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ARTICLE VI.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE WORDS OF
JESUS, ESPECIALLY OF HIS PARABLES.¹

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THE INNER LIFE OF JESUS.

BY PROFESSOR JULIUS A. BEWER, PH.D.

JESUS himself in his words, Jesus' inner life, the experiences of his soul as portrayed in his words,—that is the subject of the psychological study to which we will devote our attention. We are not now to determine the exact truth which Jesus meant to teach in his words, but rather to find out, if we can, what the experiences of his soul were, out of which these utterances were born. What were those strange and yet so real undercurrents of his spiritual life which come to the surface in his words? What psychical states do they presuppose?

Men have always wanted to know more about his inner life because they felt that here, if anywhere, must lie the secret of his personal charm. But they have not always kept in mind, that, if we would understand him well in this his deepest life, we must not bring dogmatic prejudice with us, but must try to understand him as a real son of man. For only thus can we ever gain a true conception of his inner life, of the beauty and also of the strength of his great soul. I believe that the parables of Jesus are of especially great importance for this study; for it is universally recognized that the pictures which a man uses to illustrate his ideas reveal quite faithfully the impressions which have been made on

¹ Opening address delivered before the students of Oberlin Theological Seminary, September 24, 1903.

him by the world about him, especially if he uses them in a natural and not in an artificial manner. And thus we gather frequently the illustrations which a man employs, in order to find what influences have been at work to make him what he is; and so we see how this one is influenced by the mountains in the loftiness of his thoughts and the clearness of his vision; that one by the sea, which has written all its mysterious beauty and all its strong, resistless energy into his heart; and the other by the lowland, with its meadows and its flowers, with its woodlands and its streams. All have been influenced by their surroundings. But all have seen the sky and sun and moon and stars with different eyes and in different surroundings; have heard the birds and beasts, but not the same and not with the same emotions. And we know that when they begin to tell about all this they give us something of their inner life. How much more must this be true of Jesus; for the pictures which he paints in his parables are not mere illustrations as the average preacher uses them to-day, but part and parcel of his own experience, and thus must form a real contribution to the study of his inner life. He teaches only what he has experienced; and the power of his preaching lay in this, that even his illustrations were so completely blended with his experience that they reveal his very soul.¹ We see not only Jesus' teaching, but Jesus himself, in his words, and especially in his parables.

His outer world is portrayed here, with the impressions it made on his sensitive mind. It is the world of the working-people, of whom he was one. The pictures of domestic life

¹That is the great thing in Jesus, that he speaks only from his own experience, speaks of the ideas of God and of life which he has won in the struggle of his soul. And this is why his words are so full of tremendous power, because back of them lie the living experiences of the greatest of the children of men.

with its intimate family relations, of industrial and commercial life, of civil and national life,—all are painted with delicate grace. Everywhere,—in the field and in the town, in the yard and in the market, in the chamber and in the banquet-hall, among the farmers and the business men, the fishermen and the slaves, the publicans and Pharisees,—he moved, and kept his eyes wide open; saw the actions of the judge and of the physician, of the housekeeper and of the servants, the relations of father and children, of friends and enemies, noticed the growth of the tree and the leavening of the dough, witnessed the joy and the sorrow of men, looked on man and on nature with open eyes and learned, and taught again what he had learned; for he discerned the underlying relations, and brought with clear vision, almost unconsciously, everything into relation to the great central truth which dominated all his thinking and his living,—the Kingdom of God.¹

It would be of profound interest and importance to notice not merely what things in the world around him made an impression on him, but also what things did not impress him; for it is just as instructive to see what selections he did not make as to see what selections he did make. In both, a man's

¹ We must, of course, not overlook how clearly Jesus has grasped the fundamental principles and must be careful not to think that all pictures have taught him new truths. But that they made many a principle clearer to him, will appear as we proceed. He uses illustrations because he is always concrete. He uses no abstract forms of speech, because he is always personal. An abstract, philosophical thinker he has never been, and has never wanted to be; but he has recognized the fundamental principles of true religion with a clearness, and has enunciated them with a simplicity, which evidence unrivaled mastery; so simply and so plainly speaks only he who is a master of thought and expression. And nowhere do we look so deeply into the heart of this simple and yet so great Son of man as in his parables. He talks here, in the plain language of the people, of those pictures which dwelt in his mind, and out of the inexhaustible fountain of his soul flow those words which reveal his innermost self.—See, also, Note I.

individuality reveals itself. But we dare not forget that our records of him are very fragmentary, that Jesus uttered many other words, and in all probability all of them no less striking than the words which are handed down in the Gospels; so that it is rather precarious to argue, from the absence of certain images in those speeches which we have of him, to their absence in the treasury of his mind. Still, a good many things are reasonably sure in this connection, and they repay a thorough study. But at present it is not so much our desire to trace the impression which the outward world made on him, however important and suggestive that may be, but rather to press deeper, and look with reverent eye into his very heart, in order that we may understand the better the great struggles of his soul.

It is remarkable with what simplicity he utters the deepest truths, as if they were self-evident! With what sublime tranquillity! The casual reader never notices that the marvelous peace and the hopeful joy are born out of great soul-struggles. We get a few glimpses of this soul-life when we see him struggling in Gethsemane, when he weeps over Jerusalem; but that his soul was burdened with deep anxiety and yet again filled with glorious hope, that it struggled fiercely in the great battle, is seldom noticed, because we see him ever victorious, and in the serene look of his eye and the quiet tone of his voice there is nothing of quivering anguish, nothing of despair. But his heart is full of confidence, because he has *conquered!*

“ Every word that He speaks has been fiercely furnaceed
In the blast of a soul that has struggled in earnest.”

His words help us much in our quest to understand his inner life, if we but ask the question What did they mean for him? not, What should they mean for us? What inner experiences

of Jesus do they presuppose and reflect? not, What did he mean to teach or prove by them? So we will try to study the inner life of Jesus, and try to fill up the gaps in our information by the contributions given us especially by his illustrations,—look thus at his words and at his parables in their relation to his inner life. We can, however, appreciate their value only as we study them in connection with the other data of his inner life.¹

Like every other great prophet, the Nazarene had his great inaugural vision, which is always carefully prepared by previous experiences, and always the culmination of great inward struggles, though the record may not speak of them; for else they would be psychologically inexplicable. The inaugural vision of Jesus came to him at the time of his baptism by John. The vision at the baptism is granted to Jesus, not to John the Baptist. In it the revelation is vouchsafed to him with overwhelming clearness, "Thou art my beloved Son." The record which makes the vision be given to John is due to a theological reflection, and is not the original saying.²

It was the crisis of Jesus' life. The reality of the vision he never doubted; the conviction that he was God's Son, so powerfully wrought in him, could come only through God's Spirit. Of this he is confident, just as he is quite sure later on, when Peter proclaims him as the Son of God, that nothing short of a divine revelation could have convinced Peter of this. But the conviction had to be won, or rather to be defended, in terrible struggles of his soul. At once, we are told, in the wilderness, whither he has gone to prepare himself for the great

¹I wish to refer here to the very suggestive article by Prof. B. W. Bacon, on "The Autobiography of Jesus," in the *American Journal of Theology* (July, 1898, pp. 527-560), which gave me the first impetus to this psychological study of the words of Jesus.

²See Note II.

work by gaining clearness and peace, after the experience which must have stirred him to the very depths of his being, and have overawed and overpowered him, and filled him with great wonder, the doubt is cast into his soul, "Art thou really the Son of God?" The temptation to change the stones into bread to still his hunger does not mean, that he must decide whether or not he would use for his own need the great power of which he has become conscious, but rather this, "Art thou really the Son of God?" Then prove it to thine own satisfaction by working this miracle. Make thyself sure of it. How canst thou know it with certainty? Work this miracle, and thou wilt know! It is not an outward tempter who casts this suggestion into his heart, but it is the thought that surges up in his soul, "Is this revelation really true? Am I really the Son of God?" If he had yielded to the suggestion, he would have doubted his intimate relation of Son towards God, and that would have been disastrous. It would have meant that he would never have entered upon his ministry; for, if the doubt whether he was God's Son or not had taken such hold upon his soul that it voiced itself in concrete act, it would have been of no use for him to proclaim the Fatherhood of God, because only as he experienced this himself could his message have power over others. We see at the same time why it was that he refused so steadfastly to work a miracle when the opponents tempted him. It was a real temptation every time.

How serious that temptation was, we see from the fact that it comes up once more, in another more acute form, when he is on a pinnacle of the temple,—whether actually or mentally matters little. "Art thou really the Son of God?" Then prove it, cast thyself down; for God will surely protect his Son by his angels, as he has said. That would be an evi-

dence! To jump down the precipice, and land safely, borne on the wings of angels! And with it all, perhaps thousands of worshippers would witness the glorious deed—an evidence to them, as well as to himself, of his divine Sonship! If he had done it; if God had not shielded him; if he had fallen; if he had been shattered! These temptations shook the very foundations of his nature, and in their importance they were so immense that we scarcely dare to think what would have been the result if he had not conquered.

There was another set of temptations, coming we may well believe in the most varied forms. The typical form is given in the record where Jesus beholds in vision all the kingdoms of the world, and is conscious that they will all belong to him. The two ways present themselves to him,—spiritual and worldly conquest. Which shall he choose? The one is so hard, the other so easy and so sure; to inflame the people by setting himself up as the worldly Messiah, and conquer the world by force. The temptation reveals an exalted state of consciousness of Jesus. He knows that the whole world will be conquered by him. Without this consciousness,—this is important to notice,—the temptation cannot be explained psychologically.

All these temptations are typical; they extend in one form or other over his life. When, shortly afterwards, the temptation comes again, after he had healed so many sufferers for the first time, when his mind is sorely agitated and troubled, whether he should not after all devote his powers to this glorious work of a miraculous healer, he is true to his first decision; not by any extraordinary or supernatural force, but by purely moral and spiritual working, will he conquer the world for God. And so he enjoins the people not to speak about his cures. And later on, when the end draws near, and he utters that

strange word to his disciples, that they had better sell everything and buy a sword, we perceive that this is the sudden temptation that has come over him,—the temptation of the two ways in another form. But when the disciples show the two swords, he has already conquered. Calmly he wards them off, "It is enough." But his disciples seem never to have understood what he really meant. They did not know that it was one of those moments when "he was tempted in all points like as we are."

There is nothing that reveals the character of a man more clearly and more infallibly than his temptations. How high and how noble and how pure is the inner life of the Master; these very temptations are a crown! He is not a penitent sinner who has gone through the great experience of changing his whole life. There is no great break in his life by which he has become a child of God through renunciation of sin and the world. Moral goodness and true religion are to him the very atmosphere in which he lives. This pure life in communion with God is something perfectly natural for him, the only normal life. There is nothing artificial about him; he dares to be absolutely himself.

We cannot be thankful enough to the evangelists that they have preserved the story of the Baptism and the Temptation. But we would be even more grateful to them, if they had also told us more about Jesus' earlier years. How much we long to know something about his home! Yet, with the exception of the story of his birth and connected events, a hint concerning his experience in the Temple when twelve years old, the reference to the carpenter, to his brothers and sisters,—hints which are all too slight,—they tell nothing of the home life of the Saviour, nothing of those long silent years in which his character was formed for the great work of his life. Were

they not interested in this? Or did they not know more about it? It seems to me that here some parables offer us valuable suggestions. It is highly significant, that, in connection with the parables of the building of the tower and that of the warfare, Luke (xiv. 28-33) reports the saying of hating father and mother and the other relatives, as a condition of discipleship. The terribly great cost of discipleship must be weighed before the decision. Do not press light-heartedly into this service, because it costs much more than you may think at first! In connection with these parables this saying becomes full of intense meaning. In stating these hard conditions, this seems to him the hardest, which will cause many to regret the step,—to leave father and mother, brothers and sisters! He states it with the consciousness that he requires the hardest thing of all, and his words have the ring of one who knows by personal experience what he says. Those struggles of the soul which are so bitter for tender-hearted natures, he passed through. The break with his home must have been exceedingly painful; it is the hardest of all conditions for discipleship! And this need not surprise us; for what kind of a father must Jesus have had "who could present God to the world in the image of a father's face"! How tender must have been the bonds of love which bound him to his mother, to his brothers and sisters, when it seemed to him, later on, the heaviest burden to have had to break off his relations with them, and made him almost harsh in his answer, when his mother and brothers made an attempt to draw him away from his mission, and he practically disowned his blood relationship with them by saying: "Who is my mother and my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mark iii. 31-35). Here is a place where every one feels the profound emotion; but one feels, also, that these ap-

parently harsh words are not directed against his loved ones. He battled in a fierce battle of his soul with the temptation into which the voice of home with its alluring charm had thrown him. But he was true to his high calling, however sweet and irresistible the voice might be. He fights and wins, but his words sound harsh, like the words of a man who masters a profound emotion and is unwilling to have it be seen. But in his heart there settles down the conviction that a man's foes are they of his own household. Need we wonder any longer that the evangelists speak so little of his home and his relations to his family? As a man who has received a deep wound in his heart does not like to touch it, lest it break and pain afresh, so Jesus must have said little or nothing about his inner conflict. He fought it out silently and alone in his heart, as he was always alone in the deepest experiences of his life.¹

How great his love for the home and the family life was, seems also to shine through in that other word of renunciation, about the eunuchs who have become eunuchs because of the kingdom of God. There seems to be back of it his deep understanding of the great soul-struggles through which they had to pass, and it seems most natural to conclude that the longing for marital happiness and family joy has most probably arisen sometimes in his heart also. But if it did arise, he put it down. He must not think of it. Why? There is but one answer possible, Because of his exalted mission. One is reminded of the striking parallel of the tender-hearted Jeremiah, who also must renounce all such desires for the same reason (Jer. xvi.), with this striking difference, that Jeremiah laments over it, while Jesus never pities himself. This renunciation gives us a right to press back of our written information. It must mean that Jesus must have had, already, long before his bap-

¹ Compare Note III.

tism with the Spirit, at least a clear presentiment that God had chosen him,—a presentiment which broke through into full clearness of vision, and crystallized into the firm conviction that he was the Son of God at the time of his baptism in Jordan. How long he had this presentiment we do not know. In all probability for quite a long time; for the Orientals marry early, and Jesus was about thirty years old at the time when he entered upon his ministry. In the light of the great vision at the time of the baptism, we may conclude that the contents of this presentiment were perhaps more definite than merely that he would be a prophet. That vision marks, as we saw, the culmination of a long series of struggles, with the resultant consciousness of divine sonship and Messiahship. We perceive that, after all, that brief incident of the boy Jesus in the Temple with the consciousness of God's Fatherhood is not to be so lightly treated. But this is merely a suggestion.

After this vision he can no longer stay at home. He becomes conscious of being the Light of the world, and feels that he cannot be hid any longer,—a conviction which he has expressed so simply and so beautifully in the parables of the City on the Hill and the Light on the Stand. He must go out into the throng of the world, in order to make the tremendous power of his personality felt, to lighten the world! This is so natural to him that it appears preposterous to him not to do it; as preposterous as it would be to kindle a light and put it under a bushel!

It is as prophet that Jesus stands up, as prophet that he begins his preaching by taking up the great prophetic message: "Repent, the end is at hand!" The conviction of the nearness of the end is the conviction of all the prophets; it is also the conviction of Jesus, only that Jesus defined the end as "the Kingdom of God." The term was not strange to the people;

and, though there may have been ever so many who could think of the Kingdom and God only in materialistic forms, they all knew, or at least all might have known ever since the preaching of the prophets, that the test of participation in the blessings of the kingdom would be a moral test.¹

The coupling of the cry to repentance with the proclamation of the near approach of the Messianic kingdom, the great day, was thus nothing new. Jesus takes up the message of the great prophets. But does this mean that he simply repeated the message of the prophets as he had learned it from their writings? That is contradicted by the parable of the New Patch on the Old Garment and the New Wine and the Old Skins, where we are shown that he regards himself as the representative of the New. Not something old and stale which by reason of its familiarity had lost its power, but something new and original he has to bring, which had taken possession of his heart with all the freshness of life itself. This should never be forgotten, for it is essentially the consciousness of the newness of the message which fills his heart with such bold-

¹ "Behold the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings" (Mal. iv.). So rings out the message of one of the last of the noble procession of prophets, the first of whom had declared:—

"Woe unto them that desire the day of Jehovah!
Wherefore would ye have the day of Jehovah?
It is darkness, and not light.

"As if a man did flee from a lion,
And a bear met him;
Or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall,
And a serpent bit him.

"Shall not the day of Jehovah be darkness, and not light?
Even very dark, and no brightness in it?"

—AMOS v. 18-20.

ness and victorious assurance. The conviction of the terrible nearness of the Kingdom of God must then have come to his soul directly and with overpowering force, not as something old but as something new. How did it come? Could he read the signs of the times, and was it the result of sober reflection? Assuredly, he read the signs of the times, for once he reproaches the Pharisees very bitterly because they could not read the signs of the times, could not read in them that the kingdom was near. But is this the real explanation of his conviction? Surely not, if he was a prophet; and that he was a prophet admits of no doubt.¹

It has been claimed that the striking conviction of the prophets that the end is near, is due to the fact, that they were readers of the events of history, that they understood the logical outcome of the events by reason of their political or diplomatic insight, and perceived that, if things were going to run their natural course, it must mean the end of Israel. This is not the prophets' own consciousness of it, nor do the data furnished us by their writings vindicate this theory. Their reading of the signs of the times is secondary; the primary factor is what they call the word of God that came to them. The irrepressible, dark presentiment which they cannot explain to themselves, that something terrible is going to happen to the nation, is the fundamental cause of their message. Theirs is a psychological experience, which is parallel to the "second sight" or "sixth sense," with this important point of difference, that with the prophets the ethical element is all-controll-

¹ For though Jesus never uses the prophetic phrase "Thus saith Jehovah," the striking absence of the phrase speaks more loudly than the ever-repeated emphasis on it by those later, post-exilic prophets. Jesus needs no such phrases; his prophetic power is felt by every listener. The people speak of him as *the* prophet; the Pharisee who has invited him says to himself, "If this were a prophet," showing that Jesus was treated everywhere as a prophet.

ing. "*The end*" comes because of the sins of the people.¹

But "the end" is to Jesus the coming of the spiritual kingdom. That is the distinctive note in his opening message. Could he read the nearness of this spiritual kingdom in the events of the times? Yes; if his conception was that the coming of the kingdom meant essentially the punishment of the wicked. Then he could read, in the terrible moral and spiritual indifference on the one hand, and in the empty formalism of his time on the other hand, the reason for the awful wrath of God, who would come with fire, "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff will he burn with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 12). But that was not the conception of Jesus. That was John the Baptist's proclamation: *he* read the signs of the times in this way. Jesus had fixed his mind on the surpassing glory of the spiritual kingdom,—a glory which not even he could adequately describe in words. What makes him think that the break of this glorious dawn is near? What does he read in the hearts of men that makes him so certain of its impending advent? Surely he must have known many true, devoted souls; for, however low spiritual religion may be at any time, it is never altogether without faithful witnesses. But they would hardly account for this striking conviction. And we would have to change our estimate of the time altogether if we expected to find its reason in the hearts of these men. He must have found it in his own heart, and here it was the result of that inaugural vision. When he becomes conscious of being the Son of God, he knows also that the Messianic time has come, that the kingdom of God has already begun. Because he himself realizes the fullness of this glorious kingdom in his own heart, he feels

¹ Compare Note IV.

sure that others will realize it also, if they have only once seen the surpassing glory of the kingdom.¹ He is conscious of having been anointed to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And so he proclaims, in striking contrast to the prophets who had warned the people that their day would be a day of darkness and deep gloom, "Believe in *the good news!* The Kingdom of God is at hand!" No one ever formulated the ethical conditions more clearly and keenly; but, nevertheless, it is joy and good news that he brings. Do we wonder that the people heard him gladly when he spoke, with all the tremendous authority of the greatest prophet, of the good news of the coming of the glorious kingdom?

Two parables lay bare the springs of this conviction,—the parable of the Hidden Treasure and of the Goodly Pearl, where he shows that one will gladly give up everything in order to gain the Kingdom of God. He would show the people the transcendent beauty of the kingdom to awaken a longing for it in their hearts. He does not say here in what this beauty consists, but he shows what it meant to him. He had experienced himself what the Kingdom of God was, and in the full consciousness of its wondrous glory he had gladly given up everything for it; and now he believes that he has simply to show the people this glory, in order to fill them with such a longing for it that they would want to procure it for themselves at any price. He does not emphasize in these parables the necessity of giving up one's possessions, but rather that it is something self-evident, something entirely natural, that one should give everything for the Kingdom of God. One simply cannot help giving up everything, if necessary, for such transcendent glory. It is the very best that can be gained, and no price is too high for it. He knows it, because he has exper-

¹ Compare Note V.

ience it, and has given up everything for it,—home and parents, his native town and his friends, everything that is dear to the human heart! And now he proclaims this evangel of the kingdom, and points to its marvelous glory.

In spreading the good news, he saw that he brought joy to many hearts. But we can say even more. That little parable of the Bridegroom and the Sons of the Bridechamber shows that Jesus was conscious of creating joy and deep satisfaction in the hearts of his friends by his simple presence. The sense of overflowing life took hold of them; so that it was a continual festival for them to be near him. It is simply impossible for them to fast and to mourn; their hearts are so full of joy, that it would be hypocrisy for them to show a sad face. This means much; for in his presence they felt the presence of God, and in their relationship with him they met with God, for they all knew that he was God's prophet, God's representative. And yet, far from being cast down or full of despair, they are full of joy because they met in his presence not with a condemning God, but with a loving Father; they knew through Jesus, to use a technical term, that their sins had been forgiven by God. Psychologically this must lie back of the joy, though in the text it is not directly referred to. Indirectly, however, it is hinted at; for the fasting and mourning had only one reason, namely, to win the favor of God. The great and evidently serious question of the Pharisees and John's disciples (see Matthew) is, What is the reason for such behavior? for they know that Jesus as a prophet wants to bring the people into right relation with God. But can this be done in such a way? His manner is passing strange to them. The psychological yield of this parable, to which we shall have to refer once more later on, is hardly less important than that of the great word, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy

laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus experiences the power that he has over the souls of men in his contact with them. To him they came, and in his presence people's hearts grew wide and whole. Twisted and unstrung lives felt the Master's touch, and once more the thrill of harmony passed through their soul. Into his eyes they looked; there dwelled eternal peace; and, altogether inexplicable to themselves, they felt the life-renewing, healing touch of God's own life in Jesus of Nazareth. His words stole sweetly into their hearts; and, as a tune we once have heard comes ever back to us, so did his sayings ever come again, and they took hold of all the best in them, and made them better men and women.

With this consciousness of being able to give joy and peace by his simple presence to the heart-hungry, heart-sick people goes hand in hand the consciousness of the certain triumph of the Kingdom of God. The small beginnings do not disturb him; he is confident that they will be followed by exceedingly great results. It seems that Jesus won this conviction as the result of anxious concern, that the mustard-seed and the leaven taught him first the lesson before he taught it to the disciples in the parables. As surely as the small mustard-seed will produce a mighty shrub, as surely as the little piece of leaven will permeate the whole dough, so surely will this small beginning of the Kingdom of God be followed by a mighty development. There is a victorious confidence in the inherent power of growth and of pervasion of the Kingdom which shows the sunny optimism of Jesus at its best.

Yet oftentimes the anxious care about the result of his labors must have been a heavy burden on his soul. He could not always stay with those whom he had influenced by word and deed, could not wait to see what the result of his labor would be. He saw no fruit at once, and secret wonder came

into his soul, whether fruit would come at all. These states of feeling underlie the parable of the Seed which grows of itself.¹ He tells the disciples here what he himself had experienced, what he himself had learned from the sower. The sower sows the seed, and then waits patiently until it springs up and grows. He knows it will sprout, and yield fruit, and he will reap it at the harvest time; and so he is not impatient, but waits. That was a revelation to the Master. It sounded like the Father's voice "Be not anxious." Was not his work also a sowing of seed? Surely, then, he must not be impatient, or disheartened, because he cannot see the results of his work. The fruit will come, for the law of growth and fruitfulness prevails also in the Kingdom of Heaven. He must not expect fruit at once. Here, also, the process of growth is gradual,—“first the blade, then the ear, then the full blade in the ear.” The parable sounds so cheering, so full of refreshing confidence, that we do not always notice that this serenity is born of care. His peace is not the result of carelessness and indifference, but of intelligent trust; and this trust he has gained in the silent hours of care.

At first, when he was so extremely popular with the masses that they always flocked to him in great numbers, he seems to have been bewildered and somewhat troubled, because the bad as well as the good followed him; and sometimes he may have thought whether it would not be best to separate the bad elements from the good, and this desire may have been accentuated by the use which his adversaries made of this fact. But he learns again from the farmer, as he tells us in the parable of the Tares, that it is best to wait till the harvest time; and from the fisherman also, as he tells us in the parable of

¹ I am indebted for this point and a few others to Heinrich Weinel's suggestive lecture, "Die Bildersprache Jesu in ihrer Bedeutung für die Erforschung seines inneren Lebens." Giessen, 1900.

the Drag-net, that it is unavoidable, in throwing out his nets for the catching of men, that there will be many bad ones among them. The time of the separation will come; he need not worry about the bad among the good; the sifting and dividing will be done on that great day, when good and bad will be separated with absolute justice. He must go on with his work, sowing the seed of the gospel, and throwing out the nets for the catching of men; and his heart must be free from care, for only then can he do his best work.¹

But when, towards the end of his ministry, the Master looks back on his work, and estimates the result, there is no attempt on his part to make things look better than they really are. He gives his observations, the experiences of his work, in the famous parable of the Sower, which was, in my opinion, not uttered at the beginning of his ministry, but later on, in the latter half of his work. The crowds had come to him at first full of joy, and he had sown the seed. But when he now considered what fruit it had borne, he saw that many had turned away without bringing any fruit whatever. And the reason for this he also clearly perceived. With some it could but be traced to the great enemy who undid the work that Jesus had done. Well did he know of all the various machinations of his opponents, who, by argument and ridicule, by slander and open attack, by all possible means, sought to destroy what he had built, and who in many cases succeeded all too well. He knew the human hearts—knew the shallowness of some, the lack of endurance of others; saw the effect of worldly care and anxiety and the terrible hold of money on countless hearts; he saw it all, and knew it all, and did not blind his eyes to it. But he also knew that all this was not his fault. The high enthusiasm which filled his soul at the

¹ Compare Note VI.

beginning, when the whole world seemed to come to him to be saved, when no mountain of difficulty appeared too high to be conquered, when to his glorious optimism the Kingdom appeared so very near, has given way to sober critical reflection. He has not succeeded so quickly. But, in spite of it all, the calm, firmly-rooted conviction still controls his heart, that the victory is after all with him; for some have borne fruit indeed,—some thirty-fold, and some sixty-fold, and yea some even a hundred-fold. His work has not been without success.

Of what importance the parables become when looked at in this way! when we do not ask, What does Jesus mean to teach in them? but, What do they mean to him? Out of what experiences of his soul were they spoken? It is of profound significance to notice that one of the parables seems to have been the means of calling his attention for the first time to his death,—the parable of the Bridegroom and the Sons of the Bridechamber, which we have already referred to as revealing the consciousness of Jesus that he was able to create the sense of overflowing life in his friends by his very presence, of filling their hearts with great joy. While we see him but now full of the sunny happiness and joy of life as he says that it is impossible for his disciples to mourn and to fast in his presence, we suddenly notice a shadow fall upon his brow. As he muses over this picture of the bridegroom and his fellows, for the first time according to our sources, the shadow of death is cast into his soul. It becomes clear to him that he cannot always be with them; the time will come when he must leave them. "The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day." This sentence is not a part of the parable itself any more, but has grown out of it. The "bridegroom" means

here the Messiah, and in chaste reserve the term covers the thought which as yet he cannot proclaim openly. The picture has become a revelation to his soul. Was it the first suggestion of the end? According to our sources, yes. Did it come with all the terrible clearness at once? We do not know. Later on, when it became ever clearer to him what the end would be, his troubled soul finds rest in another picture, in the analogy of the grain of wheat, which is reported in the Fourth Gospel, and about whose originality there can be no doubt. His death, which might appear as the proof of a life of failure, would in reality mean the liberating of all the tremendous spiritual forces which were bound up in him, and would in very deed be the means of certain triumphant victory.

Scarcely less important is the conviction which Jesus gained in connection with another picture, the simile of the Children and the Little Dogs, which belongs to the story of the Syrophenician woman who came and besought Jesus to heal her daughter. According to Matthew, Jesus does not answer her at first; and the disciples, growing weary of her crying, interceded for her. But Jesus answers, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The defense for his behaviour is his mission. And when the woman thereupon falls down at Jesus' feet, and implores him to heal her daughter, he answers her in a simile: As it is not right to take the children's bread, and give it to the little dogs; so it is not right for me to use the power which belongs to the Jews for the heathen. The woman in her distress answers, also in the form of a simile, using Jesus' own material: But as the little dogs are allowed to eat the crumbs of the children's bread which fall from the table, and do not thereby take away the children's portion, so let me be allowed to receive

simply a little bit of thy strength for my daughter. I shall not thereby have taken away anything from the portion of the Jews. It is evident that there underlies this simile the idea that the power of Jesus was intended merely for the Jews, and not for the heathen, and the woman recognizes this idea. Mark does not report the saying in which, according to Matthew, Jesus enunciates the consciousness of his mission to the Jews, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." That Jesus considered himself as being sent to save the lost, we know from other words of his; but that he is sent to none but to the lost Israelites, only this passage says. Now, there could be nothing more foreign to Matthew than to put such a sentence in his Gospel, unless he regarded it as an undoubted saying of Jesus; for Matthew conceived of the gospel as being intended for all the world, and not for the Jews only. And it is to be noticed that this idea which is enunciated in this sentence is presupposed by the simile of the Children and the little Dogs even in Mark. Thus, if we regard the simile as genuine, we must also regard this saying as genuine,—at least in substance, if not in form. But if the story is genuine, and I do not think that there is any force in the arguments advanced to invalidate its authenticity,—we have here a most remarkable revelation of the development of Jesus' consciousness of his mission. He did regard himself indeed at first as being sent only to the Jews, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and not to all the world, particularly to the heathen. His mission is limited and not universal. This is a point of extreme importance, and one which cannot be denied if the story of the Syrophenician woman is regarded as genuine. Since Jesus labored so intensely among the Jews, we may well believe that the question as regards the heathen was not so pressing with him as we may sometimes be in-

clined to think. That it may now and then have occupied him is quite possible, but it did not change his conviction that he was sent to the Jews only. Not till he meets this heathen woman did the question really become acute. How shall he behave himself towards this heathen? Evidently at first he decides that this is outside of his mission; that the power given to him must be used for the Jews only, and not for the heathen. However much he may have pitied the woman, his duty seems clear. But now we see the change; the simile which the woman formed out of his own material brings about a highly significant development in Jesus' consciousness of his mission. The glorious universalism of Jesus, which is so strongly marked in the Gospels, was born in this hour by means of one of his pictures.—What a wealth of meaning his pictures and illustrations and parables have when looked at from this point of view, and of what momentous importance this story, with its similes, which attracts every one by its peculiar charm, becomes for the understanding of the inner life of Jesus, especially in the development of the consciousness of his mission, if looked at in this way!

Here the matter is perfectly clear, and we discover with a good deal of certainty his inner experiences. But it is not always so. There are statements which show unmistakably that profound experiences must lie back of them, else they could never have been made; and yet at the same time we hardly dare to do more than to suggest them. With what boldness, with what absolute assurance, does he speak those parables of the Friend at Midnight, of the Unjust Judge, the Asking Son! Earnest, persevering prayer will always be rewarded! Keep on praying earnestly and intensely, and be sure you will receive your petition at last! It is altogether unthinkable that a human father should give his child a stone when he

has been asked for bread; but it is still more unthinkable that the Heavenly Father should not be much more willing to give his children good gifts, in answer to their prayers!

"Ask and it shall be given you;
Seek and ye shall find;
Knock and it shall be opened unto you.

"For every one that asketh, receiveth;
And he that seeketh, findeth;
And to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

These words sound so confident, so reassuring, that Jesus must have known them to be true from his own experience. He also must have prayed without receiving his request at once; so that it seemed to him as if God did not hear or did not wish to answer. But he prayed more earnestly, and he received his answer. He knows man's tendency to grow despondent, from his own experience, and encourages therefore his disciples with these great words. And the remarkable thing is that no condition is made, God will certainly hear their prayer. Jesus is no theologian, but a prophet. He has no system of theology, and is not troubled about reconciling and harmonizing one statement with another. He speaks out of the fullness of his experiences; and what profound experiences must they have been! Because he knows God as his Father, he proclaims him as the Father of them all; because he knows the power of prayer, he can speak as he does about prayer. He who was altogether filled with the consciousness of God's presence and communion with him, could think of God in no other way. Dogmatic sophistry had no room with him: he speaks of his life's experiences. Thus he knows his God; and thus he proclaims him, unmindful of the metaphysical and theological problems of the day. And we have no right to minimize the tremendous strength, or to soften the severe beauty, of his words. We do so only at the expense

of misunderstanding him; and how slight is the gain when he fits then better into our little system!

It is important to notice, that, in spite of this great power of prayer; in spite of his intimate relation with God, whose Son he is conscious of being,—Jesus' attitude toward God is always characterized by profound reverence; there is no easy familiarity which disregards the deep sacredness of the relationship. For him a real and sincere humility toward his Father is something so natural, so self-evident, that he cannot conceive how a man who is not humble can ever be acceptable to God. How strikingly he gives utterance to this conviction in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican praying in the Temple! How can any one be proud and self-confident toward God! Humility is a fundamental principle of religion for him; without it the intimate relation between God and man cannot exist. He had given his whole life to God's service, worked as much as ever he could for the kingdom, and yet he carries deep in his heart the consciousness that he does nothing but his duty. He had to do it as a true prophet. Special favor or reward he never thought of. And it appears to him as absurd, as preposterous, that a man should think that he has a right to require something from God as a special reward, as if a servant who has done his duty faithfully during the day should come home in the evening and expect from his master a special reward. Why should he? He has done but his duty! So it seem to Jesus in man's relation to God. So he looks upon his own work, for he has no different standard for himself; he also has done but his duty, and any reward that he would receive would be an act of sovereign grace.

He is profoundly impressed by the sovereignty of God's grace. Surely the Pharisees are right when they protest that

the sinners have not deserved the Kingdom of God. Certainly not. But God gives it to them out of his own free grace, and he is not unjust in doing so; can he not give his grace to whom he will? As the householder in the parable is not unjust when he gives equal reward to those who have earned it and those who have not earned it, but is rather to be judged as being very kind and gracious for giving them what they really have not deserved; so God is not unjust, but rather extraordinarily kind, when he admits into his kingdom out of his own free grace those who have not deserved it. How strange it appears to Jesus that the Pharisees should complain about injustice, when he cannot but rejoice over the great goodness and graciousness of his Heavenly Father, who loves his enemies, and causes it to rain and to shine on those who do not deserve it as well as on those who deserve it. May it not be that we are allowed to see in these parables Jesus' consciousness of God's love towards him, and his choice as God's Son and Messiah, as being also an act of sovereign grace, received by him in profound humility and gratitude?

This humility and reverence on the part of Jesus, this feeling of the sacredness of the relation to God, so far from standing in the way of a real intimacy, rather deepened and enriched the fellowship, in which we see the sources of his strength. For ever on the eve of a great crisis do we find him alone with his God in prayer: after the baptism in the wilderness as well as after his first great day of healing, in every great crisis of his life, just before his self-revelation as Messiah to the disciples, and in that dark hour in Gethsemane. Here are the springs of that serenity and peace that characterize him during all his public life; here he fought out those silent, lonely battles of his soul; here he gained his

inner balance. But here are also the moments of the great revelations which came to his soul, and strengthened his conviction that he was God's Son, and as such filled with God's Spirit.¹

In these hours of prayer Jesus received not only the strengthening of his convictions, but also new revelations. The prophetic consciousness was here not only strengthened, but also enlarged by the revelation, that burst upon him: A prophet is doomed to persecution! It seems that this conviction was gained in a struggle which intensified itself in an outward vision, of which we have a record—unfortunately not all too clear—in the story of the transfiguration, where he learns from the prophets (Moses and Elias) what fate he had to expect. Of course this is merely a climax of the inner conflict, the stepping into the clear light of the sphere of his consciousness of what had already long occupied his subconscious life, beginning, as I believe, at the time when he spoke the parable of the Bridegroom and the Son of the Bridechamber. How important this conviction was for his inner life is made clear by his words, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against

¹ And this conviction became to Jesus so all-controlling that it appeared to him the height of blasphemy, when the opponents declared that the wondrous deeds of healing which he performed were done by the power of the devil. Not because they ridiculed him, blasphemed the Son of Man, was he indignant, that was a pardonable sin. But that they should identify the Spirit of God, which dwelt and wrought in and through him, with the Prince of the Demons, that was a sin which could never be forgiven. It is quite important to notice here that he does not identify himself with the Divine Spirit, but regards himself as possessed and controlled by him, as the instrument and agent, which the divine power uses. It is essentially the spirit of the prophet that shines through here in these Beëlzebub parables.

you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." These words lose their great power if they are divorced from Jesus' own experience; for only in the light of it can we understand the almost exhilarating joy which he commands his disciples to have in persecution, for it had possessed his own heart also, it had made him, moreover, certain, when the great opposing forces were at work, that he stood in organic connection with the prophets. Let me once more point to the similar experience of Jeremiah, who receives comfort and inspiration from the same source: the true prophet has always been persecuted.

With an unflinching determination, through which there throbbled the exalted consciousness of being guided and controlled absolutely by the Spirit of God, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem to fulfill his destiny. He knows that he must be true to his God, must bear witness to the Truth, even at the cost of his own life. And into his heart there came, as a result of his determination, that strange ecstatic joy which has come since into many a true disciple's heart in the face of certain death. It is significant that, at the height of the conflict with his opponents, he conveys this conviction of his certain death to them in picture form by means of the parable of the Vineyard and the Wicked Husbandman. That he uses a parable for this is at the same time an indication of the correctness of the psychological method of interpretation. Almost defiantly he points out to them: As the husbandmen in the parable have treated the messengers of the owner, so have you, rulers of the people, treated the Son of God; but, as surely as the owner of the vineyard will fearfully avenge the murder of his son,

so surely will God avenge with terrible vengeance the murder of his Son which you are now planning. How significant is here the blending of Jesus' consciousness of standing in organic connection with the prophets with the consciousness of standing in a still more intimate relation to God than they, in the relation of the Son to the Father (elsewhere he has expressed this consciousness by saying that some one greater than Jonah was here, some one greater than Solomon, greater than Moses, over against whose teachings he had placed his own), and the blending of the consciousness that he will suffer at the hands of his enemies a shameful death with the consciousness that God will surely avenge his death, and that he will exalt him to supreme glory! This latter thought, only implied in the parable, is distinctly expressed in the word about the corner-stone, which the evangelists have joined with exquisite tact to this parable, though it appears to form no part of it. Both convictions, proclaimed so openly, were won in the secret recesses of his soul in moments of communion with the Father.

And again we feel, that in these hours of prayer Jesus must have had those great experiences of his soul out of which were born those words which sound to us almost too bold and too daring, but which he meant to be understood just as they were given,—those words about the omnipotence of faith which he clothed in pictorial form: "Verily I say unto you, If you have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig-tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 21-22). What a profound experience of intimate communion with his Father voices itself in the words about the sparrow on the

housetop and the hair on the head! The Father controls his life absolutely, takes cognizance of everything that happens to him. Such words can be spoken only by one who has experienced their truth in his own life; otherwise they would be preposterous.

What unexpected vistas into the soul-life words like these afford! How close we get to him! How much better we understand him! These parables and pictures mean more than a superficial reading would suggest. People in all ages have rightly felt that behind their marvelous simplicity is hidden a depth of meaning which but the true disciple understands. And so they have resorted to explain them allegorically, and have read more into them than the text would warrant, that thus their religious longing might be satisfied. We must discard the allegorical method, must apply the strictly historical and literary method; but we should combine with the literary method the psychological. The psychological gives us that depth which has been divined in these parables, gives us Jesus himself in his parables, and allows us a look into the life of his soul. It is plain that this method should be applied to all his words; for underneath his thoughts and actions lies that mysterious sphere which we call the subconscious life, in which are formed most of our thoughts and decisions, and out of which merge those powerful impulses and feelings which seem to come so often suddenly and unprepared, but which may have been quite long in this subconscious stream out of which they come into the light of consciousness at the given time. Into this region we must press to find a clearer revelation of Christ's inner life.

And incidentally, I may suggest, we shall receive some light on that most difficult of all New Testament questions,—

the Johannine problem; for it seems to me that we must approach it from the psychological side. Comparing carefully the results which the psychological study of Jesus' words in the Synoptists yields with the statements in the Gospel of John, we shall find, for instance, that the word in the Fourth Gospel, "I am the light of the world," is psychologically back of the synoptic saying, "Ye are the light of the world"; and that the statements "I am the bread of life," "I am the water of life," "I am come that they might have life, and might have more abundantly," are expressing, in regard to Jesus himself, what we found to lie back of the parable of the Bridegroom and the Sons of the Bridechamber, in the consciousness of being able to satisfy the deepest wants of the human heart. Conscious of being the physician of the soul, he is able to impart fullness of life. And that remarkable saying in John's Gospel, "And I, if I be lifted up [to glory], will draw all men unto myself" is in fundamental accord with the conviction which lies back of the temptation, in which he sees in vision all kingdoms of the world and their glory, and knows that they shall all be his.

The whole Christ we must have. But we shall not understand him wholly by theological and metaphysical speculations, but rather by a penetrating, sympathetic, psychological study of his words, the richness of whose results this sketch has meant to indicate by pointing out those feelings of his soul which his wonderful illustrations reveal. And, as we try to see the vision of his soul, we shall also hear his voice speak to our soul.

"Go forth, for thou shall see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city!"

And, as we listen, we shall also experience what the pure-

souled youth experienced to whom his loved one spoke these words. For,

"As she spake,
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief."

And to us, also, will be given the power that this youth received. For, while he spake to one of his brother-knights, this one felt that

"His eye, dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed."

Here lies the secret of Christ's wondrous charm, the great attraction and transforming power of his life; here lies the secret of the Christian's joy and peace, in that most gracious influence of soul upon the soul, in Christ's regenerating touch of life on life.

NOTE I. (page 104).

His purpose was practical, for sophistry he had no time, word-catching he detested. Many problems which we feel as problems to-day, he has not yet felt as such, has not faced them and has not solved them. For him there was only one all-controlling aim,—to establish the Kingdom of God. That was the center of his thoughts and of his wishes, and all his energies he bends to this one aim. He was no social reformer and did not want to be one, although his principles are fundamentally revolutionary. He has felt deeply, it is true, the social evil, for he belonged himself to the working-class; but it does not enter his mind to change outward circumstances, either social or political or both, and thus to bring about his ideal. The root of the evil lies for him deeper; it is in the hearts of men. The hearts he wants to change by bringing them into right relation to the Father God.

It is true, he has felt deeply the distinction of the classes, of rich and poor; has recognized clearly the demoralizing tendency of wealth; has characterized it even as standing in sharp contrast with God; has seen in his work how the poor were more receptive for the kingdom, how hard it is for the rich to feel the power of the high, moral ideal; and so he has called the poor blessed, and on the rich he has pronounced his solemn woe. But a social question this has never been to him: it was, as everything else, a religious question. It is the service of the Mammon that he condemns because it excludes the service of God.

NOTE II. (page 106).

The question whether Jesus regarded the vision as an objective or a subjective reality is, after all, of minor importance. All visions are subjective experiences,—states of mind which are so intense that, at the given time, when the excitement reaches its highest pitch, they are projected outwardly; so that the vision is seen outwardly and not within the soul, the voice is heard as coming from without and not from within. And so the one who experiences the vision thinks of it as an objective reality; and Jesus in all likelihood thought so too. But not so much the manner as the contents of this exalted experience are of fundamental importance. In Jesus' case the vision brought the clear revelation of his divine Sonship.

NOTE III. (page 111).

Here in his home-life lie also the springs of those most beautiful and most evangelical parables of his, of the Prodigal Son, of the Lost Coin and the Lost Sheep, of the Friend at Midnight, and many others. Where but at home had he learned to speak so touchingly of the father's love? Sometimes he has learned the heart of God by contrasting the earthly and the heavenly Father with each other, but more frequently by arguing from the great love of the earthly father to the surpassing love of the Heavenly Father, saying, "How much more!" The highest message which Jesus had for the poor, despairing children of men he has given in these parables, especially in that pearl of all parables, of the Prodigal Son. He would gladly take away everything that makes men feel afraid of God by showing how heartily glad God is over the return of his lost children. The father cannot help being glad,—“It was meet to make merry.” Out of his love-warm heart there wells up the joy over his long-lost son, who has come home at last. Boldly and courageously Jesus compares the noblest traits of a human father with the character of the Heavenly Father, because he knows his Father's heart, for “I and the Father are one.” If a human father acts thus, the Heavenly Father cannot act otherwise. Jesus conceives it to be one of the life-elements of religion, that men should win confidence in the Father God; and he cannot express this conviction better than by pointing to the love of the human father, which had taught him the deepest lesson of trust.

Here in the home-life, also, was laid the foundation for his judgment of values,—his right estimate of things, with its emphasis on the essential and the eternal. The inherent foolishness of laying emphasis on earthly riches, so graphically portrayed in the parable of the Foolish Rich Man, he had already learned at home, where he had in all probability witnessed the scene of the patching up of the clothes, and of the use of old skins for new wine. Can we doubt that he learned here also to lay stress on the inwardness of true religion? He had learned in his intercourse with his Father, that those outward matters which the teachers emphasized so much could throw no shadow between him and God. Purity of heart and conscience was the only condition for him. He saw God with undimmed eye, and stood in intimate communion with him, even when his hands were not levitically clean. The only criterion of his is, whatever does not hinder real childlike communion with God cannot be sin. If his earthly father's love was independent of such outward details, how much more the love of his Heavenly Father!

NOTE IV. (page 115).

Notice, for example, Amos' experience as he himself describes it. First, he has the strange vision of the utter destruction of Israel, and he pleads for the nation; the vision comes again, and troubles the prophet greatly. Then, when he cannot rid himself of the awful sense of approaching danger, he sees the reason for the calamity. Israel cannot stand; it is as impossible for it to stand if it does not live righteously, as it is for a wall that has not been built aright—the fall *must* come. Jeremiah sees those fearful sights of absolute destruction, and hears those awful sounds of the coming enemy. The terrible anguish of soul produces in him even physical pain.

“ My anguish, my anguish ! I am pained
At my very heart;
My heart does rage within me.
I cannot hold my peace.

“ For trumpet-sound my soul has heard
And the alarm of war.
Destruction upon destruction is cried,
For the whole land is laid waste.

“ Suddenly are my tents destroyed,
My curtains in a moment.
How long shall I see the standard,
And hear the sound of the trumpet ?”

And Jeremiah also finds the *explanation* in the conditions of the time. The primary and fundamental factor in the prophetic consciousness is, that they became possessed of that awful sense of the impending doom,—a sense so strong that it was vain for them to attempt to rid themselves of it. It is not necessary to insist that this primary factor was always the first in time; that they always had this dark feeling before they had reflected upon the sins of the nation, before they had read the signs of the time. In Amos' case it seems to have been so. But, however much they may have reflected on the sin, however profoundly they may have been convinced of the moral corruption of the nation and of the necessity of a radical change or of a terrible punishment, this is not the force that drives them to proclaim the destruction. It comes to them as an *explanation* of this strange feeling which overmasters them, which is intelligible to them only on the supposition that Jehovah had spoken thus to them. Of course, the two factors are combined in their message, and it is quite

natural that their reading of the signs of the time becomes quite prominent with them; for it is on this that they must lay much stress when they address the people. "The end" must be justified to them, they must come to see that their sins must lead to such dire results, and so it comes about that the political element plays a great part in their message. It is not quite certain whether Jesus also spoke of the approaching political end of the nation. If he did, as I believe he did, it was wholly subordinated to the approach of the spiritual kingdom. It is an interesting problem whether the eschatological parables do not really belong for the most part to the beginning of his ministry, when he spoke more of the end, which was so very near, though he always retained that idea.

NOTE V. (page 116).

This gives us the explanation of the strange saying of his that produced such a profound impression on the Scribes, "Son, thy sins are forgiven" (Mark ii. 5). How does it come that Jesus is impelled to say this to the poor palsied man, when he did not say it to other sufferers? And what did he mean by it? Jesus looked into the eager eyes of the man, saw how confidingly he came to him who, as prophet, was God's representative, and knew that such childlike trust that has no fear of God can only be in one who has found peace in God. And so, full of glad surprise, he says, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." He does not give him something new, as if he intended to cure the soul first, before he would cure the body. He simply states what he sees in the man. He knows that his sins must have been forgiven, else he could not have this "faith."

That this is the true interpretation is clear from the similar story of the sinful woman in Simon the Pharisee's house (Luke vii. 36-50). There Jesus shows Simon that he must not merely infer the effect from the cause (because a great debt has been remitted, the debtor will love his creditor), but also, conversely, he must infer the cause from the effect (the love which Simon sees here exhibited is due to the fact that the great guilt has been forgiven, "Her sins, which are many, have been [perfect tense!] forgiven"). The explanation of this great love which the woman has just now shown (aorist!) is to be sought in her gratitude for the forgiveness of her sins. She shows this grateful love to Jesus because he must have been instrumental in bringing her God's absolution before the events described in this passage, although we are not told this in so many words.

NOTE VI. (page 120).

Jesus did not deceive himself in regard to his success among the people. His criticism is thoroughly sober. They appear to him like children who are sitting in the market-place to play, but cannot get up a good game because of their capriciousness; neither glad nor serious games find the approval of all, and so it happens that their playing comes to naught, on account of the petulance of some of the playmates. Just so the people behave towards the truth: when a stern ascetic prophet like John the Baptist appeared, they said, he has a demon; and when a prophet with glad heart and look like Jesus rises, they are again dissatisfied, call him a winebibber and gluttonous man, religiously worthless because he has intercourse with publicans and sinners. When Jesus spoke this parable of the Children playing in the market-place he had already experienced the first disappointments; but he had conquered them so completely that he could speak about them not only with calmness but with a certain amount of humor. They had pained him, but they could not rob him his fresh courage. His hopeful joy is still undimmed, because he knows that divine wisdom will always be justified, his work will not be in vain.

Not only the people in general were clearly understood by him: he looked, also, through his adversaries. And here the little parable pair already referred to—of the New Patch on the Old Garment and the New Wine and the Old Wine-Skins—shows very strikingly the tremendous energy of his opposition to the Pharisaic conception of life and religion. Jesus feels the contrast too strongly to believe that a union between himself and them could ever be effected without the greatest damage. As little as one should think of putting new wine into old wine-skins, since only damage would result; so little should one think that the basic principles of Jesus and his opponents could be united without the greatest damage, because the differences reach down to the very essentials of life. This, in connection with the emphasis on the new, appears to indicate an absolute break with the old on the part of Jesus. That radical break should never be left out of sight. As a true prophet, Jesus was in radical opposition to the prevailing tendencies of his time. But he did not thereby cut himself loose from all the good of the past. How far he was from doing this, he himself shows us in his parable of the True Scribe, who has been trained for the Kingdom of God, and knows how to use the new wisdom and the old, just as a householder knows how to use wisely the old as well as the

new things which he possesses. We perceive that he does not merely give advice, but lives himself according to it. He is conservative as well as radical. With clear eye he discerns that the very essence of this so-called traditional party was in deadly opposition to the great dominating principles of life, which were alive in his own soul with such freshness and originality, and which were in perfect harmony with the eternally old and true. Never saw a man more clearly the issue involved; never faced two parties each other with such determined opposition. The battle between the old and the new! Bitter personal animosity on the one side, joyous conviction of sure victory on the other side. Jesus fought in this conflict in such manner as became his character. But it is a false picture that has been painted by many Christians when Jesus' tenderness has been emphasized at the expense of his strength. It is not necessary here to enlarge on the unyielding strength of his will in his fight against his opponents, on his unsparing criticism, on the relentlessness with which he lays bare their base purposes, on the divine fury which overmastered him when he drove out the money-changers from the temple. But, in the light of it, those words which have troubled so many, assume a new significance: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also" (Luke vi. 26-29). This is not the counsel of a coward or a weakling, but the advice of the strongest of the sons of men; and he speaks these words with the full appreciation of their profound significance. His strong heart knows that he requires from his disciples something great indeed, when he asks them not to resist him that is evil, knows from his own experience that it meant the full mastery of oneself. To be kind to a friend is nothing; but to show love to an enemy, that is the great deed, and this deed is required. The immediate joining of this thought of the ease with which one loves a friend to the thought of the love of the enemy is of the greatest significance. Jesus knows what it costs, and can therefore appreciate its worth. He has learned it to be one of the fundamental principles of true religion to forgive our debtors. With out such a forgiving spirit there can be no harmony between God and the soul. And this Jesus emphasized not merely in the Lord's Prayer, but in that gracious parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xvii. 23-35), where he teaches, as it is only just and natural if a king who has shown extraordinary

mercy to a servant in forgiving him his enormous debts, reverses his act of mercy when he finds out that the servant has shown an utter lack of mercy in a similar case; so it is only just and natural if God does not forgive those who do not forgive others. Jesus shows the spirit of love even in his conflict with his opponents. He did not hate them, though they hated him most cordially. But he knows what it means to bless even those who cursed him and his work.

Jesus was never afraid of his opponents; but he was troubled on account of his friends, of those friends who had forsaken him and his cause. He had seen how the quality of his being influenced the people about him, how their lives gained by it their real value, and in one parable he compares this influence to the seasoning power of the salt. When his disciples had received from him this same quality of being, together with his principles of life, they were also filled with this seasoning power by which they would influence the people. But Jesus had made the awful observatoin that the one and the other lost this spiritual power; and it appeared to him that they were then like the salt that had lost its savor and was cast away as altogether useless. One hears the solemn warning ring through these words, though it is not directly expressed, to be careful about this spiritual power lest it be lost; and one perceives, also, what a deep and sad impression this observation must have made on Jesus. That he himself ever felt in danger of losing his great spiritual power, there is no hint whatever.