyalty.

Verse 32. On this verse see the comments at Matthew 26: 36.

Verse 33. Leaving most of the apostles where they first paused, Jesus took with him Peter, James and John and went on into the garden. The humanity of his nature now began to manifest itself which caused him to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.

Verse 34. *Exceeding sorrowful unto death* is a highly-colored figure of speech, meaning he felt sad enough to die. Wishing for still more privacy he left them here.

Verse 35. Jesus went still farther from the three so as to be alone with his Father. He prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. This is the same prayer that is termed "cup" in Matthew 26: 39. The crucifixion was not to take place until the next day, so we know that the prayer about this "cup" and "the hour" could not refer to the cross. (See also the comments at Matthew 26: 39.)

Verse 36. This prayer had to do with the hour just commented upon.

Verse 37. Their sleeping was not from mere indifference. (See Luke 22: 45).

Verse 38. The flesh is what gave way and caused the apostles to fall asleep. Jesus admonished them to let their spirit or better part of their being have more influence over them and lead them into a more watchful attitude.

Verse 39. The prayer in this instance was the same as that in verses 35, 36.

Verse 40. *Eyes were heavy* because of their grief and worry over the situation.

Verse 41. Jesus had gone away the third time and now when he came back he found them sleepy as before.

In his great compassion he bade them go on and take a nap. But it was not for long because the mob was seen coming toward the garden.

Verse 42. Jesus then roused the apostles with the announcement that the one who was to betray him was at hand.

Verse 43. Jesus had no sooner said the words of the preceding verse than the mob approached with Judas in the lead. *Staves* is from a word that means "clubs," as if they were hunting for some hardened criminal who was a foe of society.

Verse 44. The sign agreed upon was a kiss and they were to watch for that demonstration. *Lead him away safely.* (See the comments at Matthew 26: 48.)

Verse 45. The mere act of kissing Jesus would have seemed too cold, hence Judas added warmth to the salutation by recognizing him as *Master*.

Verse 46. *They* means the mob composed of the chief priests and scribes.

Verse 47. The one who used the sword was Peter (John 18: 10). See the remarks that Jesus made to Peter and my comments on the same at Matthew 26: 52.

Verse 48. Jesus charged the mob with coming out against him as if he had been a thief who deserved to be taken with the unrefined weapons like clubs.

Verse 49. It was rather late for them to be showing such concern on behalf of public safety. Jesus was in the temple and other public places daily before this. When a dangerous person is at large (such as these clubs would imply), it is the custom not to "stand on ceremony" but to take such a person at once. Jesus then explained the seeming contradiction in their conduct by saying that it fulfilled the scriptures.

Verse 50. *They all* means the apostles. Seeing Jesus was being taken without any resistance, they concluded that all was lost and in their fright they fled.

Verses 51, 52. Mark is the only one of the writers who records this event. There is no information as to the identity of the young man. *Linen* is from the Greek word *SINDON* which Thayer defines, "thing made of fine cloth." He then explains it by saying, "so of a light and loose garment worn at night over the naked body." Robinson gives virtually the same definition and explanation as that of Thayer. That accounts for the fact that the young

man had nothing else on. It was night, and the commotion had attracted his attention so that without taking time to dress he went to the scene of excitement. The apostles had just fled while the young man still followed along after Jesus. The men of the mob thought he was sympathizing with Jesus and decided to arrest him. This frightened him so that he escaped by giving up his nightrobe.

Verse 53. The chief priests assembled to discuss what to do about the case.

Verse 54. Peter was afraid to be known as a friend of Jesus so he followed *afar off*.

Verse 55. *And found none* means they could not find anyone who was prepared to testify as they desired. They wanted to get some person to affirm some word or act of Jesus on which they could secure the death sentence.

Verse 56. There were plenty of men who would have been disposed to give such testimony, but since they were falsifying their statements did not agree and hence their pretended testimony was rejected.

Verse 57. Other pretended witnesses told what they had heard Jesus say.

Verse 58. A look at John 2: 19 will show how grossly these men falsified.

Verse 59. No wonder these so-called witnesses did not agree. When men conspire to bear false testimony they are sure to overlook something that will expose them.

Verse 60. The high priest was surprised that Jesus did not reply.

Verse 61. Jesus said nothing in reply to the falsehoods of these men; in that way he fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53: 7. The high priest then asked Jesus a question touching his personality which was the same as his divinity. That was important and we will see that he answered it.

Verse 62. Jesus not only answered the question of the high priest, but added a prediction that was in line with his divinity and authority as a king.

Verse 63. Decisions of the Sanhedrin were made by vote, supposed to be based on the testimony of valid witnesses. The statement of Jesus agitated the high priest so that he declared there was no need for witnesses.

Verse 64. The high priest called for the vote of the assembly and *they all*

condemned Jesus to death. This means that all who voted at all did so. There were some who did not take part in the voting (Luke 23: 50, 51).

Verse 65. The Jews could pass a sentence of death but could not execute it. But they gratified their wicked feeling against Jesus by gross personal mistreatment. The things they said and did to him would not be permitted today in any responsible court, regardless of what sentence might have been pronounced.

Verses 66, 67. The point to be noted is that being *with Jesus* was regarded as significant. Association indicates fellowship or participation.

Verse 68. Peter understood it that way, for he denied it very emphatically, then moved out farther in his fearfulness and stopped at the porch. At that instant the cock crowed the first time.

Verse 69. This maid spoke to the people standing by and not to Peter. She made the declaration on her own information (indicating Peter), "this is one of them."

Verse 70. Peter denied her statement which made his second denial. The next time it was the people standing near who made the statement, and they supported their claim by referring to the similarity of speech used by Peter and Jesus and his disciples.

Verse 71. *Curse and swear* are explained at Matthew 26: 74. This made the third time that Peter denied even knowing Jesus or having been with him.

Verse 72. Matthew says this second crowing was immediately after the third denial (chapter 26: 74). This fact, (together with the look that Jesus gave him, Luke 22: 61), recalled the specific prediction of Jesus about his denials. *When he thought thereon, he wept*, or, upon considering the whole event, he was overwhelmed with remorse. Matthew 26: 75 says "he went out and wept bitterly." The conduct of Peter was different from that of Judas. Both men were disappointed over the way matters were going with Jesus, and the things they had said or done. But Judas destroyed his own life while Peter repented through godly sorrow.

MARK 15

Verse 1. *In the morning* was the day after the scenes in the garden, and the meeting in the palace of the high priest. The Jews had gone as far as they could under the law, so the

next step was to take Jesus before Pilate who was the Roman governor.

Verse 2. To be a king under the Romans might imply some rivalry, but Pilate restricted his question to the Jews, which would not mean any necessary opposition to the law of the land. To the question of Pilate Jesus merely said *thou sayest it*.

Verse 3. To the accusation of the chief priest Jesus made no reply, not even to the extent of denying them, although they pertained to his alleged conduct.

Verse 4. Pilate called the attention of Jesus to the accusations, doubtless thinking that he had not noticed them, or at any rate had not observed the nature of them.

Verse 5. It is usual for a prisoner to deny the charges made against him, whether he cares to defend himself or not. Jesus did neither which caused Pilate to wonder.

Verse 6. It was customary to celebrate that feast with the release of a prisoner to be selected by the people, not the officers or priests.

Verse 7. Pilate knew about the situation, and he therefore was aware that Barabbas was a noted criminal whom no good society could tolerate.

Verse 8. While the governor was delaying his action the *multitude* began clamoring for him to follow up with the usual practice.

Verse 9. Pilate thought this would give him an opportunity of releasing Jesus without clearing him of the sentence the Sanhedrin had pronounced against him.

Verse 10. The chief priests had no voice in selecting the prisoner to be released. They had caused Jesus to be delivered into the hands of this court with an envious motive. In view of that, Pilate thought the people would take a better view of the case and call for the release of Jesus.

Verse 11. It is possible that they would have done so, had the chief priests not *moved* or influenced them to call for the release of Barabbas.

Verse 12. Pilate was evidently surprised at the selection of the people. If they were willing to have so wicked a prisoner as Barabbas turned loose upon the community, they certainly could not wish for anything severe to be done to as harmless a person as Jesus, hence he asked them directly for their verdict concerning him.

Verse 13. They cried out *again*. Mark does not tell of their having made this demand before, but Matthew 27: 21 gives that instance.

Verse 14. According to Mark's account the Jews would not state any *evil* against Jesus, but John 18: 30 reports that they accused him of being a "malefactor," which merely means an evildoer, so that they evaded the governor's question.

Verse 15. It was a practice of some of the courts to scourge a condemned prisoner before delivering him to the executioners. It was a harsh ordeal imposed on his bare body.

Verse 16. *The whole band* means a part of the army to be used as executioners.

Verse 17. Purple and scarlet were the royal colors, and this kind of robe was put on Jesus in mockery. The crown of thorns was for the same purpose because he had claimed to be a king, and also in order to torture him in his humiliation.

Verse 18. This was a salutation of mockery and contempt.

Verse 19. These men did not *worship* Jesus in any proper manner as we may well conclude. (See the note on "worship" at Matthew 2: 2.)

Verse 20. After these acts of mockery were concluded, the soldiers replaced the robe with his own clothing. Matthew, Mark and John mention the crown of thorns and also the robe of royal colors. They tell of the removal of the robe but neither of them says a word about removing the crown of thorns. We can reasonably conclude that our Lord was compelled to wear the instrument of mockery and torture throughout the six long hours of the scenes of the cross.

Verse 21. *Compel Simon . . . to bear his cross*. (See notes at Matthew 16: 24.)

Verse 22. See a full explanation of *Golgotha* at Matthew 27: 33.

Verse 33. This mixture is explained in the comments at Matthew 27: 34.

Verse 24. The act of crucifixion is so cruel that a detailed description of it, as given by the works of reference, is given in the comments at Matthew 27: 35.

Verse 25. The *third hour* corresponds with our nine o'clock A. M.

Verse 26. *Accusation is defined*, "The crime of which one is accused." Hence those who passed by would see that

Christ was crucified for being The King of the Jews!

Verses 27, 28. The scripture referred to is in Isaiah 53: 12.

Verse 29. Again the mob misquoted Jesus, for he never said he would destroy the temple. What he did say is recorded in John 2: 19.

Verse 30. There can be no question that Jesus had the power to come down from the cross. Had he done so, however, the scriptures could not have been fulfilled (Matthew 26: 24; Isaiah 53: 7-10).

Verse 31. This remark of the chief priests fulfilled Luke 4: 23.

Verse 32. *That we may see and believe* was a hypocritical statement. They had known of miracles that Jesus performed that called for as much power as this would have required, yet they were still in unbelief. *They that were crucified with him* means the thieves. According to Luke 23: 40-42, one of them repented of his saying and appealed to Jesus for mercy and asked to be remembered.

Verse 33. Jesus had been on the cross three hours when the darkness started (verse 25). It lasted until the ninth hour which was three o'clock P. M.

Verse 34. See the comments at Matthew 27: 46 for use on this verse.

Verse 35. This is explained at Matthew 27: 47.

Verse 36. In John 19: 28, 29 is the record of why this vinegar (sour wine) was served to Jesus. He had expressed his condition which was one of thirst, the kind that so often comes upon one at the approach of death.

Verse 37. *Cried with a loud voice*. This is commented upon at some length at Matthew 27:50. *Gave up the ghost* (or spirit), which proves that man possesses something besides his flesh which leaves the body at death.

Verse 38. A description of the importance of this veil is at Matthew 27: 51.

Verse 39. According to Matthew 27: 54, the earthquake and other demonstrations in the natural creation, helped to convince the centurion that it was no ordinary person who had just died and was thus accorded such distinction.

Verses 40, 41. These women were faithful to the last, but with feminine timidity they had stood some distance

away watching. They had come from the same district where Jesus was brought up, Galilee, and had served him on various occasions.

Verse 42. *The day before the sabbath* is a general explanation, meaning that every sabbath or holy day is preceded by a preparation day. Whatever manual exercise would be needed in preparing food and other necessary articles for life must be done on these preparation days. The regular Pass-over came on Friday the fourteenth. Jesus was crucified on the day before, which was the reason for saying this was *the preparation*.

Verse 43. Being a *counsellor* means he was a member of the Sanhedrin. For extended comments on this man see those at Matthew 27: 57.

Verse 44. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was dead. Crucifixion causes a slow death and the victim usually has to suffer on and on for hours until late in the night, and this was the cause of Pilate's surprise. To make sure that Joseph was not planning to recover Jesus alive, the governor sent the centurion to see if Jesus had died.

Verse 45. The centurion reported that Jesus was dead, and Pilate then gave the body to Joseph. This good man had made special provision for the care of the body. For further comments on this phase of the subject see at Matthew 27: 58.

Verse 46. John 19: 38-40 tells us that Nicodemus assisted Joseph in this service of Love. He was the man who had come to Jesus by night (John 3: 1, 2).

Verse 47. The women witnessed the burial of Jesus and the rolling of the stone against the door of the sepulchre, which explains their concern in chapter 16: 3.

MARK 16

Verse 1. The word *sabbath* is singular in number and Thayer defines it, "The seventh day of each week." It corresponds with our Saturday which also is the seventh and last day of each week.

Verse 2. *Early in the morning* and *rising of the sun* are phrases used in the same sense. This agrees with Matthew 28: 1, and shows that the 24-hour period of time began and ended in the morning; not at sundown or midnight.

Verse 3. This verse is referred to at chapter 15: 47.

Verse 4. Matthew 28: 2 says the

angel rolled the stone away from the sepulchre.

Verse 5. *Entering*. It will be well again to quote the description of a sepulchre as given by Smith's Bible Dictionary. "A natural cave enlarged and adapted by excavation, or an artificial imitation of one, was the standard type of sepulchre." Hence we understand the sepulchre as a whole was a spacious cavity, in the far side of which would be a specific spot arranged for a body; the outside entrance would be closed with a stone. This *young man* is called an angel by Matthew which is not strange. Angels often appeared on earth in the form of men, and the long white garment of this person agrees with that idea.

Verse 6. The angel spoke encouragingly to the women, and let them know he was aware of their purpose in coming to the tomb. As an evidence for their eyes that Jesus was gone he led them to the spot where he had been laid.

Verse 7. *Tell his disciples, and Peter*. This does not mean that Peter was not a disciple; but he had denied Jesus three times, and it was fitting that his attention be especially called to the evidence that his Lord was alive again as he had predicted.

Verse 8. The whole scene was so unusual and solemn that the women were virtually overcome, and were speechless for the time being.

Verse 9. The first few verses of this chapter pertain to the scenes at the sepulchre. This verse begins to tell of things that took place elsewhere after the resurrection. The *seven devils* had nothing to do with the character of Mary Magdalene (it being an affliction), for she was a good woman and was interested in the work and fate of Jesus (Matthew 27: 61; 28: 1; Mark 16: 1; John 19: 25; 20: 14, 15).

Verse 10. *They mourned and wept* fulfills chapter 2: 20.

Verse 11. It was somewhat on the principle of a phrase "too good to be true" that the disciples *believed not*. But according to Luke 24: 25 Jesus rebuked the disciples for such unbelief.

Verse 12. *Appeared in another form*. Luke 24: 16 explains that the disciples' eyes were *holden* (restrained) so that they did not know him. Doubtless the unusual character of the report so overcame them that they were confused. Under such conditions a

person whom they well knew would not look natural.

Verse 13. These disciples reported what they had seen and heard, and the ones to whom they told the story were as doubtful as themselves.

Verse 14. *The eleven* means the apostles except Judas who had hanged himself. We should note that these apostles at this time *believed not*. Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief in the face of testimony of those who had seen him after his resurrection.

Verse 15. This and the following verse corresponds with Matthew 28: 19, 20. It is commonly referred to as The Great Commission, although the New Testament does not so name it. *World* is from *KOSMOS* which has a wide range of meaning, but its usual sense is, "the inhabitants of the earth." *Preach* is from *KEBUSSO* which Thayer defines, "to be a herald; to officiate as a herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald." He then explains his definition, "always with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed." The word may be used occasionally in a general sense, but its primary meaning is to tell something that is new. That is why an apostle had to be inspired because he would be expected to publish the Gospel for the first time, and to the people of various languages. *Creature* is from the same original word that is used in Colossians 1: 23 where Paul says that the Gospel had then been preached to every creature which is under heaven. Whatever Jesus meant by *every creature*, Paul says it had been done, and hence the "great commission" was carried out by the apostles. That means that when a preacher says he is preaching under the "great commission" he is perverting the scripture.

Verse 16. *He that believeth* necessarily means to believe what is preached which is the Gospel; the good news of the death and resurrection of Christ for the sins of mankind. The believing must be followed by being *baptized*. That word is from the Greek word *BAPTIZO* which Thayer defines, "To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water; to overwhelm." Robinson defines it, "to dip in, to sink, to immerse." *Saved* is from *SOZO* which Thayer defines, "To rescue from danger or destruction," hence it does not cover all that may follow in a person's life. A man might be rescued from drowning, and afterwards he could

carelessly fall into the water again and perish. If a man does not believe the Gospel he will be condemned regardless of whether he is baptized or not, hence it was not necessary to mention baptism on the negative side.

Verses 17, 18. *Them that believe* are the believers of the preceding verse. It cannot be restricted to the apostles on the ground that "believe" is in the present tense, for verse 14 says that even the apostles did not believe at the time Jesus was speaking. *Follow* means to attend or accompany one, and refers to the spiritual gifts that were bestowed upon Christians in the first years of the Gospel age (Acts 6: 8; 19: 6; 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, 14; Ephesians 4: 8-14; James 5: 14, 15). Matthew then names some of the miracles that Christians were enabled to perform in that period.

Verse 19. The ascension is reported also in Luke 24: 51 and Acts 1: 9.

LUKE I

Verse 1. I have consulted a great number of works of reference, such as histories, Bible Dictionaries, encyclopedias, lexicons and critical concordances; also a number of commentaries, and all agree that Luke is the author of the book we are now studying. For the sake of saving space, I do not think it necessary to list all of these works, in view of the unity in their statements making the conclusion well founded. Many of them state also that Luke was not a born Jew, and that he was a doctor of medicine. He was not an apostle but was inspired to write a record of the Gospel.

Verse 2. Luke was not an eyewitness of the things on which he writes, but they were told him by those who were. In copying down the things told him he would be qualified by inspiration, even as the Spirit guaranteed the accuracy of the memory of the apostles which was promised by Jesus before he left them (John 14: 26).

Verse 3. So thorough was the report these witnesses gave Luke that he says it caused him to have perfect ("exact"—Thayer) understanding of the whole story. The book of Luke was addressed to Theophilus who was an outstanding, educated Christian, according to the Bible Dictionaries. Being addressed to one individual does not affect its importance for others, any more than does the fact that Paul wrote four of his epistles to individuals do so.

Verse 4. The special purpose Luke had in writing to this man was that he might be assured of the instructions he had already received.

Verse 5. Luke, like Matthew, begins his record at the time just prior to the birth of Jesus. However, unlike Matthew, he first gives us the history concerning the parentage of John the Baptist. It was in the days of Herod (The Great) who was king of Judea. *Course of Abia* is explained at 1 Chronicles 24 in volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary. All priests had to be descendants of Aaron but that was not required of their wives, hence Luke gives us the added information that Elizabeth was also from Aaron.

Verse 6. This couple lived up to all requirements of the law, which proves that it was not physically impossible to do so as some teach. Paul was another who did this according to Philipians 3: 6.

Verse 7. *They had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren.* This is a significant statement that contrasts with the practice of some professed Christians who are childless from choice. Such people treat with contempt the first object of marriage by practicing birth control. Not only was Elizabeth barren, but she and her husband were in advanced age as were Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 11: 30; 17: 17), yet they did not give up hope (verse 13).

Verse 8. *Order of his course.* (See the comments at verse 5).

Verse 9. *This custom of the priest's office* is described in Exodus 30: 7-10.

Verse 10. *The whole multitude* were obeying Leviticus 16: 17.

Verse 11. The altar of incense was in the first holy room of the temple, and incense was burned on it daily. *Right side;* on Zacharias's right hand as he stood facing the altar in the service.

Verse 12. The people were not permitted to accompany the priest in this place (verse 10), hence the appearance of an angel there caused Zacharias to be disturbed.

Verse 13. *Prayer is heard and bear thee a son* are phrases that are related; he had been praying for a son. This was one thing that caused Luke to say this couple was righteous. Had they been opposed to children and tried to avoid having them, they would not have been righteous. The promise of a son included instructions for his name.