

## Chapter XVIII

**I**T is not necessary at this time of day to give more than a passing notice to what are called the miracles. Klausner says, miracles were performed by many practitioners in the Orient, and he is conscious that the compilers of the New Testament have drawn on their imagination to a great extent in recording some of the improbable happenings. The raising of Lazarus from the dead has seemed to numbers of rationalists to be the one miracle which condemns the whole series because of its utter impossibility. But in the appendix of an extremely interesting book, called *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, the incident of Lazarus is treated in accordance with Yogi practices common in India. Many instances are recorded of people raised from the dead. But were they dead? Not so long ago there was the instance of the famous Japanese statesman who was given up for dead but came to life again. In connexion with the Lazarus incident, all that is necessary to make it clear is to assume he was not dead, but in a state which gave all the external evidences of death. As for other instances of miraculous healing, it may be urged that numbers of cures, which seem to be miraculous, by laying on of hands, and all that this implies, particularly in an Oriental sense, take place in Western civilizations. Anyway, the question of belief in Jesus and his mission does not depend at all on whether he performed miracles or not. The fact that he was expected to perform miracles by a people that not only looked for them, but believed that certain highly gifted persons could perform them, must be recognized in dealing with this question. Al-

most incredible instances are recorded in old literature. What faith, the great contributing factor, as Sir William Osler called it, had to do with the cures, must be considered. Faith moves mountains, as all physicians must admit, and religious faith, scientific faith, and artistic faith are keys which unlock some of the deepest secrets of the universe. But the sublimest faith of all is that which Jesus had in full measure, indeed, as we find it in no other since Moses, and that is the faith in a bountiful Creator who has provided the source of all material needs for his children. This is the faith which lies at the basis of economic fundamentals, this, the beginning of all true faith, the one which binds man to an invisible God. Only through this faith can the kingdom be established on earth; there is no other faith which embraces all mankind.

The actions of Jesus in the Gospels speak not so loud as his words. It is wellnigh impossible to understand Jesus when he is taken from his environment. Galilee, the Galilee of the Zealots, is indispensable to a proper understanding of his mission. First and last he was a Galilean, and it may very well be that it was a Galilean who compiled the record of him which was the source of the gospel stories. Who else could have produced the Nazarene history of Jesus? It is quite admissible that he taught certain of his disciples to recite many of the sermons and parables. There is nothing unusual in that method of instructing a school. Many who can look back some fifty years, when numbers of earnest-thinking people could neither read nor write, know that many families learned from oral instruction long parts of the Bible. At the time of the Adult Schools in England, years ago, numbers of aged people told the story of how they had learned to repeat chapters of the Bible, by having them read to them, over and over again, until they had perfectly memorized them. There

is nothing strange in unlettered disciples learning to repeat the sermons of their pastors. So there may be two sources for the compilations of Mark and Matthew. One, the Nazarene record so many authorities agree existed at the time the gospels were written; the other, the learned-by-heart method of memorizing the sermons and parables. There is no other way to account for the clarity and continuity of so many closely reasoned productions. Certainly they must have come from a very great thinker, and the disciples produced no great thinker. They were simple men, who, having given up hope of a Messiah, suddenly found in Jesus what they thought was the "phoenix-like" realization of their messianic yearnings. But they did not understand the secret of his mission. Jesus came to give them what they desired, a kingdom not of this world, neither Roman nor Herodian, but they did not realize it, they were thinking of something else.

It has been said so often by the scholars that there is nothing original in the sayings of Jesus, that there are numbers of instances in the Hebrew literature before him of similar sayings, that it seems inconceivable how they have missed the fact that it is not a question of a saying here and there denoting originality or not, but of how the saying is used, in what connexion it is put. For example, Jesus turned the saying of Hillel, "What is hateful unto thyself, do not unto thy neighbour," into this form: "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even to them, for this is the law and the prophets." Now, this is the climax of a reasoned statement which begins with "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

It would be surprising if the speeches and parables of Jesus contained no sayings familiar to the people. There is a language of the folk who live always near to the soil or to primitive occupations, such as hunting, fishing, and shepherding, and in it are found sayings current at all times and with all races. Ancient literature is full of sayings that have been common in England since the days of Chaucer, and these sayings, connected with the seasons, the weather, the house, the character and conduct of the individual, differ very little from one civilization to another. The Sermon on the Mount is not a mere string of familiar sayings strung together with no definite idea or purpose in view. Taking the whole of the sermon as it is recorded in Matthew, it is possible to separate it into three sections without deleting a single verse in character with ninety-five per cent of it. Only a few lines which are obviously introduced by Christian editors need be struck out. The disputed passages are well known. The fifth chapter is complete as it stands in the New Testament; the sixth chapter should end with the eighteenth verse, making the second sermon; and the third sermon should begin in the sixth chapter at the nineteenth verse: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," and end in the seventh chapter at the twenty-seventh verse. These sermons seem to be designed for a very definite purpose. They are not specimens of spontaneous eloquence; nowhere is the impression given that any section came to him on the spur of the moment. These sermons were deliberately planned, thought out, perhaps, over a period of many years; they were prepared for the Galilean audience he addressed. They could have been thought out and spoken only by one thoroughly familiar with the conditions of the meek and the poor. No one but Jesus at that time could have put these three sermons together. No one at that time had the slightest con-

ception of what was in Jesus's mind. There is no record of any Jew, either in Galilee or in Judea, who appreciated the importance of the old law and its economic significance to the people he lived and worked with. Jesus says: "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you: till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." He lost no time in making it clear that it was the old law, according to the prophets, not according to the priests, that he came to teach and to strive to fulfil. His hearers must have been familiar with the gossip of how the old law had been changed, and how severely the changes in connexion with tithe had borne upon the people. He called them "the salt of the earth," and this passage has puzzled many commentators; indeed, many Christians have wondered why the poor in spirit and the meek should be called "the salt of the earth." The phrase is not to be taken as applying merely to their present condition, it refers to them as they were in the past before they were despoiled; it refers to them with all their future possibilities as producers. The phrase refers to all the essential, indispensable folk, those who till the soil. Jesus was perfectly orthodox in the Mosaic sense in seeking to do something for the downtrodden; Moses did just exactly the same thing. He not only went to the meek, the lowly, and the poor in spirit, he went to slaves who had had four hundred years of Egyptian taskmasters! Moses thought they were worth saving; and the reward these slaves were to receive, if they agreed to obey the law, exceeded in material value anything that has ever been offered, before or since. Moses undoubtedly considered that the Hebrew slaves in Egypt were the "salt of the earth." If they were worthy the attention of the Almighty, Moses certainly could not overlook their claim.

It must be difficult for people who have been brought up in the Resolute School, which so long taught the gospel of forcefulness, and called upon the strong in spirit to colonize, enlarge dominions, form empires, teach the gospel to the backward peoples, and so on—it must be difficult for scholars of that school, whether they be Christian or Oriental, to understand why Jesus should state the beatitudes at the beginning of the first sermon. As to the place, whether they should come first, or after the twentieth verse, it is not a matter of great importance. Still, the first sermon might have begun with the twelfth verse: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven," and then the beatitudes could, without losing effect or significance, follow after the twentieth verse: "For I say unto you, That except your justice shall exceed the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God." But to return to the Christian Nietzscheans who look with disfavour upon the meek and lowly, it should not be difficult for them to realize the worth of their imperial policies, now the results of enlarging dominions and protecting empires are plain to men of all creeds. Jesus knew how utterly futile it was to fight Rome with Roman weapons. The history of the Herodian lordship had taught him that violence against powerful political institutions which despoil the people was useless. Therefore, he chose another way—passive resistance. In originating the surest, though it might be the longest, way of resisting not evil, he formulated a method of opposition which had in it an idea, which, if carried out by all the people, would have left Rome itself helpless. Complete passive resistance, as an idea expounded by Jesus, contained all the essentials of general boycott. He opposed to force, spoliation, and slavery—non-resistance, non-co-operation, living for the day only,

voluntary poverty. The first sermon contains clearly all the instruction that is necessary for a campaign of non-resistance: "But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Retaliation had shown that the "other cheek" would not escape the blow. "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Coat and cloak were taken anyway; and neither Roman soldier nor famished Zealot gave heed to protest. The whole system was crumbling fast. "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." There was to be no resistance, no protest, no matter how terrible the suffering was; the only thing left for them to do was to submit. Death was preferable to the sickening torture of Roman rule.

Forty years of trial and tribulation in the desert were necessary before the Hebrews could enter the promised land. The Jews knew the history of the return from Egypt. Generation after generation it was taught to the children, and taught so that they could understand it. Therefore, it is not so strange that Jesus should advocate to a people whose sufferings had reached the limit of endurance that they should offer no resistance to the Roman tyranny. When he said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal," he told them how to avert the consequences of pillage; all that was necessary was sufficient for the day: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Roman soldiers, guerrillas, and thieves of other descriptions would leave them alone if they held nothing worth taking; even tax-gatherers do not bother people who have no means.

It was not altogether a policy of despair, as so many people think. Jesus was not a pessimist. The sixth chapter of Matthew, twenty-fifth to thirty-fourth verse, contains a perfect

piece of economic optimism. No higher critic, no commentator, no divine, seems to have left remarks on this section of the sermon which give the slightest idea that he understood its meaning. It has puzzled many a preacher. The first difficulty encountered in this sermon is the seeming contradiction of laying up treasures in heaven and giving no thought to the necessities of earth. Some critics have condemned Jesus for laughing, as they put it, at the hunger and poverty of his hearers. Others say his advice is most unpractical, and Renan himself tries to excuse it by saying it was an advice that could only be understood by Oriental peoples. It is curious how the atheists have completely missed the meaning; orthodox Christians seldom seem to have troubled about its meaning. Many who refer to it in their works seem to accept it as a poem, rather intended to enchant than to instruct. Not one suggests that the Galileans did not understand it; it is perhaps the one sermon Jesus delivered that his Galilean audience would have not the slightest difficulty in understanding. It may be assumed that there were few in the congregation that heard him who had enough for the season's requirements, and those who might have so much would keep it hidden away from priests and tax-collectors, save what was necessary for immediate needs, the rest living from hand to mouth. No demonstration against Jesus, no disapproval of his sayings in the sermon are recorded. It may be taken that his audience found his advice acceptable and that they clearly understood it. He advised them to lay not up for themselves treasures upon earth, for many reasons: they might be liable to tax, tariffs, and other fiscal impositions, other methods of pillage. It must be remembered that Jesus was an orthodox Jew of the ancient prophetic line, who would recognize no earthly ruler and considered it unholy to pay tax. He was not a Jew of the



type that accepted priestly changes in covenants and codes without question. He was a Galilean Jew, reared and educated in the land of Judas of Gaulon at the time when Judas lived; it is quite possible that he met him, knew him. So it would not be anything strange for the audience Jesus addressed to understand quite clearly what he meant, when he said they should not lay up treasures upon earth, because thieves might break through and steal. Such happenings might very well be a daily occurrence to many in his audience. Then he told them that no man can serve two masters. They knew what he meant; the kith and kin of Judas would know they could not serve Rome and serve God. And if the word "Mammon" stands for the Phœnician god of ill-gotten gains, the meaning is just as clear: you cannot serve God and the idol of ill-gotten gains, whether it be Roman or Phœnician. Therefore he advised them: "take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" This is the passage which some critics have thought seemed liked jeering at the penury of the people; it is one of the passages that have been used to turn thousands away from the churches. Men have asked their pastors to offer a reply to the criticism of atheists and rationalists, some simple statement as to what Jesus meant and whether his advice was sincere and likely to better their condition if they accepted it and put it into practice. Nothing was done to satisfy the demands of the curious student who wished to remain in the church but felt incapable of meeting the severe criticism of its opponents. Jesus saw quite clearly that there was an order in nature which provided the fowls of the air with food, and that thought was given to the condition of the flowers of the fields, and so on; and in nature he saw an ar-

rangement, a harmony and a sequence, all operating year after year, which to the man near the soil indicates design and purpose, and that the designer is careful to provide for the creatures of his care. Often it must have struck Jesus that the same care lavished on the birds and animals, on life in nature, must be lavished on man. What would a Creator be like, that remembered the birds, but forgot man, and how could it be expected of man to praise God, from whom all blessings flow, if man thought God had left him helpless? Jesus had no difficulty in understanding the law, in going back to the old, original covenant and realizing its deep secret. God's kingdom is a kingdom wherein "thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it." Jesus knew what that meant, but that was in the promised land, not in a land held by the Romans, or by Herod, or by the priests. All that was to be found everywhere where the reign of God's justice prevailed. No, Jesus was not scoffing at the penury of his hearers; he was giving them the only advice that can be given to the poor. He said: Are ye not much better than the birds of the air? If God clothe the grass of the field shall he not much more clothe you? Why should you be anxious what you shall eat, what you shall drink, what you shall wear? Why? If "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," he has most assuredly provided the source from which you can gain them, and, if you cannot use the source, then it is not God's fault, it is yours, for permitting anybody to thwart the intention of the Creator and to disrupt his reign of justice. Whether the advice be given to Orientals or to the people of temperate or colder zones, it is just as sound. The source from which man produces what he eats, what he drinks, what he wears, the roof he lives under, and so on, is not merely Oriental, it is uni-

versal, and the Finn or the Icelander is not less a land animal than the native of Galilee or the Uganda. If men could only enjoy what the Créator intended them to have, it would not be necessary to take thought for the morrow, it would not be necessary to lay up treasures upon earth. Jesus said: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things, but seek ye first God's kingdom and its justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." In this perfect piece of economic reasoning Jesus gave to mankind the most precious advice that has ever been tendered it. Probably one of the great reasons why Jesus has lived all through these twenty centuries and his name and fame today are discussed more widely than those of any other man, is that the simple folk, everywhere that his message has been taken, understood this sermon. It is hard to imagine the people of England, when they received Wycliffe's Bible, whether they could read it or had to have it read to them, misunderstanding the wisdom and truth of this economic essay on God's goodness. Misunderstanding has come only from the so-called educated sections of society. Whether it be that some minds lose all touch with the simple things of nature when the complexities of political and social systems wind their tentacles about them, and cleave to the state as their one paradise; or others retain all the old feeling and receive sympathetically the first-hand evidence of God's work and intention, having understanding and sympathy, but realize that the individual life is short, that political and social systems have got into a hardened state, and that one man can do so little to help, and that, seeking the quiet life, it is better to leave the work of reformation to those who have not so much to lose; whatever the reason for inaction, educated people have done little for the kingdom of God on earth.

Jesus was speaking to people who were the victims of the tax-gatherer, poor people who had had their goods stolen, distracted folk who had tried to serve God and Cæsar. To tell such a body of folk not to be anxious about the necessaries of life seems absurd, and it is not to be wondered at that men who have heard such explanations are leaving the churches and have been leaving the churches now for more than half a century.

The attitude of the church to an analysis of this part of the sermon at one time made many worthy men feel that it was not straightforward. The very people who talk so much about the spirit, the eternal life, the freedom from the cares of this world, in connexion with this passage, forget the story of the feeding of the five thousand. They forget the numbers of times that Jesus refers to the poor and hungry, and that they should be clad and fed. He says: "What man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" Who has been able to understand the church's explanation of this and similar passages? Jesus says: "Is not the life more than food, and the body than raiment?" Imagine, if it is at all possible, Jesus scoffing at their condition, he who knew their plight! "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

As an economic contrast this will never be beaten. He practically says to them: you poor, deluded, despoiled creatures, anxious every day about the wherewithal of your necessaries, do you think your heavenly Father who provides for the birds believes you are of less value and provides not for you? Life is more than food, the body more than raiment; therefore God does not give life and its temple, the body, without providing the source from which life draws its sus-

tenance. The twenty-seventh verse: "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" means: anxiety alone will not add another loaf to the larder. As if the beautiful instance of the life of the birds were not enough, he furnished, in contrast to their lack of raiment, a still more beautiful image: the Creator's care of the lilies. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" They knew they had lost faith; they understood the old story. To them it was the voice of the prophets, the promise of Immanuel, the New Jerusalem, where they would build and inhabit, plant and eat, enjoy the work of their hands. O ye of little faith! the faith which binds man to an invisible God, the faith in a bountiful Creator, the faith in a Father who knows what his children need. "Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things."

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," Jesus said. And yet the church has suggested Jesus urged the hungry and the ill-clad to think of another world, to disregard material cares of this, and the necessities of life.

There is nothing in the whole range of interpretation so far from the true point as the theory that Jesus held out no earthly hope of material amelioration. One of a race nurtured in the philosophy of Deuteronomy and Leviticus could not have drawn the poor, the helpless, to him, if he offered a stone when he knew they were anxious for bread. He would not have drawn a platoon to hear him had he been silent on this question. In thought he hailed from Ezra, from Isaiah.

"Seek ye first the kingdom (God's kingdom—not Cæsar's) and the justice of the kingdom, and all these things shall be added unto you." And in that kingdom, the New Jerusalem, men shall build and inhabit, shall plant and eat; they shall

enjoy the work of their hands. "Be not, therefore, anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself." And who would be anxious for the morrow, if he lived in "a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it"? The promise of old time.

There is nothing in this sermon which suggests any form of political government; there is nothing in it which even approximates systems of socialism or communism; it contains not one sentence indicating communal ownership of land or produce, implements or dwelling; in it there is nothing which sanctions the abrogation of natural rights. Therefore, it is theocratic in the old Mosaic sense. Many have thought that Jesus was an Essene. They find in his doctrine many likenesses to the doctrine of that cult. There are several objections to the theory: one, mentioned above, is that there is no hint in his sayings of communism. Another objection is, the Essenes' organization was strictly esoteric and ordained a novitiate of three years for intending members. The gospel of Jesus on the other hand was for all men, women, and children, of all races, and anyone was eligible for the kingdom of God at any time and place, by seeking the kingdom and its justice. If, as Dr. Eisler suggests in a very interesting thesis, Jesus was a Slep or Rechabite, then he must have renounced the oath of the tribe, because everything he did and said differs entirely from the order of the cult laid down in the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, where it is commanded by Jonadab, the son of Rechab: "Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever; neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers." It must be remembered in considering the mission of Jesus that its aim and purpose was to establish the

kingdom of God on earth. If this idea is not kept uppermost in the mind, all effort to understand him will be as naught. First and last the great injunction was: "Seek ye first the kingdom and its justice and all these things shall be added unto you," and: "Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things." It may be, as some have suggested, that Jesus thought in the early days of the mission that Galilee was the world, but if he did there is nothing in his doctrine that excludes any other land of the earth. It is applicable to any Galilee under the sun wherein men have to use the earth: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

That he was conscious of the perils of teaching such a doctrine is obvious. When he sent his disciples out to the lost sheep of the House of Israel to preach, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," he told them to beware of men: "For they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings," knowing that the preaching of the coming of the reign of God would be opposed by the priests as sternly as it would be by governors and kings. He knew how families would be torn asunder by his doctrines: "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." All this has taken place for much less than he promised. What could be truer than his saying: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I come not to send peace but a sword"? Ever since his day, because men have opposed the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, there has been no peace, and there will be no peace until men decide to put away the sword and accept the will of God. He knew the dangers, he

knew the consequences of preaching such a doctrine; his prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter. But what alternative is there? None. Twenty centuries of turmoil and struggle have not revealed one. Twenty centuries of Hebrew history have not revealed one; all alternatives call for the sword. His swordless campaign of non-resistance was the only logical one that has been offered to man.

That the secret of his mission was not understood by his disciples is plain when the passages which refer to their demand for a sign to be given are closely examined. Leaving the obvious introductions by Christian editors aside, and the laboured insertions of those who desired to show how the prophecies were fulfilled, it is clear that no sign was to be given. The first one, which refers to the resurrection as a fulfilment of the Jonas prophecy, could not possibly have been spoken by Jesus. The disciples were looking for a Messiah, perhaps; with hopes revived, they imagined one had come at last that would not fail. At Cæsarea Philippi, according to Matthew, it is said: "He asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Mark says that he charged them that they should tell no man of him, and this does not necessarily imply that Jesus knew he was the Christ and desired his disciples to keep it secret. Then, in Mark, comes the extraordinary idea of resurrection, and that Jesus spoke openly to them as the Messiah: "And he began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." This unac-



countable contradiction cannot possibly be explained. Is it likely that with one breath he would say, No sign shall be given, and, Tell no man I am the Christ, and in almost the next one begin to teach the very thing he had charged them to tell no man? The probabilities are that Jesus did not desire to be identified with the Jewish hope of a Messiah; it was the disciples themselves who invented the idea and clothed Jesus with the Messiahship. Even in Matthew's version it is plain that at Cæsarea Philippi he charged his disciples that they should tell no man he was the Christ. Why? If he felt he were the Messiah, why should he try to hide the fact? If he were the Messiah, and the disciples guessed he was, could not numbers of others who were looking for the Messiah also guess? Jesus was conscious of the fate of the Messiahs of the past; he was not for taking the kingdom by violence, quite the reverse. There was no room for a Messiah in his system. It is quite plain that in the minds of his disciples miracles made the Messiah, but it is shown how little Jesus regarded the matter of miracles; he did not want them mentioned.

It would be as well for anyone interested in the construction that has been put on the declaration, as it is called, at Cæsarea Philippi, to compare Mark's version with that of Matthew. It is noticeable in recent works by Jewish and Christian authors that this question may assume great importance in the controversies that are now taking shape. Dr. Eisler, in his book *The Messiah Jesus*, holds that Jesus had long known that he was the Messiah. He kept the information to himself for reasons "to be sought in the most obvious motives of worldly wisdom and political precaution," says Dr. Eisler. It might be said with some justice that the disciples were looking for a Messiah and ready to accept the first comer who presented a better appearance than so many of the failures. Some of the

writers who support the declaration theory do not seem to have examined all the evidence the New Testament offers. Stripping the story of all the obvious additions of Christian editors, it is very difficult to sustain the idea that Jesus thought he was the Messiah. He not only told them not to mention their thoughts; nowhere is it implied that he said he was the Messiah. Modern attempts to establish the case of a Messiah according to the ideas in the minds of the simple disciples are strange enough as a literary exercise, but what there is to be gained by it with regard to the purpose and true mission of Jesus is hard to say. Modern attempts will perhaps be no more successful than the first centuries' attempts. To some students the early Christian editors and councils, by concentrating on the Messiah idea to the complete exclusion of the wisest counsellor mankind has had, have caused nothing but the strife which has pushed the coming of the kingdom on earth farther and farther away from man. It may be urged that the Messiahship conferred on Jesus by the disciples was necessary for the purposes of the crucifixion and resurrection, and that to question the wisdom of the Christian editors, who, in Matthew's gospel, put together the story of the happenings at Cæsarea Philippi, must strike a blow at the foundations of the church. That notion opens up a very big question, one the church itself will have to deal with very soon; it is one that extends beyond the present purpose here, but in passing it may be mentioned that numbers of authors have dealt with it, and one of the best presentments of the case is to be found in "The Standpoint of the Ideal," in Frederick Lange's *History of Materialism*. Lange's work is most sympathetically treated by Vaihinger in his *Philosophy of "As If."* Anyway, what has the church to lose? Alas, what has she lost! The English church has everything to gain; and nothing need be

changed. As Le Roy says of the Christian church, nothing need be changed so far as ritual is concerned. The essential thing is, to revive interest in the mission and true purpose of Jesus. When the church is known generally to stand for the kingdom of God on earth, it will become again the Bible of the poor, the centre of indispensable knowledge, and function with something of the glory of Glastonbury and Chartres at the height of their fame. But it must be understood that the ritual and the observances are all poetic expressions of man, the artist's desire to fashion something to the glory of God.

During the past ten years scores of works have been published which re-examine the gospels from the historical standpoint. One of the most interesting is Dr. Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth*. Dr. Klausner is a Jew who has made a profound study of the history of the Hebrews. In connexion with the happenings at Cæsareà Philippi, he shows quite clearly that the synoptics are unanimous in recording that Jesus forbade his disciples to tell anyone what they thought of him. But they had learned nothing definite from Jesus, unless the obvious additions of the Christian editors are accepted. Dr. Klausner says time and place were yet unsuitable. If this were so, there would be some indication in the version of Mark to the effect that Jesus was not yet ready for the announcement. But there is no such suggestion in any of the versions. Dr. Klausner sees quite clearly that the Christian editors must have introduced the prophecy of his own sufferings. He says:

To say that he told his disciples that "he should be killed and after three days rise again," is to go beyond the bounds of probability. Some Christian scholars hold that "after three days" signifies "after a short time," following the scriptural verse: "He shall revive us after two days and on the third day he shall raise us up, and we shall live before him." But the gospels nowhere quote such

a passage in explanation of this "prophecy"; and, again, it would be a coincidence, amounting to a miracle, had he spoken of the death and revival after three days on the basis of scripture and then been actually killed and, after three days, been found by his disciples to have risen again.

How it is possible for him to hold that Jesus accepted the Messiahship as suggested by Peter, and then deny that he could have made the prophecy about being killed and rising again after three days, is difficult to understand. Surely these two ideas cannot be separated. If the one is improbable, the other is improbable, and Dr. Klausner says: "The whole idea of a Messiah who should be put to death was one which, in Jesus's time, was impossible of comprehension both to the Jews and to Jesus himself." Further, Dr. Klausner says: "The words recorded at this stage: 'Let him deny himself and take up his cross,' must be regarded as a later addition; crucifixion was not a Jewish mode of death, and Jesus the Galilean could not have used such a figure of speech, since Galilee had not yet possessed a Roman procurator, and Jewish legal processes were still in force there."

What remains of the incident at Cæsarea Philippi is the sudden determination to go to Jerusalem. This is far more significant in the life of Jesus than the guess of Peter about the Messiahship. Jesus realized that he had failed to make his mission clear to his disciples. They had understood the economic revelation contained in the Sermon on the Mount. That was natural, for some of them were undoubtedly Zealots, as Dr. Eisler convincingly shows. But they had failed utterly to grasp the secret which lay in the non-resistance idea, as the only logical way of bringing about the kingdom of God on earth. When Peter remonstrated and said: "Be it far from thee; this shall not be unto thee," it must be taken

to refer to the decision to go to Jerusalem, not to the manner of his death; and when Jesus said: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," there can be no doubt the words were spoken by one who realized hope had gone of Peter understanding his mission. This event in the career of Jesus is as poignant as the arraignment before Pilate, or the crucifixion itself.

It was from this time that Jesus was disillusioned. He realized that they did not understand him. Their devotion, their faith in his miraculous powers, were no compensations for their failure to understand the great secret of the establishment of the reign of justice and God's kingdom. Hence, the sudden desire to see it out and go to Jerusalem. What could be better proof of his objection to their yearning for a Messiah than the following:

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

The hopelessness of it all! Elias came, and they knew him not. Jesus came, they heeded him not, and the disciples thought not of him but of John the Baptist.

Recent authors make much of Jesus moving from place to place to elude his enemies, but nearly all are under the impression that these enemies were Jews, the priestly class of one sect or another doing lip-service to Rome. There is little to show that Jesus was conscious of coming into conflict in Galilee with the Jewish authorities. It is true he warned his

disciples that they might be haled before the magistrates, and that they were in danger of being scourged in the synagogues, but that refers to other districts. He expressly stated to them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." The context in Matthew, Chapter x, clearly shows that he had more fear of the political authorities of Rome, than of the Jews. If they were to preach the coming of the Messiah, there is no reason why he should fear that "the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." This indicates clearly that he feared the clash with the political authorities not with the Jews, who were looking for a Messiah. Dr. Eisler has shown from the Roman records what a perfect spy system was maintained in the provinces. Who would know this better than Jesus? Had he lived in Galilee for nearly thirty years, without knowing the details of the conflict between Judas and Rome; could such a collision as that which took place near Sepphoris have happened without the knowledge of Jesus? Dr. Klausner says:

Near Sepphoris, only an hour's journey from Jesus's birthplace, Nazareth, Judah, the Galilean, collected a large body of desperate nationalists, attacked the king's armoury, seized the weapons, and with these armed his followers, and took away all the money he found. Then the warrior-zealot fought against all those, Gentiles or Jews, who opposed the idea of freedom; and, as is usual in such campaigns, he made little distinction between actual enemies and traitors and those who were merely peace-loving Jews. He put the fear of himself on the whole of Galilee.

If this statement gives any true indication of the condition of Galilee, how can it be maintained that Jesus did not realize

the political consequences of his mission? It may be assumed the spies were everywhere in Galilee hunting information about the movements of Judas and his adherents. Therefore, the commands given by Jesus to his disciples, when he sent them out to preach, were in the nature of warnings against coming into collision with the political authorities. This is important, because it will explain away some of the difficulties commentators have found wellnigh insuperable in dealing with the trial before Pilate. It is conceivable that Peter, when he advised Jesus not to go to Jerusalem, was fully aware, as a Zealot, of the perils that he would encounter there. But Jesus knew better than Peter the real nature of the peril. Peter was thinking of the things that savour of man, not of those that savour of God.

Dr. Eisler, in *The Messiah Jesus*, depends largely for his picture of the great end on the thesis that Jesus was of the House of David. In a most interesting search through the literature of that time, much of which is analysed in the light of modern interpretation of it, he goes back for his starting-point to Deuteronomy, Chapter xvii, verse 14 to the end of the chapter. But this chapter must be of very late date. It was obviously inserted in Deuteronomy by the priests to create, as it were, a tradition for the appointment of Saul. It is not necessary to be familiar with the oldest sources; the student can take the Pentateuch and work out for himself (it has been done often enough) a straightforward story of what happened, by eliminating all that could not have happened, that is, everything that contradicts the spirit and intention of the basic idea. In Dr. Garstang's *The Foundations of Bible History*, at the beginning of the analysis of the texts of the books of Joshua and Judges he tells his readers:

The original nucleus of the Book is found to comprise two independent strains of tradition, which are believed to have been set down in writing during the ninth and eighth century B.C. and in part welded together during the seventh century B.C. The symbols used to denote these elements in the text are J, E, and JE respectively. These old documents were grouped, amplified, and explained from a national and religious standpoint in the sixth century by the Deuteronomic School (D) under which the Bible began to take connected form. Then ensued the Exile, during and after which the Book was further supplemented and edited from the point of view of the organized priesthood (P), in the light of more recent political developments. Thus the O.T. did not gain its final form until about the second century B.C. Even so, no surviving Hebrew version of the text can be attributed to an earlier date than the end of the first millenium A.D. Earlier copies exist of the Greek rendering, known from the circumstances of its translation as the Septuagint (abbreviated as LXX), which was begun at Alexandria about the middle of the third century B.C. and may thus preserve the original form or meaning of various passages better than the Massoretic or standard Hebrew text.

Dr. Garstang explains:

J denotes that part of the narrative, distinguished by the use of the divine name YAHWEH, which preserves chiefly the traditions of Judah and took written form about the ninth century, possibly about 850 B.C. E denotes that part of the narrative in which the divine name is rendered Elohim (God); this took form apparently about 750 B.C. and seems to embody more particularly the traditions of Ephraim. E2 is used especially to denote the somewhat later origin of most of the Book of Judges, which took form about 700 B.C. JE denotes the narrative in which portions of J and E were combined, probably in the first half of the seventh century B.C. between 700 and 650 B.C.

It is a different matter when it comes to precise chronology and the corroborative work of the archæologists; there the



student must depend on the work of the experts. But it is quite possible that an amateur's mind, unburdened and unhampered by too great a weight of technical ballast, will be quicker to detect introductions which do not harmonize with the structure and sequence of the form originally given to the idea. There could not have been room for the idea of a king in the Deuteronomic period, that is, at the time of Moses and Joshua. And when at length the people asked for a king, the demand displeased Samuel, and when he prayed to the Lord for counsel, the Lord promised a king that would rule like an affliction and a scourge over the people. The appointment of Saul was not a blessing; indeed, it was not intended to be beneficent in any way, and "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul: and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel." It is a very thin foundation Dr. Eisler sets for the Christian claim of royal descent for Jesus. But it is interesting, and the way Dr. Eisler pieces his thesis together provides some of the most stimulating and exciting pages to be found in recent literature on this vast subject.

It is curious, when one turns to Dr. Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth*, to find scarcely any reference to the so-called Deuteronomic Royalty Law. He rejects the idea of Jesus having been born in Bethlehem of Judea, and says: "There is no sound basis for such an hypothesis." It would be indeed an extraordinary thing if Jesus lived with his family until he was nearly thirty years of age, without realizing that he was of royal descent. How could such a secret be kept quiet in a large family? Surely, the neighbours, who had grown up with them generation after generation would know something of it!