

have virtually commenced on that day of Pentecost when 3,000 were baptized, and the essentials of a new Christian worship, having links with the Jewish worship which preceded it, were instituted. These were the beginnings, but that the Church was intended to be no longer local and national, like the Jewish, but catholic and universal, we know from our Lord's marching orders to His disciples (Matt. xxviii. 19, Mark xvi. 15, Acts i. 8), and from the later Mission to the Gentiles, as carried out by St. Paul and others. So that the Church (not "the Fellowship") fitly framed and founded, and already shewing signs of organisation to be completed as time went on and need arose, may be said to be the real, and, if not primary, enduring result of the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

The first Whitsunday was the Birthday of the Christian Church.

WILLIAM SPICER WOOD.

"SEE THOU TELL NO MAN."

WHY did our Lord forbid the publication of certain of His miracles? Perhaps no complete answer to this question is possible; but there seems still to be room for a more thorough discussion of the problem, and even for a fuller and more satisfactory statement of its data, than the present writer has seen. Some passages which might help to a solution are commonly ignored, while others are adduced which do not seem to have any real bearing on the question.

We must begin, obviously, by ascertaining what the data actually are.

1. These prohibitions are confined to one class of our Lord's miracles, those performed upon the body of man. Bishop Westcott seems to be right <sup>1</sup> in grouping together

<sup>1</sup> *The Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles.*

under this head the miracles of healing and of resuscitation,<sup>1</sup> and in distinguishing these sharply, not only from the Nature miracles, but from the exorcisms. To this class, then, the prohibitions are confined. The Nature miracles were performed for the most part for and among the disciples only.<sup>2</sup> They were the most secret of all His miracles, and we may perhaps suppose that the disciples were under a general injunction not to speak of them. This supposition receives some support, as we shall see later, from the healing of Peter's mother-in-law.

It is equally noteworthy—and to this point also we shall return later—that our Lord never forbade His exorcisms to be made known. As this is not universally admitted, a word of proof must be added. Dr. Sanday<sup>3</sup> alleges Mark i. 34, and also iii. 12, with which latter verse he compares Matthew xii. 16, as instances in which, “after a miracle has been performed, the recipient is strictly cautioned to maintain silence about it.” This is surely erroneous as far as Mark i. 34 is concerned. Nothing whatever is there said to the recipients. The command, we are expressly told, is addressed to the demons themselves, and is exactly similar to that in verse 25, “Hold thy peace, and come out of him.” The reason for this is obvious. Had Jesus connived, even by silence, at the proclamation of His Messiahship by evil spirits, He would have afforded some slight excuse to those who charged Him of complicity with Beelzebub. Bengel's comment is right, *Neque hoc tempus erat, neque hi praecones*. In four cases of exorcism no such command is given, but in three of these we are

<sup>1</sup> Hort points out (*The Way, the Truth and the Life*, p.103) that our Lord spoke of Himself as saving life when He healed the man with the withered hand.

<sup>2</sup> The only exceptions seem to be the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and (presumably) the Feeding of the Four Thousand.

<sup>3</sup> *Hastings' D.B.*, Art. “Jesus Christ.”

expressly told that the devil was dumb, and in the fourth—the case of the Gadarene demoniac—there is no indication of any spectators other than the twelve.

And is not this the right explanation of Mark iii. 12 also? The phrase there used appears to have the same meaning as that used in Mark i. 34; what our Lord enjoined was, “that they should not make him known.”<sup>1</sup> The parallel in Matthew xii. 16 demands, however, separate treatment. Our Lord’s words are similarly reported, but as Matthew does not actually mention demoniacs—he only says, “great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all”—it would seem that he attached a different meaning to the prohibition. What was that meaning?

This ought not to be very difficult to discover, since the Evangelist himself appends a quotation from Isaiah with the express purpose of giving us the clue. The only commentator, so far as the present writer has noticed, who has made much use of the hint is Zahn. He points out that Jesus had retired from the Holy Land after a controversy with the Pharisees which had resulted in their conspiring with the Herodians to destroy Him. His mission, even in Galilee, was not yet finished, and He accordingly took measures to avoid a premature rupture with the authorities. He could easily have protected Himself against them by throwing Himself upon the enthusiasm of the multitudes, and thus forming a party which neither Pharisee nor Herodian, nor both combined, would have cared to face. But His character and His commission alike forbade this expedient. The Servant of the Lord was not to “strive nor cry,” neither should “any man hear his voice in the streets.” The time was to come when He would steadfastly set His face to go to

<sup>1</sup> The phrase itself does not seem very naturally to bear the meaning which Dr. Sanday puts on it.

Jerusalem, but in the meantime He quietly avoided both needless danger and needless strife. That this, and not the reference to Messiah's mission to the Gentiles, is the main point of the quotation, seems clear from the fact that Matthew—unlike Mark—does not mention the presence of Gentiles in the multitude. The natural inference surely is that our Lord did not wish His place of retirement to be known more widely than was inevitable. It could not, of course, be wholly concealed, but if, as seems probable, He was moving about from place to place, even a few hours' delay in the spread of such information might serve His purpose.

This explanation of Matthew xii. 16 seems to be confirmed by Mark vii. 24, where Jesus once again, after a controversy with the Pharisees, withdraws from the borders of the Holy Land. On this occasion we are expressly told that He sought secrecy—"He entered into an house, and would have no man know it."

There is, then, no evidence that Jesus ever attempted to keep His exorcisms secret. The reason for this we shall discuss later.

2. The second *datum* is that, as far as the narratives give us clear guidance, no publicly performed miracle seems to have been followed by an injunction of silence.<sup>1</sup> This is what we should naturally expect; and on this ground also Dr. Sanday's explanation of Mark i. 34 and iii. 12 is surely improbable.

3. Thirdly, *all* privately performed miracles (of this type) were—so far as we can judge from the narratives—ordered to be kept secret, with the exception of the healing of Simon's wife's mother. This exception seems to confirm

<sup>1</sup> The healing of the leper in Mark i. 40-45 does not seem to be an exception to this, though Matthew's narrative, if it stood alone, might suggest publicity.

the suggestion already made that the disciples were under a general injunction not to divulge private miracles. The case of the Transfiguration was peculiar. It was not exactly what we call a miracle, and it bore so directly upon the question of the Messiahship of Jesus that the temptation to publish it must have been very strong. It may be also that Jesus did not want all the Twelve to know of it.

4. Fourthly, in four out of the five cases Jesus Himself took means to ensure privacy. He did so at Capernaum, where He took no notice of the blind men till they had followed Him into the house; He did so in the house of Jāirus; He did so when He led the deaf and dumb man out of Bethsaïda, and forbade him to return thither. It is noteworthy that these precautions were taken after the first of the five prohibitions had been disobeyed.

5. And this last point leads up to the fact that the prohibitions tend to increase in urgency. From the first, indeed, they were strict and peremptory; "he straitly charged him . . . See thou say nothing to any man" (Mark i. 43, 44); and similar language is reported in Mark v. 43 and Matthew ix. 30. But in Mark vii. 36 the injunction was given again and again, and in Mark viii. 26, though we must abandon the received reading, "nor tell it to any man in the town," the prohibition even to enter Bethsaïda is more significant than any mere injunction of silence could have been.<sup>1</sup>

6. The next fact is that the prohibitions were confined to Galilee and its immediate neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup> No instance is supplied by the miracles performed in Peraea,<sup>3</sup> at Jericho,

<sup>1</sup> The *οὐδέ* is emphatic and eloquent. It introduces a sort of *a fortiori*.

<sup>2</sup> The instance recorded in Mark vii. 31-37 must not be taken as performed in heathen territory. Dr. Swete remarks in his Commentary (v. note *in loc.*), "The Lord is again in the land of Israel."

<sup>3</sup> That is, during what is called the Peraean ministry; we have no exact geographical information here.

and in Jerusalem. Especially striking is the contrast between the healing of the blind men at Capernaum, and the healing of Bartimaeus at Jericho. In the latter case Jesus responds publicly to the cry, "Have mercy upon us, thou Son of David"; in the former, as we have seen, He does not. To this point we shall return later. There is a similar, if less striking contrast between the cleansing of the leper in Mark i., and the cleansing of the ten lepers in Luke xvii.<sup>1</sup> Here the Samaritan publicly advertises his cure, and Jesus plainly hints that the others ought to have done the same.

Another touch of contrast is added by St. John's account of the ministry in Jerusalem. Both in Jerusalem and elsewhere Jesus healed people on the Sabbath Day. But in Galilee and on the last southward journey there seems to have been always a special reason for this. He was expressly asked to heal Peter's mother-in-law; and, moreover, that miracle was performed in private. In the case of the man with a withered hand, He was challenged on a point of principle, and could not but accept the challenge. Matthew alone puts the challenge into words, but it is clear even from Mark and Luke that Jesus was conscious of it. The same remark applies to the case of the dropsical man (Luke xiv. 1-6) and possibly also to that of the woman with a spirit of infirmity (Luke xiii. 11-17). In these two last instances, moreover, it is quite likely that Jesus might never have met the sufferers again. But in the two healing miracles performed at Jerusalem, He seems to have deliberately selected the Sabbath Day for the cure. He was residing in or near Jerusalem, where the sufferers lived; the cases were both chronic, and could well have waited a day or two for their healing.

<sup>1</sup> v. 12 suggests that the incident probably took place in the village street.

In these cases, then, the Lord seems to have courted publicity and discussion.

And the same may be said of the raising of Lazarus. The mere healing of his sickness would not (as the remarks of the Jews in John xi. 37 indicate) make any very special impression on those who knew that He had healed the man born blind, but the Lord's own words in verse 4 (notably similar to His statement about the blind man in ix. 3) suggest that the resuscitation of Lazarus was designed to make a more powerful appeal.

7. The seventh and last *datum* is found in Mark i. 45, where the Evangelist tells us the result which followed from the leper's disobedience to our Lord's command; "Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter."

These, then, are the facts. How are they to be interpreted? It will be simplest to begin with 7, in which the Evangelist himself gives us the germ of an explanation, by telling us how our Lord's movements were restricted by the leper's disobedience. This is a pregnant hint, the only one of its kind which the Gospels contain, and we shall do well to follow it.

It enables us, in the first place, to dispose of two interpretations which have been suggested, of the first as untenable, and of the second as at least inadequate.

It is surely odd that anyone should ever have suggested that the prohibitions were not very seriously meant, and that Jesus regarded the loquacity which could not or would not be thus restrained, with a sort of amused tolerance. Not to dwell on the fact that the suggestion—though certainly not so meant<sup>1</sup>—has an air of flippancy about it,

<sup>1</sup> I cannot recall where I have seen this suggestion; but its author was certainly a well-known orthodox theologian.

it cannot possibly be reconciled with Mark i. 45, or with the urgency of the prohibitions or the pains that Jesus took on certain occasions to ensure privacy.

The second interpretation, that it was for the restored sufferer's own sake that silence was imposed, lest the spiritual impression which the miracle was intended to produce should evaporate in talk, may possibly be correct as far as it goes, but, like the former, it leaves Mark i. 45 unexplained.

It is obvious at the very outset of the inquiry—and so much may be conceded to the second of the foregoing explanations—that Jesus could not, in any of the cases, have hoped to secure absolute secrecy. What He evidently did desire was to restrict as far as possible the publication of His miracles of healing and resuscitation, and by such restriction to limit the size of the crowds that thronged Him. So much is plain from Mark i. 45, where it is unmistakably implied, first, that the leper's disobedience had the effect of greatly increasing the crowds, and secondly that this increase prevented our Lord from continuing His work openly in the towns.

But we have still to ask the crucial question, Why did the pressure of the crowds interfere with His work? We know that He had compassion on the multitudes; we know that He desired that as many as possible should hear the message of the Kingdom. Neither as prophet, therefore, nor as healer, should we have expected *a priori* that He would desire in any way to limit the size of the crowds that gathered round Him. (It may be remarked, in passing, that if the gospel story had been legend, not history, no such problem would have confronted us.)

And yet the reason is perhaps not very far to seek. It will be remembered that the injunctions of silence belong exclusively to the Northern ministry. Now the religious



atmosphere of the North was not quite the same as that of Judaea. In Judaea, and particularly in Jerusalem, under the very eyes of the religious and political leaders, it was impossible that His ministry could take the same course that it did in Galilee. In the first place, the Messianic hope was less ardent in the South,<sup>1</sup> and the claims of Jesus, even as the Galilean populace understood them, would have aroused less enthusiasm there than in the North. In the second place, those claims must have been better understood in the religious capital than in Galilee. Questions must have been asked, and answers must have been given which would have laid bare, at least in some measure, the deeper implications of Christ's teaching about His Person and authority. (This, of course, is exactly what the Fourth Gospel tells us did happen.) The religious leaders, therefore, must have either accepted or rejected Him on His own terms; and it was precisely on His own terms, as even the Synoptists tell us, that they rejected Him. He was condemned for blasphemy. Nor is this the only confirmation which the Synoptic Gospels give us of the picture presented in the Fourth Gospel. It appears from Mark iii. 22 that the bitterest personal opposition even in Galilee emanated from "the scribes which came down from Jerusalem," and Luke v. 17 suggests that the same malign influence was present there at an even earlier date. St. John is therefore not alone in giving us to understand that the rejection of Jesus by the religious authorities in Judaea and Jerusalem was, on the whole, open-eyed and emphatic from the first.<sup>2</sup> Once again, it is not John but Luke (xiii. 23) who reports the saying,

<sup>1</sup> Presumably the chilling influence of the chief priests, who were mostly Sadducees, had something to do with the state of feeling in Judaea.

<sup>2</sup> This statement does not exclude the recognition of the fluctuations of feeling and opinion recorded in the Fourth Gospel.

"It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

The situation in Galilee was different. The danger there, where Messianic hopes burned high, was of an unspiritual acceptance of Jesus as a Messiah corresponding to popular expectations, a supernatural Son of David, mighty in word and deed, at once prophet and miracle-worker, who should "restore again the kingdom to Israel." With the exception of this last item, this conception was a true one as far as it went, but it not only did not include, it actually, as they held it, obscured the deeper significance of His Person and work. There was no room here for the Suffering Servant of Isaiah liii., no room for the universalism which was always at least latent in our Lord's teachings, no room even for the unworldly ethics of the Sermon on the Mount. And just here we touch another significant fact already noted, that the injunctions of silence were confined to the type of miracle which we have indicated. The exorcisms were never so treated by Jesus<sup>1</sup>; in the miracles on man's body the prohibitions occur in five out of fifteen or sixteen instances, while the Nature miracles were performed almost exclusively in the privacy of the inner circle of disciples. Least of all did our Lord wish to call special attention to these last; they were at once the most startling and the least obviously ethical of His mighty works; and when He did at last perform one in public, the carnal enthusiasm of the Galilean multitudes reached its climax, and they endeavoured to take Him by force and make Him a king. That incident appears virtually to have brought the Galilean ministry to an end. Secrecy and retirement from thenceforth increasingly mark its course, and before long the Lord makes His final departure from Galilee.

The conclusions thus reached seem to be strikingly

<sup>1</sup> For the reason of this *v. infra*.

borne out by a consideration of our Lord's attitude towards those who addressed Him as "Son of David."<sup>1</sup> This, of all our Lord's titles, was perhaps the one which lent itself most readily to the worldly and political conception of Messiah which the Galilean multitudes were so eager to apply to Him. The title was His, of course, by right ; He could not disclaim it ; but He did not wish to use it where it was so likely to be misunderstood, and where misunderstanding must produce such disastrous results. In the North, therefore, He declined to respond to it in public. He took no notice of the blind men at Capernaum while they called after Him by that name *in the street* ; it was not till they had followed Him into the house that He healed them. He seems to have treated the Syrophenician woman in the same manner ; Matthew's narrative shows that the incident took place, or at least began, in the open air,<sup>2</sup> and the fact that Jesus did not at first rebuff, but *ignore* her altogether, suggests an unwillingness to respond to a loud and public appeal to Him as "Son of David."

How different all this is to His attitude to blind Bartimaeus, and to His acceptance of the royal title on His triumphant entry into Jerusalem ! Nor can the difference be wholly explained by saying that Jesus became less reticent towards the end of His ministry. We have seen that the close of the ministry in Galilee was marked by increasing reticence and privacy ; the chief determining factor seems to have been place and environment. And we have seen that this was just what we should naturally expect under the different conditions which prevailed in the two districts.

But there is more evidence still to be adduced. The *a priori* argument that the title "Son of David" was specially liable to misconception by the people is con-

<sup>1</sup> I have anticipated some part of this argument in the *Churchman* (Feb. and March, 1919).

<sup>2</sup> "She crieth after us"—"then came she" (Matt. xv. 23, 25).

firmed, as we have seen, by our Lord's attitude to it ; we shall now see that it is confirmed by the attitude of the people themselves. No one, so far as we are informed, prior to the Triumphal Entry, ever addressed or spoke of Jesus in this manner, except in connexion with a miracle hoped for or performed. Three times He was thus appealed to by those who desired such help from Him ; and once the casting out of a demon evoked the question, "Is not this the Son of David ?" Even at His Triumphal Entry, which seems to have followed immediately upon the healing of Bartimaeus, it is quite possible that the crowd may have caught up the words which had met with such a gracious response in the streets of Jericho ;<sup>1</sup> and the children who raised the same cry in the temple were apparently moved to do so by the sight of "the wonderful things that He did."<sup>2</sup> We must not read too much approval into our Lord's comments upon these two incidents. He accepted the homage, for shallow and inadequate as it was, it was sincere, and it was His due,<sup>3</sup> and it was evoked at least in the former case by His own deliberate fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy. It would have been monstrous had no voice been raised in sympathetic response to that claim ; Nature herself would have abhorred such a vacuum, and the stones would immediately have cried out. The enthusiasm of the crowd was doubtless as crude as that of the children, and less pure, but the Lord would not permit any criticism of either by the Pharisees, who grudged Him even that imperfect homage.

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke, indeed, tells us expressly (xix. 37) that the enthusiasm of the multitudes was evoked by "all the mighty works which they had seen."

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxi. 14, 15. They had presumably caught up the actual words from the crowd that accompanied the Lord into Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> And, as His due, it must be claimed publicly ; the cup of the nation's guilt was not full till it had heard and rejected *all* His claims ; and for making this claim the time was now ripe and the place appropriate (*v. infr.*).

It may be objected that the scene at the Triumphal Entry shows that the error which prevailed in Galilee existed in Judaea also.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless it did, to some extent. But its focus seems always to have been Galilee ; the rising which had been imminent in the North (John vi. 15) could hardly have been contrived, even by Galileans, at Jerusalem ; and the Galilean enthusiasm was now wearing very thin. The acclamations at the Triumphal Entry were but the last flicker of a dying flame ; and the same crowd which on Palm Sunday had cried "Hosanna," on Good Friday were shouting, "Crucify Him."<sup>2</sup>

Two facts, we may observe in passing, seem to emerge as one studies these phenomena, first, that they exhibit a close and subtle consistency, alien alike from accident and design, in the Synoptic narratives,<sup>3</sup> and second, that they supply from those narratives a view of our Lord's ministry harmonious, so far as it goes, with that of St. John.

One further point remains to be noted. The conclusions thus reached are confirmed by a study of the exorcisms. The Nature miracles were usually performed in private, the miracles of healing and resuscitation with such small measure of privacy as circumstances allowed ; but there was no privacy in the exorcisms. These were pre-eminently moral and spiritual miracles,<sup>4</sup> direct attacks upon the kingdom of darkness, deliverances of soul as well as body, and therefore miracles which showed more fully than any others could the true nature of Christ's Kingdom, and the true character of the King. They showed not only His love and power, but His holiness, the absolute antagonism between His Kingdom and the kingdom of spiritual evil

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, the crowd was probably in large measure Galilean.

<sup>2</sup> Note the unanimity indicated in Matt. xxvii. 22, "They all say unto him, Let him be crucified."

<sup>3</sup> They are found in at least three of the recognised sources.

<sup>4</sup> Westcott, *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, Sermon III.

that He had come to destroy. And it was the full and overwhelming revelation thus made which revealed also the depth of wickedness underlying the opposition of those who accused Him of complicity with Satan, and evoked the warning recorded in Mark iii. 28, 29.<sup>1</sup> Westcott has shown in detail<sup>2</sup> the moral and spiritual effects which these miracles were calculated to produce, both in the disciples and in the multitudes. On the disciples these lessons were doubtless not wholly lost.<sup>3</sup> But the multitude seem to have viewed them chiefly as displays of extraordinary power,<sup>4</sup> and to have linked them on to their own conception of the Son of David (Matt. xii. 23). No greater proof, perhaps, could have been given of the blindness which had fallen upon Israel, than that even these miracles could not make them see the true character and mission of Him who had come to save His people from their *sins*. The scribes from Jerusalem did see this; they perceived His holiness, and hated it; their's was the clearer vision and the deeper guilt; but the blinded multitudes of Galilee did not even see it.

Finally, we note that while Jesus never forbade the publication of an exorcism, in one case He actually commanded it, an incident quite unique in His ministry. "See thou tell no man"—the prohibition imposed upon the Galilean leper—stands in striking contrast to the injunction given to the Gadarene demoniac, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee"; but if the view advocated in these pages is correct, the two commands were dictated by the same motive.

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<sup>1</sup> And also, of course, in Matt. and Luke.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, Sermon III.

<sup>3</sup> Note their question in Mark ix. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Even the Seventy seem to have viewed them too much in this light; note Luke x. 17, and the Lord's answer in v. 20.