



Excerpts from *The Great Physician*
For study related to the Bible Lesson February 15 - 21, 2010

Introductory Note – *The Great Physician*, Vols 1 & 2 were written by Vinton Dearing, Christian Scientist, who was Professor of English at UCLA where he taught the English Bible as Literature for forty years. The book is a composite translation of the four Gospels, organized by event rather than book, and includes a commentary. Because of the composite nature of the translation and commentary, the excerpts below may cover more topics than the citation in the Lesson. The paperback two-volume set of books is available for purchase on amazon.com and a hardback study edition available through amazon.com and at vintondearing.com.

SECTION III – B8 (Luke 2:25 ... 52)

JESUS' BIRTH

[Luke 2:22-39](#)

The Law of Moses (the Pentateuch) says that childbirth makes a woman impure until a period of time has passed and she has made a sacrifice to God. Should the child be a boy, the period is forty days. During her time of impurity she is not to touch holy things or to worship at the sanctuary of God. The Law of Moses also says that firstborn boys belong to God and must be purchased from Him. The purchase money became due and payable when the child was thirty days old.

Luke says that Joseph and Mary decided to redeem the child at the same time and place that Mary made her sacrificial offering. [“And when the days of their \[customary\] purification were completed according to the Law of Moses, they brought him \[Jesus\] up to Jerusalem to present \[him\] to the Lord \[and buy him back\], just as it has been written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every male that opens the womb \[that is, is the first born\] shall be called holy to the Lord’; and to give an offering \[on Mary’s behalf\] according to what has been said in the Law of the Lord, ‘A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’”](#) An offering of two birds was allowed for those who could not afford to offer a lamb and a pigeon or dove. Mary and Joseph evidently thought it wise to conceal the Magi’s gifts, and at any rate they soon had need of them. There was no diminution in the amount Joseph had to pay a priest to redeem Jesus from God. It was five shekels, ten days’ wages for a vineyard worker, and had to be paid in silver coins of Tyre, which might mean going to a money-changer. Joseph could have paid the money anywhere, but perhaps Bethlehem was too small a town to support a money-changer, who would in any case have found more business in the nearby capital city.⁷⁶

Continuing with Luke. [“And there was a man in Jerusalem, you see, named Symeon, and this man \[was\] righteous and devout, expecting Israel’s comfort, and \[the\] Holy Spirit was on him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he would see the Lord’s Messiah. And he came in the Spirit \[that is, inspired and directed by the Spirit\] into the temple precincts, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do according to the custom of the Law about him, he also took him into his arms and blessed God](#)

and said,

Now You are freeing Your slave, Master,
in peace according to Your word,
for my eyes saw Your salvation
which You prepared in the eyes of all the peoples,
a light for [the Gentile] nations.”

Symeon’s poem is called his song or psalm or the *Nunc Dimittis*, the latter from its first words in the Vulgate translation.

“And his [the baby’s] father and mother were wondering at the things being spoken about him.” Those who believe Joseph was Jesus’ father, not just his foster father, feel that Luke’s language here and later reflects the fact. Luke may have believed the virgin birth of Jesus, they say, but he did not manage to filter out all the evidence of Jesus’ true parentage when he recorded his early life.

“And Symeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘You see, this [child] is destined to cause the fall and rise of many [people] in Israel [or, if the meaning is “things” instead of “people” then “the fall” is the fall of evil and “the rise” is the rise of good]. And [he’s destined] to be a sign [a proof of God’s intent, which will be] spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also [the virulence of the opposition he will stir up will pierce you to the heart]), in order that thoughts from many hearts [good and bad] will be revealed.’

“And there was Anna [Hannah], a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She had advanced in [age] many days, living with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she [was] a widow until she was [now] eighty-four, and she used not to leave the temple [during the hours when the gates were open], worshipping with fastings and prayers night and day. And at the same hour she approached and was giving thanks to God and was speaking about him [Jesus] to all those expecting Jerusalem’s redemption [from Roman rule].⁷⁷

“And when they finished everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth.” But this is to anticipate. First, they returned to Bethlehem.

76. “Their purification”: this is the reading in Luke 2:22 of all manuscripts before the tenth century except one, Codex Bezae (D or 05, fifth century), which has “his purification.” A few later manuscripts also have “his.” The edition of the Greek text used by the King James translators has “her purification.” A twelfth- or thirteenth-century manuscript, 435, and a few others omit the pronoun. Possibly “her” was originally a guess by someone copying a manuscript like 435. Many scholars believe that Luke’s sentence betrays an ignorance of Jewish practice (see Lachs, p. 32, and *ABD*, III, 411, where the writer insists that “their” means Joseph’s and Mary’s, and III, 415). I believe Luke simply wrote rather awkwardly or carelessly here. Leviticus ch. 12 gives the laws governing Mary’s purification. It would appear that she had a choice among bringing the birds with her, buying them in the temple precincts (Matthew 21:12 = Mark 11:15), or putting an appropriate coin in the receptacle in the temple treasury that was labeled “bird-offerings” (Shekalim, VI, 5). The bird, or, for poor people, one of the birds, was called a sin offering, because the same offering might be made as an atonement either for sin or for what counted as uncleanness, lack of holiness (see Leviticus 5:1-10).

Jesus’ redemption: Exodus 13:2 (which Luke quotes, but not exactly); Numbers 18:15-16. A shekel was equal to four denarii (see “Money” in *IDB*, III, 428b; “Coinage” in *ABD*, I, 1086; some

information in *IDB* is subject to dispute, as may be seen by comparing it with Meshorer's *Ancient Jewish Coinage*). For the denarius (penny in the King James Version) as a day's wage see Matthew 20:2.

The rules for paying the redemption are in the tractate Bekoroth, ch. VIII. They are followed today by devout Jews, who find a man with a name like Cohen, Cohn or Kahane (all representations of the Hebrew word meaning "priest") and give him the money. The recipient today gives the money to charity. Originally the priest kept the money, but it was required only if the child lived thirty days; if paid before that and the child died, the priest returned it. Joseph may, then, have waited until Jesus was more than thirty days old before finding a priest to pay the money to. Baba Mezi'a, 52a-b (IV, 4), makes reference to the fact that smaller places did not have money-changers. The money-changers mentioned in Shekalim, I, 3, set up their tables in the temple precincts in Jerusalem.

77. The name of this Symeon is usually spelled Simeon (see also Luke 3:30), in accordance with the standard interpretation of Hebrew vowel pointing; the standard representation of Greek upsilon is y, as in symphony. In Acts 13:1 and 15:14 other Symeons, one of them Simon Peter, have the Greek spelling in many modern translations (not the King James).

Lachs, p. 32, finds much to object to in this whole passage, but on insufficient grounds. It is true that there was no law requiring that children be redeemed at the temple, but there was no law against it; Luke's interweaving of what was required (Mary's sacrifice) with what was not does not imply that he did not know Jewish practice.

Rabbinical use of the phrase "the consolation of Israel" to mean the rebuilding of the temple (after the Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70) is no guide to how it may have been used by Symeon in Jesus' time. Luke uses "consolation" as a synonym for "redemption" in his immediately following account of Anna. Coins struck by the Jewish revolutionaries in A.D. 69 bear the inscription, "For the redemption of Zion." Meshorer (Kraft and Nickelsburg, p. 214) says, "The expression 'redemption' on these coins indicated the hope of the defenders [of Jerusalem] for help from heaven, a hope that is mentioned by Josephus" in *War*, 6.5.2 [VI, 285-286].

And finally, Jews did identify themselves by tribe in Jesus' time: besides Anna, most of those who offered wood for the wood festivals at the temple knew their tribes (Ta'anith, 26a [IV, 1]), and Paul was a Benjamite (Romans 11:1).

ABD, VI, 26-27, summarizes speculations ancient and modern about Symeon and how Luke's account of him should be translated and interpreted.

Luke 2:40

"And the child was growing and was gaining strength, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him." To repeat, God's grace is His free gift of understanding, understanding of both Him and His effect, "His eternal power [for good] and divine nature," as Paul put it, expressed in patience, meekness, love and doing good.⁸²

Thus Jesus began to walk and talk, sharing his joys and expressing his love in new ways. He learned more about thinking and reasoning also, about moving mentally from A to B. Eventually, after he had thought over what he had been taught about how to pray, he was to conclude that praying and thinking were the same thing, that prayer is reasoning about God, and that all right thinking, feeling, acting, all true knowledge, have their source in Him. More than that, a life of prayer proves God's ever-present goodness. Would that we had a record of this giant step for mankind and could put a date to it. Perhaps it came so early or so naturally to Jesus that he never thought to reminisce about it.

Footnotes

82. Romans 1:20.

GROWING UP IN NAZARETH

Although Matthew calls Nazareth a city, the remains of it from Jesus' day indicate that it was a very small place indeed. Its populace has been estimated as less than 500.⁸³ It is, as Matthew says, a mountain town in a natural bowl in the hills from the eastern edge of which one looks southeast over a plain toward the town of Nein (Nain in Luke) on a gentler slope about seven miles away. All the ridges in Galilee have gentler slopes to the west and more abrupt to the east. At its southwest end the plain makes a T-junction with a similar plain. It rises gently to the northeast, flows around the feet of Mt. Tabor, which stands like a rock in a stream, and descends in the same direction but more steeply and with a more broken surface to the middle of the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, a freshwater lake more than two hundred feet below sea level.

In this plain, the hill towns on its borders, and its extension to the north along the shore of the lake, an area about seven by twenty-five miles, or about an eighth of the province of Galilee, Jesus spent almost the whole of his working life. On occasion he crossed the lake, a harp-shaped surface about seven miles wide by thirteen; once he went northwest of it to the seacoast, a journey of about fifty miles; once or twice he went south to Jericho or Jerusalem, a distance of about sixty-five miles from Nazareth, in addition to trips to the capital at festival times, when all who could were accustomed to go.

The English Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and their friends, believed that the landscape of one's childhood decisively influenced one's character. A pleasant countryside made a good man, a dismal city a bad one. Galilee, Josephus tells us, was extensively cultivated, was outstanding, as compared with Italy, for the length of its growing season, as long as ten months, and was famous for its olive oil and wine. It is still fertile and well watered by rain and streams. The principal river is the Jordan, which formed its eastern boundary. Rising on the slopes of Mt. Hermon, north of the Sea of Galilee, it flows south to the Dead Sea through a rift valley that continues into Africa. The climate of Galilee is generally Mediterranean. Snow may be found on Mt. Hermon all year, but in the inland valleys to its south, especially those below sea level, the heat can be intense, increased sometimes by hot winds from the east and southeast. From the middle of May to the middle of October there is no rain, but in many places there is heavy dew.

Galilee when Jesus lived there was ruled by a son of Herod the Great called either Antipas or Herod by the early historians and Herod Antipas by more recent writers. The territory was divided into five or more areas whose administrative centers were in cities, the most important being Sepphoris and later Tiberias. In retaliation for a guerrilla attack on the arsenal at Sepphoris in 4 B.C., the year of Antipas' accession, the Romans burned down the city and enslaved the inhabitants, but Antipas rebuilt it. He founded Tiberias in A.D. 20.⁸⁴ Both cities had a mixed Gentile and Jewish population. Both have some claim to have been Antipas' capital at different times. Both were within a few miles of places where Jesus lived — Sepphoris in the hills northwest of Nazareth, Tiberias on the southwest shore of the Sea of Galilee — and there is a tradition that Jesus' mother was born in Sepphoris.⁸⁵ But we have no record that he visited either place.

Some scholars suppose Jesus grew up and worked in a rural setting of almost Wordsworthian beauty, without necessarily thinking that it formed Jesus' character. It would be more accurate to say that Jesus lived and worked in a thickly-populated suburban setting. There were, Josephus says, two hundred four cities and villages in all Galilee, which would mean that they were between two and a half and three miles apart on average, somewhat more in the north, somewhat less in the south, the smaller places clustering around the larger. Rarely, then, would a person have to walk more than an hour from one inhabited place to the next. Josephus also says there were hundreds of boats on the lake. He often numbers the inhabitants of apparently small areas in thousands, and while his reckonings of very large numbers seem to many, including myself, to be considerable exaggerations, they still, even if greatly reduced, support the Gospel accounts of gatherings of four or five thousand to hear Jesus.⁸⁶

Cities might have walls, and if so, some of the streets might run parallel to the walls in concentric circles; otherwise, particularly if there was Roman influence, the streets might form a grid, with a main intersection at the center of town in a forum or market place; or the streets might have no particular plan or width, especially if the place was small. Main streets were paved with stone, as were main roads between cities. Places of worship and government buildings might stand by themselves, but other structures stood shoulder to shoulder in "islands" fronting directly on the streets but sometimes with central courtyards. Places of worship in cities with a sufficient Gentile element included shrines as well as synagogues. A Jewish ruler might build a temple for his pagan subjects, as Herod the Great did at Caesarea Philippi, and a wealthy Gentile, on the other hand, might build a synagogue for his Jewish friends, as a centurion did at Capernaum. In larger places, the government buildings included palaces, council chambers, law courts, archives, treasuries, garrisons, arsenals, prisons, and public baths. Even relatively small places, if they were on trade routes, had custom houses. There was a stadium at Tiberias, a theater at Sepphoris, a custom house at Capernaum.

The ground floors of many of the private buildings in cities contained shops selling and sometimes manufacturing furniture, utensils, implements, oil, woven goods, dye stuffs, clothing, footwear, jewelry, cosmetics, perfume, grain, processed foods, spices, wine, works of art, musical instruments, books, animals, slaves, and so on, together with services such as fulling (dry cleaning and pressing woolen cloth). The cloth may have been woven and the food prepared in nearby homes by enterprising women, who were praised for their industry. In some buildings, then, there was stabling for animals, in some there was warehouse space as well. One or more buildings housed banks. Tanning, a smelly business in antiquity because urine was used in the process, was done outside the city perimeter, from which we may conclude that manure was not allowed to accumulate in the streets. Places on the water's edge, like Capernaum, had boat yards, and no doubt carpenters and woodcutters had open yards for their logs. Places like Capernaum had racks for drying fish outside the town.

The buildings were of local stone, brick, or adobe, roofed with mud laid over planks or brushwood, or perhaps, as in some houses across the Jordan, with slabs of basalt, or again perhaps, on some of the larger buildings, with tiles. They might form part of the walls in walled cities (the city wall at Dan was adobe; recently excavated, it has begun to weather again). Roofs were surrounded by parapets, as required by the Law of Moses, lest people should fall to their deaths. There was some provision for runoff of rain into cisterns. There might also be cisterns for the storage of grain. Wood, plaster and paint were used as in houses today, and plaster might be used for flooring instead of stone or mosaic as in public buildings, or beaten earth as in humbler

homes.

Cities were much quieter then than now. The principal noise early every morning was the sound of meal being ground in hand mills of stone for the day's bread. After that, the sounds of various trades could be heard, and musical instruments. Smoke from cooking and heating found its way out through windows, which might have lattices or shutters, but not glass. We should note, also, that women might own homes and businesses if they had inherited them or had only younger or no relatives and had bought them.

Personal hygiene was partially taken care of in the home, but men might go to bath houses, and because some religious acts of cleansing among the Jews required full immersion in fresh water there were also public places for this kind of ablution, newly whitewashed just before the great religious festivals, when they would be put to most use. Burial places were outside the cities, because, for the Jews, contact with dead bodies made one unclean, requiring special washing. If burials were not in tombs, the burial places were marked with stones that were whitewashed, because the Jews were taught that even one's shadow touching certain kinds of stones at graves made one unclean.

Women gathered at the wells, water carriers and other hawkers moved through the streets, shepherds and drovers led sheep, goats, and cattle to butcher shops or milked them at house doors, traders conducted strings of camels or asses to and from inns or merchants' warehouses, porters, many of them slaves, carried heavy loads, sometimes suspended from yokes across their shoulders. Boys passed on their way to school, other children played in the market places, sometimes dancing to the music of a flute, sometimes acting out disasters of various kinds with appropriate mourning. At the law schools men too poor to pay for admission might be seen listening at windows, beggars sat at street doors or gates to public places, loafers leaned against walls, farm laborers assembled in market places, waiting to be hired, pawn brokers waited at house doors for borrowers to bring articles out to them, being forbidden by the Law of Moses to enter. Donkeys and other animals stood tethered in streets and courtyards. Here and there invalids, paralytics, or sick persons were carried on their beds, perhaps to visit a physician or an exorcist, perhaps to beg their bread. Women and men went on errands of mercy, visiting the sick and sorrowful in their homes, leaving food, clothing and money with the poor, attending to the needs of prisoners and receiving instructions from them, sometimes acting circumspectly, sometimes more openly, especially if a man were helping out a woman and did not wish to arouse suspicion of her chastity, and sometimes with considerable show. Judges, who also served as lawyers, passed along with plaintiffs or defendants in tow, bailiffs and sometimes angry crowds led captives to court or jail, government employees went their errands, soldiers kept order.

At night the streets were dark, but light shone from house and store windows, at private parties there might be hired entertainers and some drunkenness, wayfarers went about by torch or lantern light, and sometimes groups of girls with lamps in their hands would stand outside a bride's house waiting for the bridegroom.

All day flocks of doves soared over the roofs, in sweeping turns alternately reflecting the sun on their backs and showing their shadowed breasts, their feathers squeaking, or settled on the tops of walls or pecked about the streets. From time to time, homing pigeons sought their lofts — their trainers so widely accepted as dishonest that they were not allowed to testify in Jewish courts. Cats sunned themselves on window ledges, lapdogs begged for scraps at dinner tables. Packs of dogs of no particular ownership did miscellaneous scavenging about the streets and in the nearby country, where gardens and orchards belonging to the city dwellers were also to be

found.

Vegetable gardens grew legumes, cucumbers, cabbages, beets, carrots, radishes, artichokes, melons, onions, leeks, garlic, and spices such as mustard, cumin, coriander and dill. The plants were set out in groups, not in rows, in accordance with rules in the Law of Moses that forbid mixing different kinds of plants. Vines might grow in gardens also, trained up on trees or trellises, and there might be a small winepress in a garden, together with a shelter of some kind and a dovecote. Gardens and orchards grew olives, figs, sycamore figs, almonds, pomegranates, apricots (called apples in some translations), pears, quinces, pistachios (terebinth), walnuts, citrons (ethrogs), and balm trees. A person of sufficient leisure might read or study under the trees, trellises or other shelter in his garden. Dates came from further south in the Jordan Valley. Together with figs and grapes, all either fresh or dried, and honey, they provided sugar for the diet.

Gardens, orchards, vineyards, and fields were walled or fenced with thorns and often had temporary or permanent guard posts in them for protection against animal and human marauders, although Jews allowed passers-by to enter their vineyards and eat grapes, and to enter their fields and pluck handfuls of grain to eat, in accordance with the Law of Moses. Some of the steeper hillsides were terraced so that they too could be cultivated.

Workers in smaller plots used hoes, plowmen drove their animals in larger fields, orchards, and vineyards. In vineyards and orchards, plowing at the end of the rainy season prevented weeds from competing for the moisture in the soil (for the Jews, growing grain and so on in vineyards was forbidden by the Law of Moses). If a team drew the plow, Jewish plowmen put either steers or asses under the yoke, but not one of each kind, because the Law of Moses forbade it.

Field crops included various kinds of wheat, barley, millet, sorghum, lentils, broad beans, flax (for lamp wicks as well as clothing), rice, sesame, alfalfa, and clover. Where appropriate the seeds were sown broadcast, where appropriate they were dropped through seed drills attached to the plows. Not only is the ground very stony, the iron points of the plows (they did not have shares and moldboards) could not break it to any depth. Plowing and sowing therefore began after the first rains had softened the ground, toward the end of October and continued for two months; next came two months of planting; next a month of haymaking.

The barley harvest began in April, the wheat harvest a month later, the grape harvest and winemaking the next month, the olive harvest and oil pressing two months later, lasting into September, the barley, the wheat, and the combined fruit harvest each marked by a festival. (From September until the rains came the farmers occupied themselves with maintenance and other tasks.) At harvest time men and women stooped down in the grain fields gathering handfuls of stalks and cutting them off with sickles. Sickles were used in the vineyards to prune the vines and to harvest the grapes. The edges or corners of fields belonging to Jews were not reaped, nor were their vineyards and orchards completely stripped of fruit, but left to the poor and Gentiles, who were also allowed to glean everywhere, as required by the Law of Moses. Every seven years the Jews left their fields fallow, and allowed the poor to eat what grew there, again as required by the Law of Moses. Threshing might be done by beating the stalks with sticks, by having animals tread on them, or by driving a sledge over them. In the afternoon, when the wind sprang up, the grain was winnowed by throwing it up in the air with a fork or shovel. The chaff that the wind did not separate was separated with sieves.

The farm animals par excellence were the cow, bull and steer, sources of milk and meat,

drawers of the plow and cart. Horses, asses, and mules were rather for longer transport, as were camels, horses being preferred for drawing chariots more than for riding. Jews did not breed mules, in accordance with the general rule in the Law of Moses that kinds are not to be mixed, but they could own and ride them. Shepherds with their staffs led goats and sheep over the hillsides, and protected them against thieves, wolves, jackals, foxes, leopards, lions, and vipers, both day and night. Their folds were walled or fenced with thorns, like the other agricultural enclosures. There they milked the animals, counted them, and cared for their cuts and bruises. In the oak forests and on the hills sloping down to the east shore of the Sea of Galilee pigs roamed in their thousands, under the eyes of their herdsmen, and in some places, presumably, stray animals helped the dogs in general scavenging in towns.

Along the roads through the countryside passed caravans, travelers on business, priests going to Jerusalem for their week of service in the temple, and occasionally even tourists. Some people were visiting friends or relatives, perhaps for weddings, some were just out for walks, enjoying the air in the fields or the cool of the trees or the view of water courses, hills, and lake. Troops of cavalry set out after bandits or conveyed prisoners to places of safety. Foot soldiers marched along with their standard bearers, their officers riding ahead, their baggage transport and supplies bringing up the rear. Servants ran before their masters to announce their imminent arrival and arrange accommodations. Men taken from fields or villages carried the baggage of government officials for a mile. At the three great religious festivals, Passover in March or April before the barley harvest, Pentecost in May or June after the wheat harvest, and Tabernacles or Booths in September or October after the fruit harvest and before sowing began again, crowds of the faithful went to and came from Jerusalem. The roads would be dry at those times, and the people could camp out.

In isolated places where there was some shelter, those with diseases that had been identified as leprosy might be seen, singly or in groups, their clothes torn, as required by the Law of Moses, and as required, calling out “unclean, unclean,” when anyone came near, for their loved ones, their agents if they had businesses, their stewards if they owned property, and charitable strangers did come near to tend to their needs and to learn their wishes, because there was always a possibility that they would somehow get well.

Houses in villages and isolated farmhouses gave all or much of their ground floors to stabling. Some were bed and breakfast establishments, many had dovecotes, chicken houses, beehives, and could provide the odd meal or handout. Chickens gave about ten eggs a month, about half as many as chickens today. Beehives were horizontal tubes made from mud and straw. At intervals along main roads there were caravansaries with walled courtyards.

Carpenters, boat builders, woodcutters and charcoal burners found cypress, myrtle, oak, plane trees, oil trees (a kind of pine), and tamarisks in the forests. Cedar wood, for boat planking and so on, came from the mountains to the north. Basket weavers, who also made sieves, found willows and reeds or rushes by the watercourses, particularly along the Jordan both south of the Sea of Galilee and north of it, where there were extensive marshlands, now drained. Swineherds fed their pigs on the pods of carob trees, which people ate as well in times of famine, and jewelers took their small round seeds as standards of weight, whence our carat. Spiny or prickly plants and other weeds were everywhere, some of the latter poisonous, some used for medicine, some, in times of famine, used for food. Besides the flowering trees, such as the almond, carob and tamarisk, there were many species of wild flowers, among them thistles, dandelions, ranunculus, anemone, cyclamen, arum lilies, fritillaria, hyacinth, narcissus, crocus, and iris, but no true lilies.

In spring they carpeted the ground.

Grasshoppers hopped in the grasses, conies scuttled in the rocks, deer grazed in the forests, hares gambled on the hillsides and partridges and quail led their young through the underbrush, all prey to eagles, falcons, vultures, and (for the grasshoppers) lesser birds, and people (the Law of Moses forbids the eating of raptors, conies, hares and deer, but singles out grasshoppers as allowable food). Up and down the rift valley of the Jordan passed in their seasons great flocks of migratory storks and buzzards, riding the up-currents of warm air and gliding down again, traveling ninety to one hundred fifty miles a day, even across the Red Sea, with scarcely a wing-stroke. At the opposite end of the scale of some hundreds of species of birds, sparrows sang in the mustard bushes, felt the net of the fowler fall upon them or the blow of his throwing stick or arrow, and found themselves sold in the markets for next to nothing because they made only a mouthful apiece.

Kingfishers, fisher owls, and ospreys took their prey in the swamps. In the Sea of Galilee, the principal species of fish were the musht, which carry their eggs in their mouths, and include the variety now called Peter's fish, the barbels, large and small, and the catfish. Catfish, having no scales, were not to be eaten, according to the Law of Moses. Jewish fishermen either threw them away or sold them to Gentiles. Fishermen used hooks, nets thrown from shore, and nets set out from boats and either drawn back into the boats or hauled ashore. The boats themselves were generally hauled out on the shore while the fishermen mended their nets, though Capernaum and a dozen or so other towns all around the lake had jetties also. Some boats had a single square sail, and carried oars as well, two to a side. They could hold twelve or thirteen people comfortably. All could be hired for transport, or might be commandeered by rebels and soldiers for battles on the lake, when blood would mingle with the clear blue water.

Like the cities, the countryside was almost noiseless. Winds blew, waves lapped the shore, birds sang, foxes and jackals barked, the noises of nature were there, but except in storms they were small. As a result, human noises, slamming of doors, raised voices, carried for long distances. The theater at Tiberias was far from the only place where large crowds could hear a single person. Any box canyon in the hills, any small bay with a sloping shore, would allow the same kind of public address.

Jewish fishermen and farmers at work might strip to their loincloths or shorts, but absolute nudity was frowned on among the Jews (not the Gentiles, whose male athletes might train and compete in the nude). Presumably women wore similar underwear. What are usually called undergarments in the Bible dictionaries were tunics, worn by both sexes. Most, apparently, were made by sewing together front and back pieces. The tunics were white or yellow, and might have borders of blue or brown woven into them, or two stripes, one descending from each shoulder, in front and back. As today, one might wear one tunic over another. One kind of outer tunic, made in one piece, had slits for the head and hands. Jesus came to wear one of these, apparently a more expensive garment, possibly something for formal occasions. I like to think his mother made it for him. Men, at least, did not count themselves fully dressed unless they also wore a belt or girdle. John the Baptist wore a notable leather belt and a tunic made of camel's hair, a durable fabric used also for tents. The general populace wore woolen tunics; linen ones were more expensive. Fine linen, said Jesus, was found only in palaces. Jews who observed the Law of Moses would not wear garments of cloth in which woolen and linen threads were mixed. Soldiers protected their upper bodies with hoops of leather or metal or both and half hoops over their shoulders, or with leather tunics armored by small overlapping metal scales or rings, or with breast- and back-

plates, which might be molded to fit their bodies (called muscle cuirasses today). Heavily armed soldiers had additional protection on their lower legs. Shock troops carried shields and swords or spears; others might carry bows and quivers filled with arrows, or slings and bags of stones. Civilians needing to protect themselves wore swords or carried clubs. Still others, intent on assassination, concealed knives or daggers about their persons.

Over the tunics, both sexes wore robes of various kinds. Men who were Roman citizens wore the semicircular toga if they could afford it. The general populace wore rectangular pieces of cloth of various sizes, the legal profession wearing theirs especially long. Poor people slept in them, so the Law of Moses ordained that they could not be held in pawn overnight. Soldiers wore capes fastened at the neck. The soldiers who tormented Jesus before his crucifixion put one of their capes on him. Matthew says it was scarlet, Mark and John say it was purple. Purple garments were very expensive. Women's outer clothes were distinguished from men's by their colors, which were generally darker and more varied, by their greater length, and sometimes by the designs woven into them. The Law of Moses specifies that one's garments must be appropriate to one's sex. Men among the Jews had fringes sewed to the hems of their robes and tassels at the corners, as required by the Law of Moses. Although the Law specified blue for the fringes, white came to be allowed, probably as an accommodation to poorer people. The wealthy also had more ornate hems than others. If the outer garment was long enough it might be girdled.

Footwear was essentially like the sandals of today, outdoor wear heavier than indoor, men's the same as women's. Soldiers might wear boots. Male headgear might be anything from a headband to a conical cap to some kind of turban to a broad-brimmed hat. Soldiers wore helmets. Women pulled the edge of their outer garment over their heads. Lawyers among the Jews wore leather boxes strapped to their foreheads and their left arms, in which were parchment strips with scriptural passages written on them, and other Jews wore them when praying. Both sexes wore rings. Women wore gold and pearls if they could afford it, and keys on chains around their necks. They also wore perfume, eye shadow and hairnets, but veils, worn in Old Testament times, seem to have gone out of fashion. Some women wore their hair long in a single braid down the back, others, especially if they were Gentiles, wore their braids around their heads in Roman and Greek styles. In somewhat later times, certainly, all Jewish women were expected to keep their hair under some kind of control, and so some have supposed that in Jesus' time prostitutes wore their hair unbraided. Male Jews might wear their hair and beards long, certainly if they had taken religious vows of various kinds, whether for life, like John the Baptist, or only for a time, like Paul. Gentiles, and perhaps some Jews, might shave their faces and wear their hair short in the Greek and Roman styles.

Another example of Greek influence is that Galilean Jews spoke, wrote and read Greek as well as Hebrew and Aramaic. This we know from the prevalence of Greek in the inscriptions in buildings and on ossuaries, stone boxes for the bones of the dead, which have survived. Greek manuscripts have survived among the Dead Sea Scrolls, but these come from Judea to the south.

Although it is interesting to visualize the Galileans of Jesus' time in their outer lives and surroundings, it is far more important to visualize their thinking. We have already seen some evidence of varieties of thinking expressed in their clothing. I discuss the religious thinking of the Jews in the next chapter. In recent years there has been a good deal of interest in the political unrest among them. Josephus, who took part in the great rebellion against Roman rule in A.D. 66-73, traced its spring to a Judas of Galilee or Gaulanitis (across the Jordan from Galilee and now called the Gaulan or Golan). This Judas urged his people to rebel against Quirinius' enrollment of

A.D. 6 or 7. Luke mentions Judas in the book of Acts, which is in effect volume two of his Gospel, where he records the Pharisaic leader Gamaliel as saying that Judas died and his followers were dispersed. Josephus says, however, that Judas established an enduring revolutionary movement.⁸⁷

Josephus also tells us that the Galilean Jews were inured to battle because they lived surrounded by peoples with whom they had fought over the years. Although their remote ancestors had helped their fellow Israelites to occupy the area, there had been few or none of their people there for centuries until the Jews won it back about a hundred years before Jesus' time, drove out or circumcised many of its inhabitants, and colonized it. Many of the Galilean Jews, then, were much like today's Jewish settlers in Israel in their experience and responses. Perhaps a better parallel would be to settlers of the American West, because there is not today the sense of separation between Jews in Galilee and in Judea that there was in Jesus' time. Then, the Judeans regarded the Galileans much as a resident of Philadelphia in 1850 regarded a resident of Cheyenne. Galileans had their own accent, which had more homophones than the Judean, so that the southerners thought them sloppy in their speech.⁸⁸

Josephus came to know the Galileans well only after the rebellion of A.D. 66 had started, when he was sent by the revolutionary leaders in Jerusalem to govern the territory. At that time, when the reins of authority were loosening, the province had many considerable robber bands and the people betrayed one another at almost every opportunity. I am inclined to believe that Josephus saw the Galileans at their worst, and that at times when the pressures of life were less they had a better character in general.⁸⁹

At any rate, many of the people Jesus worked with were the sons or grandsons of pioneers. They were sturdy and self-reliant at the least, perhaps self-assertive also, and very possibly restive. A few were to prove also to be pioneers themselves, spiritual pioneers, ready for adventure, offering their own blessings to all and giving spiritual sustenance to unprejudiced hearts and minds.

Footnotes

86. Josephus' description of Galilee is in *War*, 3.3.1-3 and 3.10.7-8 [III, 35-47 and III, 506-521]. For the number of towns see *Life*, 45 [235] (the Whiston translation says two hundred forty). Josephus says Sepphoris was "the largest city in Galilee" (*Life*, 45 [232]).

Opinions differ as to the peoples who inhabited Galilee over the centuries (see *ABD*, II, 894). I reject the theory that the area always had a Hebraic population, because it rests on assertions that Galilean Judaism in Jesus' time "could not have arisen over such a short period or developed in a region that had been previously antagonistic" (*ABD*). There is no way to predict how swiftly ideas and practices will spread.

The rest of my description of Galilee comes from relevant articles in *IDB* and *ABD*, miscellaneous articles in *BAR*, some parts of the Talmud of Jerusalem, particularly the tractates in the order Zera'im, "Seeds," and various places in the Old Testament and the Gospels, which those familiar with the Bible will enjoy identifying for themselves. On the subject of nudity among the Jews see Michael L. Satlow, "Jewish Constructions of Nakedness in Late Antiquity," *JBL*, 116 (1997), 429-454.

87. Josephus, *Antiq.*, 18.1.1 and 6 [XVIII, 1-10 and 23-25]; *War*, 2.8.1 [II, 117-118]. For a thorough study see Martin Hengel, *The Zealots*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988; Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*, Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1985; etc. Some of these scholars have asserted that Jesus was a political

revolutionary; George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion (*ABD*, I, 1199) say these assertions “have proven entirely unconvincing.”

88. Josephus, *War*, 3.3.2 [III, 41-42]. Jesus probably had a Galilean accent, since his disciple Peter had; see Matthew 26:73 = Mark 14:70; similarly Luke 22:59. For something of its nature, see a joke embedded in a discussion recorded in the Talmud (‘Erubin, 53a-b [V, 1]) where a Galilean seeking “amar,” is asked whether he wants wool, a lamb, an ass, or wine. The first part of the discussion has led scholars to interpret the story as indicating that southerners despised the northern accent, but the last part of the discussion suggests that the story simply reflects an interest in punning language.
89. Almost everything written about the Galileans and their history is subject to dispute. See *ABD*, II, 876-901.

Luke 2:41-52

Carefully read, the Gospels tell us a good deal of what Jesus’ home life was like. Luke alone tells us anything definite about his boyhood: “And his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as was the custom at the feast.⁹⁰

“And when the days [of the feast] were ended and they returned, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem. And his parents did not know [it], but thinking that he was in the group [traveling with them] they went a day’s journey and [only then] were seeking him out among [their] relatives and acquaintances. And when they did not find [him] they returned to Jerusalem seeking him out. And it happened [that] after three days they found him in the temple precincts sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all those hearing him were wondering at his comprehension and answers.

“And when they saw him they were astonished, and his mother said to him, ‘Child, why did you do so to us? You see, your father and I were anxiously searching for you.’

“And he said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know that I must be doing the things my Father wishes?’

“And they did not understand the statement he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them [knowing that this was his Father’s wish]. And his mother was protecting in her heart all the statements [by and about him]. And Jesus was advancing in wisdom and size [or, age] and favor from God and people.”

Mary and Joseph have not been alone in failing to understand what Jesus meant. Was he surprised that they were worried? Was he surprised that they did not know where to find him? Is “doing the things my Father wishes” the way to translate Luke’s Greek idiom, “in the of my Father”? Some plural noun must be supplied. If we supply “activities” we get “about my Father’s business,” as in the King James Version. If we supply “courts” we get “in my Father’s courts,” that is, in the temple precincts, which may then be translated “in my Father’s house,” as in the New English Bible. If we supply “eyes,” we get, “under my Father’s observation” or “in His care.”

We see in the very first recorded words of Jesus an example of the limitations of human language. We devise words to express ideas, facts or things, we have no words waiting about to be applied to some idea, fact or thing. Crudely put, if we are to understand someone’s words, we need to know in advance what they mean. When something new under the sun appears we have two choices. Either we can devise a name for it, such as Kodak, or we can expand the meaning of an old word. Either way, we shall have to explain what we are doing. Jesus devised no new words, and he chose comparisons to explain the new meanings he gave to old words. Even so, people,

even his best students, had difficulty in understanding him when he introduced new ideas to them. It may well be, also, that his first recorded words mark his first awareness of how human language has to work. It may be that this was the first time he spoke of God as his Father rather than of Joseph as his father, and this in turn may be why his parents did not understand him. Certainly we shall see that in the greatest of his sermons he repeatedly used the explanatory expression “Father in heaven” before he trusted his listeners to understand him when he used “Father” alone.

This incident in Jesus’ boyhood, and Luke’s reason for telling it, have been variously interpreted. I believe we ought to read it in the light of Jesus’ later words about children, which show that he loved them because they were free from wrong and were receptive of right.⁹¹ The twelve year old Jesus, knowing the rich endowment his spiritual origin had given him and feeling that he ought to begin demonstrating his divine Sonship, felt also in his human innocence that his Father wished him to study with learned men in Jerusalem to prepare himself for his life’s work. And good boy that he was he obeyed his human parents when they felt differently. Luke gives us a clear sense that, in Wordsworth’s phrase, the child was father to the man.⁹²

My friend Doris Wiederkehr pointed out to me that Joseph and Mary were protecting Jesus in the sense that he would have had to reject or unlearn a great deal of what the teachers in the temple would have taught him before he could have pursued the career that he did.

I like to think that the young Rosemary Cobham was much like the young Jesus. She wrote of her awakening to “God’s goodness, rainbow-wonderful, but natural,” or, using Paul’s language, to the truth that she was an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ:

It was the very spring-tide of my being
And I a child, bending over exams, or stretched at tennis,
And all men equal, everyone my friend,
And God the Father-Mother of us all.
Life was so simple. Trials were obstacles
And I was Spirit-powered and cleared them all,
Leaping from dream, clean into reality.

At church she used to think, as she watched her elders,

How can they hear the wonder of the words,
“Now are we the sons of God”
And not, as sons of God, erupt for joy?⁹³

Rosemary made spiritual healing her career.

Jesus began to appear before the leaders of his religion at a Passover. He was to pass from their sight at another Passover some twenty years later. Luke may have been aware of the symmetry.

How did Jesus manage during the days before Joseph and Mary found him? If tradition is correct that his mother had been nurtured in Jerusalem,⁹⁴ he may have been with his grandparents, but he may equally well have formed a friendship and gone home with his friend or have been camping out and enjoying it, like any other enterprising and lively youngster. It was, after all, March or April, and the dry season was beginning. Later he was to describe himself as

homeless,⁹⁵ but it is clear that he never lacked food and shelter, and no doubt he already knew how to turn to his Father for all his needs.

Much of what we know of Mary comes from Luke. According to his Gospel, as we have seen, she was meek, alert to divine inspiration, willing to accept a spiritual origin for her child, and trustful of divine protection. She asked at first how she could bear a child, but, having been told, she did not then ask, apparently, how she could explain her pregnancy to others. Her character was attested as well by Elizabeth, whose own character had been testified to by a God-given release from barrenness and who sheltered Mary from observation during the last three months of her own pregnancy.

We may also reason from Mary's attested qualities that she proved to be an ideal mother and that as a wife she conformed to the model set out at the end of the book of Proverbs, supportive of her husband, industriously maintaining the beauty of her home, clothing and feeding her family tastefully, in business for herself selling her handicrafts but never to the detriment of her active charity, wise and kindly in her speech, happy and devout in all things.

Essentially all we know of Joseph comes from Matthew. He appears to have died sometime between Jesus' twelfth and thirtieth years, for he plays no part in Jesus' later life. He had been, however, and no doubt continued to be while he lived, a fine example to his adopted son. As we have seen, Matthew says he was righteous, a term of highest praise. His love for his wife Mary showed itself in many important ways, even though we have no direct statement of it. When he feared that she might have been raped or unfaithful, his first impulse was to shelter her as much as possible by keeping the breaking of their engagement a private matter. When he realized that God had given her the child, he proceeded with the marriage and took her with him to a distant place to bear her son, far away from censorious eyes. No doubt he did not intend to return until the people of Nazareth could not have recognized that Jesus had been conceived out of wedlock. When he realized that the baby's life was in danger, he took mother and child out of the country, and then, by a roundabout way, back to where they could live safely. Again and again he set an example by responding at once to divine guidance. A painting by Giovanni Battista Gaulli, "St. Joseph and the Infant Christ," shows Joseph tenderly delighting in his foster child who stretches out his arms to him. I like to think that relationship never changed.

Because Mary's loving and alert husband was a craftsman, I think we may be assured that the fabric of their house was well maintained and that its furniture was complete and well built. I like to think also that his business premises were a model of neatness and order, that although some of his tools were friends from childhood, none which were needed were lacking or of inferior quality or poorly looked after, and that he provided himself with various ingenious devices to lighten his labors.

In short, I believe we can say that Jesus was trained up by parents who had the highest religious and moral standards, to whom affection, mutual respect, and obedience to God seemed natural. I believe that in his home there was a minimum of tension or sorrow over matters under the family's control. I believe he was surrounded by a maximum of right thinking and the inevitable products of right thinking in the daily life of those who conscientiously affirm God's goodness and all-power. And I am satisfied that he took his full share in sustaining this reign of harmony.

Later on, we see that Jesus' mother and brothers (or cousins) thought they knew more than he about how he should conduct himself in public. How he came to free himself from their constraints without alienating them is one of the most interesting strands in his life.

Matthew and Mark record later comments on Jesus by people in Nazareth. According to Mark, the people spoke of him as a carpenter. According to Matthew, they spoke of him as “the carpenter’s son.”⁹⁶ Those who accept both statements as correct therefore conclude that Joseph taught Jesus the carpenter’s trade. The word translated carpenter could mean a builder or a cabinetmaker, as well as a “wood butcher,” and was sometimes used in the sense of a master worker, that is, a person who could design and supervise as well as do first rate work himself; it could be applied to workers in any art or craft, just as we say today that a man is a “good mechanic” when he does his work well. One carpenter in Jesus’ time, Shammai, was a leading religious and legal authority.

It is hard to imagine a better preparation for Jesus’ public ministry than his life as a carpenter. Perfection or the lack of it stands out more clearly in something handcrafted than in plowing or herding or fishing, or in the oversight of a business or government, or in a life of study. A carpenter learns to design and make things that work or fit together perfectly, that please the sight, touch and thought by their finish, fitness, grace and strength, and that are enduring and useful. He learns to do honest work and to deal wisely and fairly with his suppliers and customers. He advances from shrewdness in small things — measure twice, cut once — to foresight in large — considering the lay of your land we had better build your house here where we can reach bedrock easily. If he has Jesus’ turn of mind, he increases in his love of God as the only and enduring source of his abilities and supply. Jesus’ years as a carpenter, then, gave him every opportunity to prove to himself the working of his Christliness in him, what Luke calls his growth in favor extended to him by God and people. Christliness permeated every aspect of his personal life, making him a trustworthy man, a good worker, and a good man, before his further spiritual advancement. One might almost say that Psalm 37:23-24 was a prophecy about his whole life:

The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the Lord,
and he delights in His way.
Though he fall, he will not be completely thrown down,
for the Lord upholds him with His hand.⁹⁷

Footnotes

90. Exodus 23:14-17 and 34:23, and Deuteronomy 16:16 require every male to worship at God’s chosen place at the feasts of Passover (March-April), Pentecost (fifty days later) and Tabernacles or Booths (September-October). But the regulation was not strictly in force in Jesus’ time, if it ever was, and so may be justifiably called a custom. Thus, while the Talmud restates the biblical injunction, there was a second temple at Leontopolis in the Egyptian delta, the priests of which maintained that they were the true priesthood (*IDB*, II, 65), and perhaps a third at Elephantine at the first cataract of the Nile (*ABD*, II, 406; *IBD*, II, 65, calls it a synagogue). The Essenes, also, regarded the Jerusalem priesthood as illegitimate and kept their own calendar. And we can hardly suppose that all the adult male Jews in distant lands came to Jerusalem three times a year.

We do not know exactly what Luke means by the “days” of Passover. Strictly, Passover is a one-day feast, but it is immediately followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the eight days could be called, as they are by Josephus, either Passover or the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Lachs, p. 34, says pilgrims usually stayed the full eight days, but without giving any evidence. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, II, 32, says they usually did not stay the full eight days, again without

giving evidence.

- Robertson, *Word Pictures*, II, 33, calls attention to the fact that Jesus was attending public lectures, with attendant question periods, such as he himself was later to give in the temple precincts.
91. Matthew 11:25 = Luke 10:21; Matthew 18:1-5 = Mark 9:33-37 = Luke 9:46-48; Matthew 19:13-15 = Mark 10:13-16 = Luke 18:15-17; Matthew 21:15-16. Jesus called his apostles “little children” (John 13:33) and children (John 21:5).
92. The author of Hebrews says, as I like to translate the passage, that although Jesus was the Son of God he learned obedience by experience (5:18). I like to think the author had the present story in mind rather than Jesus’ sufferings, which I believe Jesus underwent willingly, not as one under discipline.
93. Paul: Romans 8:17. Cobham: *Kaleidoscope Plus*, London: Partnership Editions/Shepherd-Walwyn [1980], p. 88. The quotation in the poem is I John 3:2.
94. According to Peter the Deacon, writing in 1137, “the Church of Saint Anne [is] where Blessed Mary was nurtured for three years” (John Wilkinson’s translation in *Egeria’s Travels*, p. 182. Daniel had said the same thing in 1106; see Kopp, *The Holy Places*, p. 71).
95. Matthew 8:20 = Luke 9:58.
96. Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3.
97. The insertion of the word “good” is from the King James Version. Although the insertion is appropriate with reference to Jesus, without it the statement fits man created in God’s image.

SECTION III – B9 (Luke 5:15)

A LEPER HEALED

Mark 1:40-45 Matthew 8:1-4 Luke 5:12-16

Continuing with Mark (and Matthew and Luke): “And a leper comes to him, calling to him and falling on his knees and saying to him, ‘If you’re willing, you can cleanse me.’

“And feeling pity, he stretched out his hand, grasped him and says to him, ‘I’m willing; be cleansed.’

“And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.”

The importance of Jesus’ pity for those he rescued from sorrow, sickness, sin and death cannot be overemphasized. His instantaneous healings were founded on it. It was not mere human sympathy, which simply involves one more person in the problem, but an outreaching recognition of God’s ever-presence, all power and perfect love, before which the problem dissolves.

Continuing as before. “And giving him a stern warning he sent him off at once, and says to him, ‘See [here], say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to a priest and [then] bring what Moses commanded about your cleansing [a sacrifice the value of which was determined by the person’s wealth], to obtain a certificate of health to show them.’ [Protect your healing from disbelief in it until it has been certified by a person in authority.]¹¹⁴

“But he went out and began to proclaim [his healing] a great deal and spread the word, so that [Jesus] could no longer go openly into a city but was outside in desert places. And [people] were coming to him from everywhere.”

Luke gives a few more details. He says the man was “full of leprosy,” which might be counted “clean,” says Leviticus 13:12-13, but was still a condition one would wish healed. He also says

Jesus prayed in the desert places.

We shall see many examples of attacks on Jesus' healings, attempts to deny their nature and permanence, and many examples of the care he took to protect those he healed from these attacks, starting with the next healing after this one, a case of paralysis. The people Jesus healed were not his students, he had not taught them how he healed and how to heal others, so they were not prepared to defend themselves against their own doubts or against others' disbelief that he healed through divine power, power given to him by God. In the extreme case, such doubts and disbelief would have taken away the healings. Usually, Jesus could only tell his patients to live quietly with their healings until they were sure of them, a command that, not being his students, they regularly disregarded. With lepers, however, Jesus found help in the Law of Moses, which required that any leper who had recovered must obtain certification of the fact from a priest, presumably the nearest at hand, before he could be restored to society. This leper may have waited until he had his certificate before he asked others to share in his rejoicing, and if he then ran up against the argument that he had recovered spontaneously, he at least had protection against any doubt or disbelief that he was free from his former disease.

The law of Moses includes in "leprosy" a number of conditions not so classed today, so we cannot be sure of the disease here. Because various Old Testament narratives tell of leprosy as a punishment for sin, some Christians, particularly if they serve in leper colonies, say that modern leprosy is different from biblical. For them, the disease brings suffering enough, without a worried conscience.¹¹⁵

Many Christians regard Jesus' grasping of the leper as an astounding act in that time and place. Some of them, I will venture, like to think of him as astounding, almost as if he were on the vaudeville stage or in a carnival sideshow. They forget, I believe, that Jesus did not regard anyone or anything as unclean. Those familiar with spiritual healing will also understand that Jesus' pity did not spring from horror at the disease; instead, they will say, he knew the man was not leprous in any real sense but was God's perfect creature whose self-awareness needed to be restored. It is a principle of spiritual healing today that if diseases were real — agreed that they seem real enough to the sufferers — they would have to be from God and no man of God would attempt to destroy them. We shall see how Jesus expressed these concepts when we come to more extended accounts of his preaching that "the kingdom of heaven has drawn near," that is, that we need not wait for death but can change our mind-set and experience the kingdom now.

Jesus' telling the leper to get a certification of health has an additional relevance to spiritual healing today, remembering also that the Law of Moses had protected both the leper's and his society's rights by requiring that a priest inspect him before he was pronounced leprous as well as before he was pronounced healthy. Those who wish to rely on spiritual healing today sometimes find themselves required by law to be inspected by physicians, who may quarantine them, or the law in their locality may require vaccinations, or employers and insurance companies may require X-ray examinations or other proofs of health. Spiritual healers require their patients to observe these laws and raise no objection to reasonable requirements by employers or insurers, following Jesus' example of compliance with the health laws of his time and the various commands in the Bible that Christians be law-abiding. But if healer and patient abide by men's laws they abide in God's law of protection and perfection, the irreversible law of His kingdom, ever at hand. Spiritual healers of the kind described at the head of this chapter refuse to accept any diagnosis as final except that of health, just as Jesus refused to accept the official diagnosis of leprosy as final. They pray expectantly that the required examination will result in a clean bill of

health, and that vaccination or any similar requirement will not create even a mild form of the disease it is thought to guard against, so that the person will be certified as immune.

Footnotes

114. “To obtain a certificate of health to show them”: the last three words, *eis marturion autois*, have usually been translated “as a witness against them,” but the dative case of *autois*, “them,” may be translated in a variety of ways, and in Ignatius’ letter to the Trallians 12:3 the author speaks of his letter as a possible *marturion*.

Old Testament description and rules: Leviticus ch. 13-14. Neither Leviticus nor the detailed discussion in the Talmudic tractate Nega'im says anything about a certificate of cleanness. Nega'im speaks usually of being “certified unclean” and of being “pronounced clean” (Danby and Soncino), but sometimes Soncino has “pronounced unclean” and “released from uncleanness” instead (e.g., Nega'im, VII, 4, V, 2), so the verbs may be synonymous. In any event, since Nega'im speaks of the required sacrifices as having been performed in the temple (ch. XIV), a certificate of cleanness would seem to be a natural precaution in case the pronouncing priest could not be present there.

115. See the article “leprosy” in *IDB*, III, 111-113. The similar article in *ABD*, IV, 277-282, however, ends by suggesting that “leprosy” in the New Testament may have its modern meaning. But it really makes no difference what today’s diagnosis would have been of the cases of leprosy Jesus healed, for what is diagnosed as leprosy today has been rapidly healed in Jesus’ way, that is, by spiritual means alone. See *Christian Science Sentinel*, 72:31 (August 1, 1970), 1344-1345.

SECTION IV – B11 (Mark 5:25-34)

A GIRL RESTORED TO LIFE AND A WOMAN HEALED OF A HEMORRHAGE

Mark 5:21-43 Matthew 9:18-26 Luke 8:40-56

The next two healings nest one inside the other. Rather than interrupt the narratives, I postpone my comments until the end. Mark and Luke agree better with each other than with Matthew. I quote Mark, then, with one or two insertions from Luke.

“And when Jesus crossed in the ship again to the other side [the west side of the lake], a great crowd was brought together to him, and he was by the sea.

“And one of the rulers of the synagogue [that is, a member of its governing board], Jairus by name, comes to him, and seeing him falls at his feet and calls on him a great deal, saying, ‘My little daughter’s dying [Luke says she was his only daughter], so come and lay hands on her so that she’ll be saved and live.’

“And he went off with him.

“And a great crowd was following him and was pressing against him. And a woman having a flow of blood twelve years and who suffered much under many physicians and spent all she had and got no benefit but rather got worse, when she heard about Jesus came in the crowd behind and grasped [the border] of his garment, for she was saying [to herself], ‘If I may just grasp his clothes I’ll be saved.’ And immediately the wellspring of her blood was dried up and she knew in [her] body that she had been healed of her scourge.

“And Jesus, recognizing at once in himself the power [mighty work] going out of him, turned back in the crowd, and was saying ‘Who grasped my clothes?’

“And his students were saying to him, ‘You see the crowd pressing against you, and do you

say, “Who grasped me?””

Luke adds, “But Jesus said, ‘Someone grasped me, for I knew that a power [a mighty work] has gone out from me.’”

Continuing with Mark, “And he was looking around to see the [woman] who did this.

“But the woman [seeing she was not hid], fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.” **She would have been taught that her hemorrhage made her unclean, and that anything she touched would be made unclean thereby, but she may have recognized that a touch which brought healing could not transmit uncleanness. In that case, perhaps she was shy, or she would have approached Jesus more directly. Or, more likely, she was frightened by the suddenness of her healing or her sense of a power she did not understand, just as Peter was frightened when Jesus caused the great catch of fish and he and his companions were frightened when Jesus calmed the storm.**¹⁹⁸

“And he said to her, ‘Daughter, your trust has saved you [you have taken an active part in the healing]. Go in peace, and be [permanently] healed of your disease.’

“While he is still speaking, people from [the house of] the ruler of the synagogue come, saying, ‘[Alas,] your daughter died. Why trouble the teacher further?’

“But Jesus, overhearing the word [that was] spoken, says to the ruler of the synagogue, ‘Don’t be afraid, just trust.’

“And he did not allow anyone with him to follow along except Peter and James and John, James’s brother. And they come to the ruler of the synagogue’s house, and he sees confusion and [women] weeping and wailing a great deal. And he went in and says to them, ‘Why do you cry out and weep? The child didn’t die but is sleeping.’¹⁹⁹

“And they laughed loudly at him [knowing that she died].

“But he, throwing them all out, takes with him the father of the child and the mother and those with him, and goes into where the child was. And taking the child’s hand [**as Jairus had asked him to when he thought she was still alive**] he says to her [**in Aramaic**], ‘**Talitha cum,**’ which is translated, ‘Little girl,’ I say to you, ‘rouse up.’²⁰⁰

“And the little girl got right up and walked (for she was twelve years old). And at once they were all extremely amazed.²⁰¹

“And he ordered them repeatedly that no one should know this, and he said that [food should] be given to her to eat.”

“However,” says Matthew, “his fame went out to that whole land.”

In Matthew’s account of the healing of the girl, Jairus tells Jesus his daughter has just died, and Jesus rouses up and follows him without further words. Thus Matthew does not bring out so clearly as Mark and Luke do that Jesus was once more approaching the healing of a child through the thought of the parent.

Spiritual healers also learn from the healing of Jairus’ daughter their right to exclude from the sickroom any doubt of or mental opposition to the healing work. Others of Jesus’ healings show that no power can withstand God’s love. This one shows that when doubt and opposition can be excluded they should be, for the sake of the patient. We see also that Jesus told the family not to talk about the healing, just as he had warned others whom he had healed not to speak of what he had done. As I have said earlier, this warning was for their protection.

In Chapter VII, I give an example of a child dying from spinal meningitis who was healed when her minister told her that Jesus had healed Jairus’ daughter and could heal her too. The child who was thus healed by faith afterwards died from the same disease. The family, it would appear, lost

its faith in faith healing, that is, it allowed doubts about the effectiveness of faith to overcome its trust in God and in the child's consequent safety. Additional evidence of why Jesus sought to shield those whom he healed from misrepresentations of how they had been healed by telling them not to talk about their healings.

The modern example also helps us to see why Jesus did not just tell the woman with the hemorrhage that she had experienced a faith healing. To repeat, a person's faith can waver. Faith in spiritual means can give way to faith in material means or be overwhelmed by the general faith in material means. So Jesus confirmed the healing in which she had taken an active part with his own healing assertion, one not based on faith but on his knowledge and experience of God's all-power and irreversible good will for His beloved children. Thus Jesus insured that the healing was permanent.

Spiritual healing today, in the sense that I use the term, rests upon the same kind of knowledge and experience Jesus had, and, as I explain in Chapter VII, recognizes that perpetual harmony is the law of God. Using spiritual means to destroy the fear or sin that produces sickness and death gives permanent results. The God who is Spirit and Love is permanent, and so His work must be permanent. God and His creation are inseparable. He perpetuates His qualities in His creation. Who shall separate us from God's love? Not trouble, pain or lack. Not persecution, danger or calamity. Through His love we conquer every threat to our health and peace. To affirm this truth is a normal part of spiritual healing and spiritual healers do not neglect it.

I have seen the healing of the woman with the hemorrhage represented on television as making Jesus wilt when she touched him. Those familiar with spiritual healing will not so suppose. For them, it would be a contradiction in terms if divine healing of one person could only be at the expense of another. When we come to the story of the man born blind, I shall argue that the correct text illustrates the fact that Jesus was not drained by his exertion of the power of God. But in any case, those familiar with spiritual healing will seek to guard themselves against the idea that God's inexhaustible power to heal may leave those exhausted who exercise it under His direction. Jesus did not neglect to refresh his spiritual views through prayer, but to say so is not to say that his spiritual powers drained away as he healed, leaving him deflated. We may also recognize that the narrative gives us another instance of Jesus' spiritual mind reading in telling of his instant awareness that he had been not merely grasped but wordlessly called on for help.²⁰²

Footnotes

198. An issue makes a woman unclean: Leviticus 15:25. The tractate Zabim gives the rabbinic rules. Scholars disagree about whether Jesus' cloak was fringed, in accordance with Numbers 15:38, or only had tassels at the corners, in accordance with Deuteronomy 22:12.

Peter frightened: see n. 111 above.

199. R. Judah [b. Ezekiel] (third century) said even the poorest man must hire two flutes and a wailing woman. Specimens of the laments used in that era may be found in Mo'ed Katan, 28b (III, 7).

200. Vermès, *Jesus the Jew*, London: Collins, 1973, p. 53, says that *talitha*, which Mark translates as "little girl," is literally "little lamb," and that it is found elsewhere only in the Palestinian Targum (an Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible). It would seem that the text ought to have the feminine *koumi*, as in most manuscripts and the King James Version, instead of the masculine *koum*, as in the earliest manuscripts, which Vermès says "is best explained as a Galilean peculiarity" (p. 238, n. 64). BAGD, however, says *koum* is Mesopotamian Aramaic. Vermès cites the second edition of Gustave Dalman's *Aramaic Grammar*, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1905, pp. 321, n. 1, and 277, n. 2; BAGD cites

the second edition of Julius Wellhausen's *Einleitung in dem drei ersten Evangelisten*, 1911.

Specialists in Aramaic differ among themselves not only with respect to dialects of Aramaic but also over whether it is Aramaic or Hebrew that is being transliterated in other places in the Gospels. Vermès cites J. A. Emerton, "Maranatha and Ephphatha," *Journal of Theological Studies*, XVIII (1967), 427-431; Isaac Rabinowitz, "Ephphatha (Mark VII.34): Certainly Hebrew, not Aramaic," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XVI (1971), 151-156; and S. Morag, "Ephphatha (Mark VII.34): Certainly Hebrew, not Aramaic?" *JSS*, XVII (1972), 198-202.

201. "Extremely amazed" is literally, "amazed with a great amazement."

202. See p. 328.

SECTION IV – B12 (John 12:46)

GREEKS ASK TO SEE JESUS

John 12:20-50

I close this chapter with John's record of Jesus' teaching in Jerusalem. There are no parallels in the other Gospels.

"And there were some Greeks among those going up to worship in the feast. [These people are usually identified as Greek-speaking Jews, but they might have been Greek worshipers of God, something like the centurion at Capernaum, or even just tourists — Jerusalem was world-famous for the beauty of its site and buildings.] So these came to Philip, [who was] from Bethsaida [on the lake just east] of Galilee and were asking him, saying, 'Sir, we intend to see Jesus.'²⁸⁴

"Philip comes and speaks to Andrew, Andrew and Philip go and speak to Jesus. And Jesus says to them in reply, 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, if a grain of wheat doesn't fall into the earth and die it remains [a seed] only, but if it will die it bears much fruit. He who loves his soul will lose it, and he who hates his soul in this world will preserve it into eternal life. If anyone will help me, let him follow me. And where I am, there my helper will be also. Whoever helps me, my Father will honor him. Now my soul has been vexed, and what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour"? [No.] Rather, "This is the reason I came into this hour." Father, glorify Your name.'²⁸⁵

"So a voice came from heaven, 'I both glorified [it] and will glorify it again.'

"So the crowd standing and listening were saying it had thundered. Others were saying, 'An angel has spoken to him.'

"Jesus said in reply, 'This voice has not happened because of me but because of you [that is, you need to know, as I know, that God is the only power]. Now is the judgment of this world, now the ruler of this world [Satan] will be thrown out. And I, if I'll be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [people] to myself.' (And this he was saying, signifying by what kind of death he was going to die.)" This is the last occurrence in the Gospel of the theme of Jesus' being lifted up.²⁸⁶

"So the crowd replied to him, 'We heard out of The Law [and the Prophets] that the Messiah remains forever, and how do you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?'²⁸⁷

"So Jesus said to them, 'The light is still among you for a little space of time. While you have the light, walk in such a way that the darkness won't overtake you [later]. And he who

walks in the darkness doesn't know where he goes. While you have the light, trust in the light, so that you'll be sons of light.' **[One more command to practice what they had been taught so that they would know its truth.]**²⁸⁸

"These things Jesus spoke and went off and was hidden from them. And no matter how many of his signs he had made in front of them, they were not trusting in him, so that the word of the prophet Isaiah would be fulfilled, which said,

Lord, who believed our report?
And to whom was the Lord's arm [power] revealed?

This is the reason they could not believe: because Isaiah said again,

He [God] has blinded their eyes
and He has hardened their heart,
so that they won't see with [their] eyes
and understand with [their] heart
and turn [to good], and I will heal them.²⁸⁹

Isaiah said these [things] because he saw [that is, foresaw] his [Jesus'] glory and spoke about him. Nevertheless many even of the rulers trusted in him, but because of the Pharisees they weren't admitting [it], so that they would not be excluded from their synagogues. For they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.

"And Jesus said in a loud voice, 'He who trusts in me doesn't trust in me but in Him who sent me. And he who sees me sees [in me the signs of] Him who sent me. I've come a light into the world, so that all who trust in me won't remain in darkness. And if anyone will hear my sayings and won't preserve them, I don't judge him, for I didn't come to judge the world but to save the world. He who sets me aside and doesn't receive my sayings has one who judges him: the word that I spoke, that will judge him on the last day **[that is, he will be found wanting by the standards of truth]**. For I didn't speak on my own, but the Father who sent me, He's given me a commandment [as to] what I'll say and what I'll speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. So what I speak — just as the Father has spoken to me, so I speak."²⁹⁰

Once more we see Jesus affirming that his teaching was God's very word. Its truth he was now about to submit to the ultimate test. He would prove to the full Love's power over hate, Life's power over death, by letting his enemies attempt to destroy him.

Footnotes

284. Foreign residents in and visitors to Jerusalem: Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, ch. III. Bethsaida was just outside Galilee in Gaulonitis (see *IDB*, I, 396-397). In Acts 13:14 in most manuscripts we find a similar designation, "Antioch [on the border] of Pisidia," though Floyd V. Filson takes the latter as indicating that Antioch had been incorporated in Pisidia when the words were written (*IDB*, III, 820a).

285. Jesus had said much the same thing earlier: Mark 8:34-35 = Matthew 16:25-26 = Luke 9:23-24; also Matthew 10:39.

"My soul has been vexed" and "save me" are allusions to Psalm 6:3-4. This Psalm ends on a note

of triumph because “the Lord has heard,” and Jesus’ subsequent words indicate that he remembered and found inspiration in the fact.

286. Jesus’ other statements about being lifted up are in John 3:14-15 and 8:28. Some scholars see Jesus’ question “what shall I say?” and its answer as contradicting the account, found only in the other Gospels, of his mental struggles in the Garden of Gethsemane, culminating in his saying “let Your will be done” (Matthew 26:36-44 = Mark 14:32-39 = Luke 22:39-42). I regard what John tells us here as evidence Jesus had begun specific prayers about the ordeal facing him, and I regard what the other Gospels tell us as evidence that he had to continue these prayers as the time of trial approached. In fact, his words on the cross, “why have You forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46 = Mark 15:34) indicate to me that he had to continue in his prayers even then, with the glorious results at last that all the Gospels testify to.

287. “Remains forever”: Ezekiel 37:25.

288. “Sons of light” was a term used by the Essenes also.

289. Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10. For the interpretation of 6:10 see p. 257.

290. “Preserve”: the verb is *phulassô*; the corresponding noun means “jailor,” so the translation “keep” in NRSV, for instance, does not mean “obey.” (In British English, where a jailor may be called a keeper, the translation “keep” would not obscure the meaning.) Most manuscripts, but none of the earliest that have survived, have a different verb, *pisteuô*, meaning “believe,” and the KJV so translates it.

SECTION V – B15 (Luke 8:40 ... 55)

See B11 above.