NRSV

THE

C. S. LEWIS BIBLE

For Reading, Reflection, and Inspiration

ZONDERVAN®

NRSV, The C. S. Lewis Bible

New Revised Standard Version Bible
Copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America

Published by Zondervan, 2021
3900 Sparks Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546
All rights reserved

Originally published by HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2010.

www.Zondervan.com

This Bible was set in the Zondervan NRSV Typeface, created at the 2K/DENMARK type foundry.

Library of Congress Card Number 2021935165

Up to five hundred (500) verses of The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible text may be quoted or reprinted without the express written permission of the publisher, provided the verses quoted neither amount to a complete book of the Bible nor account for fifty percent (50%) or more of the written text of the total work in which they are quoted.

When the NRSV text is quoted, notice of copyright must appear on the title or copyright page of the work as follows:

> The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

When quotations from the NRSV text are used in non-saleable media, such as church bulletins, orders of service, posters, transparencies, or similar media, the initials (NRSV) may be used at the end of each quotation.

Quotations or reprints in excess of five hundred (500) verses (as well as other permission requests) must be approved in writing by the NRSV Permissions Office, The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115–0050.

Printed in China

21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 /DSC/ 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Alphabetical List of the Books of the Bible iv
Abbreviations v
Editors and Advisory Board vii
Why a C. S. Lewis Bible?, *by Douglas Gresham* ix
C. S. Lewis and the Bible, *by Jerry Root* xi
C. S. Lewis as a Guide for Bible Reading xii
How to Read *The C. S. Lewis Bible* xiii
The Spiritual Journey of C. S. Lewis, *by Jerry Root* xv
Editor's Note xvii
To the Reader ixx

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1
Exodus 51
Leviticus 91
Numbers 121
Deuteronomy 159
Joshua 197
Judges 221
Ruth 245
1 Samuel 251
2 Samuel 283
1 Kings 309
2 Kings 339
1 Chronicles 369
2 Chronicles 395
Ezra 427
Nehemiah 437
Esther 451
Job 459
Psalms 495
Proverbs 593
Ecclesiastes 623
Song of Solomon 633
Isaiah 641
Jeremiah 711
Lamentations 775
Ezekiel 783
Daniel 833
Hosea 849
Joel 859
Amos 863
Obadiah 873
Jonah 875
Micah 879
Nahum 887
Habakkuk 891
Zephaniah 895
Haggai 899
Zechariah 901
Malachi 911

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 917
Mark 959
Luke 983
John 1027
Acts 1059
Romans 1095
1 Corinthians 1115
2 Corinthians 1131
Galatians 1143
Ephesians 1149
Philippians 1155
Colossians 1161
1 Thessalonians 1167
2 Thessalonians 1171
1 Timothy 1175
2 Timothy 1179
Titus 1183
Philemon 1187
Hebrews 1189
James 1203
1 Peter 1209
2 Peter 1215
1 John 1219
2 John 1225
3 John 1227
Jude 1229
Revelation 1231

Afterword: Reflections on Scripture, *by C. S. Lewis* 1253
Indexes 1255
Index by Source 1257
Index by Scripture Reference 1270

Alphabetical List of the Books of the Bible

Acts 1059
Amos 863
1 Chronicles 369
2 Chronicles 395
Colossians 1161
1 Corinthians 1115
2 Corinthians 1131
Daniel. 833
Deuteronomy 159
Ecclesiastes. 623
Ephesians 1149
Esther. 451
Exodus 51
Ezekiel 783
Ezra 427
Galatians 1143
Genesis 1
Habakkuk 891
Haggai 899
Hebrews 1189
Hosea 849
Isaiah 641
James 1203
Jeremiah 711
Job. 459
Joel 859
John. 1027
1 John 1219
2 John. 1225
3 John. 1227
Jonah 875
Joshua 197
Jude 1229
Judges 221
1 Kings 309
2 Kings 339
Lamentations 775
Leviticus 91
Luke. 983
Malachi. 911
Mark 959
Matthew 917
Micah. 879
Nahum 887
Nehemiah 437
Numbers 121
Obadiah 873
1 Peter. 1209
2 Peter 1215
Philemon. 1187
Philippians. 1155
Proverbs 593
Psalms 495
Revelation 1231
Romans 1095
Ruth 245
1 Samuel 251
2 Samuel 283
Song of Solomon 633
1 Thessalonians 1167
2 Thessalonians 1171
1 Timothy 1175
2 Timothy 1179
Titus 1183
Zechariah 901
Zephaniah 895

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used for the books of the Bible:

OLD TESTAMENT

Gen	Genesis	2Chr	2 Chronicles	Dan	Daniel
Ex	Exodus	Ezra	Ezra	Hos	Hosea
Lev	Leviticus	Neh	Nehemiah	Joel	Joel
Num	Numbers	Esth	Esther	Am	Amos
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Job	Job	Ob	Obadiah
Josh	Joshua	Ps(s)	Psalms	Jon	Jonah
Judg	Judges	Prov	Proverbs	Mic	Micah
Ruth	Ruth	Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Nah	Nahum
1Sam	1 Samuel	Song	Song of Solomon	Hab	Habakkuk
2Sam	2 Samuel	Isa	Isaiah	Zeph	Zephaniah
1Kings	1 Kings	Jer	Jeremiah	Hag	Haggai
2Kings	2 Kings	Lam	Lamentations	Zech	Zechariah
1Chr	1 Chronicles	Ezek	Ezekiel	Mal	Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

Mt	Matthew	Eph	Ephesians	Heb	Hebrews
Mk.	Mark	Phil	Philippians	Jas	James
Lk	Luke	Col.	Colossians	1Pet	1 Peter
Jn	John	1Thess	1 Thessalonians	2Pet	2 Peter
Acts	Acts of the Apostles	2Thess.	2 Thessalonians	1Jn	1 John
Rom.	Romans	1Tim	1 Timothy	2Jn.	2 John
1Cor	1 Corinthians	2Tim	2 Timothy	3Jn.	3 John
2Cor	2 Corinthians	Titus	Titus	Jude	Jude
Gal.	Galatians	Philem	Philemon	Rev	Revelation

In the notes to the books of the Old Testament, the following abbreviations are used:

Ant.	Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*
Aram.	Aramaic
Ch(s)	Chapter(s)
Cn	Correction; made where the text has suffered in transmission and the versions provide no satisfactory restoration, but where the Standard Bible Committee agrees with the judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text.
Gk	Septuagint; Greek version of the Old Testament
Heb.	Hebrew of the consonantal Masoretic Text of the Old Testament

Josephus . . . Flavius Josephus (Jewish historian, about AD 37 to about 95)
Macc. . . . . The book(s) of the Maccabees
Ms(s) . . . . . Manuscript(s)
MT . . . . . The Hebrew of the pointed Masoretic text of the Old Testament
OL . . . . . Old Latin
Q Ms(s). . . . Manuscript(s) found at Qumran by the Dead Sea
Sam . . . . . Samaritan Hebrew text of the Old Testament
Syr . . . . . Syriac Version of the Old Testament
Syr H. . . . . Syriac Version of Origen's Hexapla
Tg. . . . . Targum
Vg . . . . . Vulgate; Latin Version of the Old Testament

Editors and Advisory Board

PROJECT EDITORS

Marlene Baer Hekkert and Michael G. Maudlin

MANAGING EDITOR

Patricia Klein

CONSULTING EDITORS

Douglas Gresham and Jerry Root

PRODUCTION EDITOR

Suzanne Quist

ADVISORY BOARD

Gayne Anacker is vice president of the C. S. Lewis Foundation and professor of philosophy at California Baptist University.

Sarah Arthur is a founding board member of the award-winning Michigan C. S. Lewis Festival and the author of numerous youth resources on C. S. Lewis, including *Walking through the Wardrobe*.

Devin Brown is a Lilly Scholar and a professor of English at Asbury University, where he teaches a class on C. S. Lewis. He is the author of *Inside Narnia, Inside Prince Caspian,* and *Inside the Voyage of the Dawn Treader.*

Michael J. Christensen is director of the Shalom Initiative for Prophetic Leadership and Community Development and affiliate associate professor of spirituality and religious studies at Drew University. He is also an ordained United Methodist minister and the author of *C. S. Lewis on Scripture.*

Fr. Andrew Cuneo is a priest in the Orthodox Church and has taught English literature at Hillsdale College. He obtained his M.Phil. and D.Phil. in English from Merton College at the University of Oxford.

Lyle Dorsett is the Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism at Beeson Divinity School and was the former head of the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College. He is also the author of *And God Came In: The Extraordinary Story of Joy Davidman* and *Seeking the Secret Place: The Spiritual Formation of C. S. Lewis*.

Colin Duriez has written several books on C. S. Lewis and the Inklings, including *The C. S. Lewis Encyclopedia, The Inklings Handbook* (with the late David Porter), *J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis: The Gift of Friendship,* and *A Field Guide to Narnia*. He has also appeared as a commentator on C. S. Lewis on DVD and on television, including productions for the BBC and PBS.

Bruce L. Edwards is professor of English and Africana studies at Bowling Green State University (Ohio) and has served as a C. S. Lewis Foundation Fellow at the Kilns in Oxford, England. He is also the editor of *C. S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy*.

Paul Ford is a professor of systematic theology and liturgy at St. John's Seminary, is an internationally recognized authority on the life and writings of C. S. Lewis, and is the award-winning author of *Companion to Narnia* and editor of *Words to Live By: A Dictionary for the Mere Christian* and *Yours, Jack: Spiritual Direction from C. S. Lewis*.

Garry Friesen is a professor of Bible at Multnomah Bible College, where he teaches a course on C. S. Lewis. His Ph.D. is from Dallas Seminary, where he did a master's thesis on Lewis's view of Scripture. Garry mentors six college students at his house, which has a Narnia theme that brings hundreds every year for a tour. He is an elder at Imago Dei Community and has just finished twenty years' work on a C. S. Lewis Scripture index with ten thousand entries.

Walter Hooper is a trustee and literary adviser of the estate of C. S. Lewis. In 1963 he served briefly as Lewis's private secretary, and after Lewis's death he devoted himself to Lewis's memory, eventually taking up residence in Oxford, England, where he now lives.

Reed Jolley is a pastor at Santa Barbara Community Church and contributor to *C. S. Lewis: Lightbearer in the Shadowlands*.

Don King is professor of English at Montreat College, editor of the *Christian Scholar's Review*, and the author of three books, including *C. S. Lewis, Poet: The Legacy of His Poetic Impulse*.

Art Lindsley is a senior fellow at the C. S. Lewis Institute and is the author of *C. S. Lewis's Case for Christ*.

Marjorie Lamp Mead is associate director of the Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College (Illinois). She is coeditor of *Brothers and Friends: The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis* and *C. S. Lewis: Letters to Children*, as well as coauthor of *A Reader's Guide Through the Wardrobe* and *A Reader's Guide to Caspian*.

Earl Palmer was the former senior pastor of University Presbyterian Church and is a speaker at the C. S. Lewis Institute.

Jerry Root wrote both his M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation on C. S. Lewis. He has been teaching college and graduate courses on C. S. Lewis for over thirty years. He currently teaches at Wheaton College (Illinois) and is a visiting professor at Biola University and Talbot Graduate School of Theology. He is the author of *C. S. Lewis and a Problem of Evil* and coeditor of *The Quotable Lewis*.

Revd. Dr. Jeanette Sears was formerly the president of the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society and is currently a tutor in doctrine and church history at Trinity College, Bristol, England. She has a Ph.D. in theology (Manchester), was a Kennedy Scholar at Harvard, and is an Anglican priest, novelist, and author of *The Oxford of J. R. R Tolkien and C. S. Lewis*.

Dick Staub is an award-winning broadcaster, writer, and speaker whose work focuses on understanding faith and culture and interpreting each to the other. The Kindlings organization he oversees (www.TheKindlings.com) is inspired by the intellectual, creative, and spiritual legacy of C. S. Lewis and the Inklings.

James E. Taylor teaches philosophy at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. He directed the Philosophy Symposium at the C. S. Lewis Foundation's Oxbridge 2008 Summer Institute in Oxford and Cambridge.

Dr. Michael Ward is chaplain of St. Peter's College, Oxford, and author of *Planet Narnia* and *The Narnia Code* and coeditor of *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis*.

Why a C. S. Lewis Bible?

by Douglas Gresham

It seems to me that many annotated Bibles are exercises in one man, or one committee of men, presenting their own wisdom and the results of their own biblical studies to the public at large, and while I ascribe to them the very best motives in the world, there still seems to me to be just a touch of arrogance attached to such an endeavour. After all, what is being said is "I/We have studied the Bible for years and I/we have achieved such wisdom therefrom that you need to read my/our comments in order to understand the Bible as deeply and as well as I/we do, which it is of vital importance for you to do."

However, this annotated Bible is very different. This is a case of the understanding of a man who never thought of himself as a theologian but always regarded himself as a rank amateur in such matters, and yet is now, more than forty-five years after his death, regarded as one of the leading theologians of his day. This is a man who never presented himself as any kind of psychologist and yet now is thought of as a man who understood human thinking and humanity better than any other writer of his time. This is a man who never imagined himself to be a biblical scholar and yet who read and memorised a chapter of the Bible every single day. He is a man who left those of us who have read all his works with one everlasting regret, it is that he did not write more, far more, than he did. And it is not he who has put his thoughts and understandings into this work, but a group of fine scholars, many years after his death, for C. S. Lewis, known as "Jack" by his family and friends, has become one of the most studied and respected writers of the twentieth century.

In all of Jack's published works, again and again we find great gems of wisdom and knowledge; passages keep appearing that leave us stunned and amazed at the great depth of comprehension that this man exhibited. In the thousands of letters of his enormous correspondence, again and again we find words of warm, compassionate advice to people all over the world who had approached him by mail with a problem. Others, desperate under the thrall of some horrific experience, turned to Jack for solace. He responded not with merely trite and easy utterances glibly borrowed from some self-help book found in a library of such dreary tomes, but with cogent and well-thought-out answers to their problems and difficulties, were they spiritual, emotional, or merely mundane. In the pages of the published volumes of his letters[1] we find such wisdom on so many matters that in today's world of specialisation it is hard to believe that one man could be so knowledgeable and so understanding about so many topics of human striving. The truth is that he wasn't, or at least he wasn't all by himself.

As Sir Isaac Newton wisely said: "If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants." And Jack himself would have been the first to admit that much of his almost unbelievable wealth of knowledge and understanding of so many things of the world came from his voracious reading habits. Since his early childhood, Jack would devour books—books of all kinds, shapes, sizes, and content, and he remembered almost all that he had ever read. Jack knew that the wisdom of the world was all to be found within the pages of books, and he sopped it up like a sponge.

1. *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vols. 1–3 (New York: HarperCollins, 2000, 2004, 2006).

However, there was more than merely worldly wisdom in what Jack read, for the Holy Spirit of God is also present in all great literature. Furthermore, Jack had guidance—guidance that he checked and perused every day, and guidance that he sought and entreated every day. For as well as being a man who relentlessly studied the Bible, Jack was also a man who prayed, continually seeking the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He put the problems of others before his maker as often if not more often, and as earnestly if not more earnestly, as he put his own. To seek out the real origins of the godly compassion, understanding, and wisdom with which Jack's writings are filled would take many years of study and deep thought. We are fortunate indeed that there are scholars today who have been prepared to devote their lives, or at least a goodly portion of them, to just such an endeavour. What you hold in your hands is the assiduous work of many scholars who, with great skill, have brought together hundreds of things that Jack has written from the Narnian chronicles, his scholarly essays, his Christian apologetic works, and even his letters to friends and strangers, to show us how, through the torturous paths of life and literature, they all lead back to the One True Source, the Bible.

Every quote from Jack in this volume can be associated with what he himself learned and took away from certain passages of Scripture, processed within his powerful intellect, and then used in his works, to entertain and always to teach as well the things so vital to human thinking and survival. How often have we read a passage from one of Jack's books and thought *Yes!* as the ring of pure truth vibrates with that delightful, familiar chill down our spines and we pause in our reading and gaze sightlessly and unfocused out of the window for a moment to let that truth settle in our minds.

There are two main additions to the knowledge and understanding that we can gain from the study of this Bible. One is just how much of Jack's thinking was directly and powerfully influenced by his own biblical study—how his mind was challenged and instructed by the Maker of all that is by the texts of His book. And the second is just how an honest mind, working with the guidance of God, along with the benefit of years of careful reading and with the purest of motivation, can make the sometimes seemingly complex and even obscure meanings hidden within the biblical texts suddenly become simple and glaringly obvious to those of us with lesser minds. If you are one whose intellect is greater than Jack's was, whose education is better than Jack's was, whose reading is wider than Jack's was, and whose faith is stronger than Jack's was, I would very much like to meet you; but don't bother with this book as you will know already all that it teaches, but for those of us who live on this planet, this is indeed a very valuable work.

C. S. Lewis and the Bible

by Jerry Root

As a liberally educated Oxford don and later Cambridge professor, C. S. Lewis was well aware of the fact that to understand Western culture—let alone culture in general—one ought to know the Bible. He believed that no other book had such a profound influence on the literature of the world as this one book, for even the Quran instructed its followers to know the Gospels and the Psalms. He clearly saw the profound value of the Bible as a religious book and wrote,

> Unless the religious claims of the Bible are again acknowledged, its literary claims will, I think, be given only "mouth honour" and that decreasingly. For it is, through and through, a sacred book. . . . It demands incessantly to be taken on its own terms: it will not continue to give literary delight very long except to those who go to it for something quite different.[2]

Once Lewis became a theist, even before he became a Christian, he began his lifelong practice of daily Bible reading. For Lewis, Bible reading was as natural to his daily routine as eating or sleeping. From the time of his conversion, the atheist turned Christian most often read passages prescribed in the Anglican prayer book, but his method of reading, study, and meditation varied. Sometimes he simply read from cover to cover the King James Version (also known as the Authorized Standard Version) or the Moffat translation; and as a medievalist he was also familiar with the Coverdale Bible. Sometimes, as his published letters indicate, he would focus for a time on a particular book of the Bible such as Romans or the Psalms. Often, as a trained classical scholar he would read frequently from the Greek text of the New Testament. No matter what section of the Bible captured his attention at any given time, this one thing must be said about Lewis: he was a man of the Book. Toward the end of his life Lewis was asked what he thought of the practice of daily devotions. He answered,

> We have our New Testament regimental orders upon the subject. I would take it for granted that everyone who becomes a Christian would undertake this practice. It is enjoined upon us by Our Lord; and since they are His commands, I believe in following them. It is always just possible that Jesus Christ meant what He said when He told us to seek the secret place and to close the door.[3]

Lewis faithfully got into the Bible each day, and it is clear from all he wrote that the Bible got into him. In his writing, Lewis sought to focus on what he called "mere Christianity"—that is, those things most central to Christian faith and teaching, and that which is most central to the Bible. From the Scriptures, all that is essential to faith and practice is drawn. As spiritual questions arise out of the text, Lewis

2. C. S. Lewis, "The Literary Impact of the Authorised Version" (1950), in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), p. 144.
3. C. S. Lewis, "Cross-Examination" (1963), in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 266.

intersected with those questions and developed profound apologetics for the faith, including his well-known commentary on whether Jesus was a "liar, lunatic, or the Son of God."

C. S. LEWIS AS A GUIDE FOR BIBLE READING

Lewis's popularity as a writer who transcends all Christian traditions is evidence of how widely he has become a trusted voice and a spiritual guide for those confronted with life's biggest questions. His years of faithful Bible study as well as his ability to state things clearly and imaginatively reveal that Lewis had the ability to open more than wardrobe doors. His wide background of reading literature of the Western world informed his perspective so that in his one voice we can hear the echo of many voices. Lewis's uniquely informed knowledge of the terrain of human thought, culture, and experience makes his commentary particularly helpful. He is a valuable guide for any reader who wants to grow in an understanding of Scripture and therefore wants to grow in his or her own life of faith.

Though Lewis wrote only one book that could in any way be construed as something approximating a Bible commentary—*Reflections on the Psalms*—much of his writing is very much informed by his study of the Bible. It is precisely in this way that Lewis's own words can become a helpful commentary or guide for Bible reading and study. Someone might ask, "Why is it necessary to have anyone guide a reading of the Bible?" The answer, in part, is that the very history of Jewish-Christian thought has always had respect for biblical guides and teachers. This is as obvious as the record of rabbinical teaching and as proximate as the most recent Sunday-morning sermon given at any church in virtually every country of the world. Certainly anyone who has ever read the Bible more than once knows that a single read through the Scriptures does not leave every question answered. In fact, multiple reads of the text provide enriched and deepening understanding at each new reading. It is a book with layers upon layers of insight. It stands to reason that, if more can be discovered from the text, those who have gone further in the study of the text can benefit those of us who are still learning and teachable. In this way, Lewis is a helpful guide.

In Lewis's fiction and nonfiction works alike he reminds readers how biblical wisdom is necessary for everyday life. Lewis wrote, "Man approaches God most nearly when he is in one sense least like God. For what can be more unlike than fullness and need, sovereignty and humility, righteousness and penitence, limitless power and cry for help?"[4] The world is complex, and none of us, on his or her own, is sufficient for the demands of any given day. We need help. The Scriptures give wisdom for those knowing they need more than their own cleverness to negotiate their way through life's labyrinth.

As a guide, Lewis points out that there is an arrogance embedded in the belief that one can get a last word about God or, for that matter, a last word about the Bible. How is it possible that finite minds—not to mention fallen minds—could ever gain a final and finished grasp of the Omniscient? Certainly we can have a sure word about God: the Bible leaves no door open to relativism. But we cannot have a last word about God, for the Bible leaves no door open to that kind of absolutism that believes it has God fully figured out. It is at this point that Lewis becomes a particularly good guide to the reader of Scripture. Lewis will not let his readers forget that sure words are obtainable while the last words are not. There is in much of his writing a sense of the wonder of the majesty and glory of God that awakens wonder and awe. Lewis never seems to forget that he is small and God is enormous. Application of this fact can be seen in a number of ways.

Lewis was adamant that the Bible, properly read, opens one up to a wider understanding of the world, full of the wonders and wisdom of God. This is something he sought,

4. C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, 1960), p. 14.

and he commented, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else."[5] Lewis believed that the Bible does not close the minds of its readers. On the contrary, it opens them up to the presence and wonder of God as He has displayed His glory everywhere. For example, in reading other books, one's own understanding of Scripture is bound to deepen. As Lewis observed, "There is nothing in literature which does not, in some degree, percolate into life."[6] The questions of the human heart, embedded in the literature of the world, allow us to seek answers in the Scriptures and thus be impressed once again by their enduring wisdom.

Here again, as a man of letters, Lewis is valuable as a guide because he reminds his readers that literature can open up the Scriptures to us in fresh ways. When reading Lewis's fiction work—*The Chronicles of Narnia*—one cannot help but notice that his heroes are all flawed in some way or another. Edmund yields to temptation. Digory struggles to obey. And when Caspian is made King of Narnia, Aslan—the Christ figure of the Narnian books—speaks to him: "You come from the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve," says Aslan. "And that is both honour enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor in earth. Be content."[7]

Such insight from Lewis sends the reader back to the biblical text with new eyes to see things he or she might otherwise have missed. For instance, to read Proverbs after reading Lewis, one cannot help but notice the dramatic contrasts within that book. A reader will be struck by the contrasting of the wise man with the fool; the righteous man with the wicked man; the industrious man with the sluggard. Proverbs marks the lines of demarcation that Lewis reminds us run through every human heart. Nobody would take us seriously if we claimed to be wise, or righteous, or industrious, for these qualities still elude us. And yet, certainly, we must be weary of being the fool, and the wicked man, and the sluggard.

Lewis also reminds readers to knock down their images of God. He once wrote: "reality is iconoclastic."[8] It is one of the biggest ideas occurring throughout his published work. What did he mean by the phrase? An iconoclast is an idol breaker. I may have an image of God in my mind shaped by my reading, sermons I've heard, or conversations in which I've participated. Pieces of the puzzle come together and take a more robust shape. Nevertheless, the image of a given moment, helpful as it may be, begins to compete against my having a growing understanding of God. Lewis reminds us that God wants to knock out the walls of the temples we build for Him because He desires to give us more of Himself. Lewis wrote, more than once, that he wanted God, not his idea of God.[9] Lewis will not let his readers forget that good thought is dynamic thought and it must not become stagnant. In this way, he will be a helpful guide for the reading of the Scriptures. And in light of this, it is important to remember that Lewis's own words are not the last words, either, but they can lead us back to Scripture to seek answers and truth.

HOW TO READ *THE C. S. LEWIS BIBLE*

Imagine if C. S. Lewis were your Oxford tutor or Bible teacher. What would he say, and how would he teach and inspire you? He'd ask the tough questions. He'd make you wrestle with Scripture. He wouldn't let you get off easy. *The C. S. Lewis Bible* was developed in order to put his wisdom and insight side-by-side with the Scriptures so that readers might benefit from the years Lewis gave to close personal study of the Bible as it informed his own writing.

5. C. S. Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?" (1944), in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses,* ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Touchstone, 1996), p. 106.
6. C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936), p. 130.
7. C. S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1951), p. 182.
8. C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), pp. 25, 56, 60.
9. C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 55.

In over six hundred readings paired alongside relevant passages in the Bible, C. S. Lewis is offered as a companion and guide to a reader's daily study of Scripture. As you come across one of these readings within the Bible text, imagine Lewis sitting alongside you, making observations on Scripture. As Lewis did in his daily study, wrestle with the Scriptures, allow his questions to make you dig deeper in the text to look for answers, and set aside time to pause and reflect.

One can deduce from Lewis's own practices that there are many ways to read *The C. S. Lewis Bible*—or any other Bible, for that matter. It can, and perhaps ought to be, read cover to cover—as you might read any other book. In fact, the Bible can be read, at a speaking speed, in approximately eighty hours. This means it takes no more than thirteen minutes per day to read through the Bible from start to finish in a year; this is less time than is given over to commercials in one hour of television. Another way is to study one book of the Bible per month, reading that book over and over, each day, in that given month, taking notes on it and exploring its context in greater depth. Furthermore, the Bible could be read thematically. To do this, while reading it through from start to finish, follow a particular theme throughout. Mark down references as you note the frequency of the theme each time it is mentioned. Follow themes like the love of God, the promises of eternal life, our obligation to the poor, the sanctity of life, our responsibility for the environment, and other topics to keep you engaged with the text and to discover what God's word says on that theme. Each read through the Bible will give you a topical reference tool for studying, in depth, God's wisdom concerning that particular idea.

The Bible is the most important book ever written. If *The C. S. Lewis Bible* will encourage you to read it faithfully, then the work of the editors has been worthwhile. It has not been their design to give you more of Lewis any more than a person who puts a frame on a Rembrandt wants to give you more of a frame. The goal of the editors is that the readers of this Bible will become more enamored with the God of the Bible. Lewis is merely a tool to accomplish that end. The editors are convinced that Lewis himself would have had it no other way.

The Spiritual Journey of C. S. Lewis

by Jerry Root

Clive Staples Lewis was born November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Ireland. His father was a lawyer, and his mother was a university graduate with a degree in mathematics. He was preceded in birth by his brother Warren Hamilton Lewis, who was a constant friend and companion.

When Lewis was a boy his mother became ill. In the days of her sickness Lewis was told that if he prayed for his mother she would recover. She didn't. He was later told that if he prayed harder and with more sincerity she would get better. Then, when he was nine years old, she died of cancer. In some ways the young Lewis felt responsible for her death because maybe he could have prayed harder. In time, Lewis came to believe that if God did exist it wasn't very important, and eventually he abandoned his childhood faith altogether.

Lewis had what might be called spiritual experiences in his youth that haunted him throughout his early life. Most of these came through his reading of romantic literature. He was particularly affected by stories of Norse mythology and medieval knights and their acts of chivalry. One gets the impression that God was wooing Lewis to himself by awakening a longing in him that, if properly followed, would lead Lewis back to faith. Still, Lewis seemed to keep these longings separate from his intellectual life and, at that time, called himself an atheist. Nevertheless, he later observed that the first great problem in life is how one could fit romantic longings of the heart together with the robust intellectual quests of reason. This was certainly Lewis's desire: to find the object of his deepest longing and have it be intellectually coherent and satisfying.

Lewis's formal school experiences were difficult for him. Although he was an intelligent and successful student, he was often bullied and found himself the object of scorn and ridicule. When he was a teenager he was sent to Surrey, England, to be tutored by the senior Lewis's old headmaster, William T. Kirkpatrick, affectionately called the Great Knock. Lewis was to study Greek, Latin, and logic in preparation for his university entrance exams. Those days with Kirkpatrick were idyllic for Lewis. It was during that time in his life he discovered a book titled *Phantastes,* by George MacDonald. The book recounts the adventures of a man named Anodos (Greek for "no way"). Anodos must go on a pilgrim quest through a fairyland, but "No Way" must be given a way or path. As Anodos follows on his pilgrimage, Lewis found his one quest for the object of his deepest longing also rekindled. Lewis would later write that his imagination was baptized by reading MacDonald.

But what was it Lewis most longed for? During this time in his life he went through what he called the *dialectic of desire*. He would have his longings awakened by some experience, and with raised expectations he would tether his heart to that object, only to be disappointed when it did not fulfill him. He would untether his desire only to retether it to something else and be disappointed once again. In time he wondered if his deepest desire was really for a mere earthly object. Perhaps he wanted something more.

Lewis sat for "responsions"—the entrance exam to Oxford University—and passed all but the mathematics paper. He was accepted to the university provided that he passed the math section at a later date—something that in fact he failed to do. However, his student career was interrupted by the First World War, and his sense of duty to his adopted country drove Lewis into enlistment in the British Army. He trained for the war in the Officer's Training Corps at Keble College and was made a lieutenant of the Somerset Light Infantry, arriving at the front in the trenches of the valley of the Somme, on his nineteenth birthday. During this time he began to read the works of G. K. Chesterton and discovered a plausible apologetic for the Christian faith. As he wrote in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy,* all of his reading began to close in on him. He was discovering that the authors he most enjoyed were Christians. After the war he found to his delight that the university had waived, for returning officers, the requirement for passing responsions, and he returned to Oxford. Lewis received three degrees—in classics, literature, and philosophy. Later, he would win a teaching post at Magdalen College, Oxford. It was during his early years at Oxford that Lewis began the more serious business of reconsidering the claims of Christianity.

Lewis had many intellectual barriers he had to hurdle, and slowly he passed over each one, moving from his atheism and materialism, through a period of agnosticism and idealism, until he finally became a theist. And it was at this time in his life that Lewis felt he could go no further. He believed he could no more know God personally than Hamlet could know Shakespeare. Nearly two years later Lewis did in fact convert to Christianity. One of his friends at Oxford was J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien was a Christian, and Lewis says he was one of the human causes of his conversion; in essence it was Tolkien who led Lewis to faith in Christ. Lewis revisited the Hamlet-Shakespeare analogy and decided it was a good one. Certainly Hamlet, a character in a play, could never break out of the play and introduce himself to the author. But Shakespeare, the author, could have written himself into the play as Shakespeare the character and thereby made an introduction between author and character possible. And Lewis believed that something like this actually occurred in history when God the Son became a man.

Lewis's conversion to faith was followed by a life of spiritual discipline. He spent time daily in Bible study and prayer. He committed himself to a community of faith and even went to a spiritual director to be discipled. Furthermore, he gave of his resources—both money and time—in service to Christ. He took what he had, his pen and his brilliant mind, and harnessed the gifts God gave him for service to Christ. All who have read his works are the beneficiaries.

Editor's Note

On Scripture: C. S. Lewis generally referred to the Authorized Standard Version (King James Version) of the Bible in his writings. He also read regularly and studied from the Greek text.

On grammar: During the time of C. S. Lewis's writing, English speakers and writers often used the word *should* where today it is more common to use the word *would*. In places where the grammar is incorrect, we have placed a bracket next to the word *should* to provide greater understanding of Lewis's writings.

On abbreviations: C. S. Lewis had a habitual style of using shorthand or abbreviations in his writings. Following is an explanation of each abbreviation:

cd. = could
v. = very
wd. = would
wh. = which
Xianity = Christianity

To the Reader

This preface is addressed to you by the Committee of translators, who wish to explain, as briefly as possible, the origin and character of our work. The publication of our revision is yet another step in the long, continual process of making the Bible available in the form of the English language that is most widely current in our day. To summarize in a single sentence: the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an authorized revision of the Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, which was a revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which, in turn, embodied earlier revisions of the King James Version, published in 1611.

In the course of time, the King James Version came to be regarded as "the Authorized Version." With good reason it has been termed "the noblest monument of English prose," and it has entered, as no other book has, into the making of the personal character and the public institutions of the English-speaking peoples. We owe to it an incalculable debt.

Yet the King James Version has serious defects. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of biblical studies and the discovery of many biblical manuscripts more ancient than those on which the King James Version was based made it apparent that these defects were so many as to call for revision. The task was begun, by authority of the Church of England, in 1870. The (British) Revised Version of the Bible was published in 1881–1885; and the American Standard Version, its variant embodying the preferences of the American scholars associated with the work, was published, as was mentioned above, in 1901. In 1928 the copyright of the latter was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education and thus passed into the ownership of the Churches of the United States and Canada that were associated in this Council through their boards of education and publication.

The Council appointed a committee of scholars to have charge of the text of the American Standard Version and to undertake inquiry concerning the need for further revision. After studying the questions whether or not revision should be undertaken, and if so, what its nature and extent should be, in 1937 the Council authorized a revision. The scholars who served as members of the Committee worked in two sections, one dealing with the Old Testament and one with the New Testament. In 1946 the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published. The publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, took place on September 30, 1952. A translation of the *Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical* Books of the Old Testament followed in 1957. In 1977 this collection was issued in an expanded edition, containing three additional texts received by Eastern Orthodox communions (3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151). Thereafter the Revised Standard Version gained the distinction of being officially authorized for use by all major Christian churches: Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox.

The Revised Standard Version Bible Committee is a continuing body, comprising about thirty members, both men and women. Ecumenical in representation, it includes scholars affiliated with various Protestant denominations, as well as several Roman Catholic members, an Eastern Orthodox member, and a Jewish member who serves in the Old Testament section. For a period of time the Committee included several members from Canada and from England.

Because no translation of the Bible is perfect or is acceptable to all groups of readers, and because discoveries of older manuscripts and further investigation of linguistic features of the text continue to become available, renderings of the Bible have proliferated. During the years following the publication of the Revised Standard Version, twenty-six other English translations and revisions of the Bible were produced by committees and by individual scholars—not to mention twenty-five other translations and revisions of the New Testament alone. One of the latter was the second edition of the RSV New Testament, issued in 1971, twenty-five years after its initial publication.

Following the publication of the RSV Old Testament in 1952, significant advances were made in the discovery and interpretation of documents in Semitic languages related to Hebrew. In addition to the information that had become available in the late 1940s from the Dead Sea texts of Isaiah and Habakkuk, subsequent acquisitions from the same area brought to light many other early copies of all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures (except Esther), though most of these copies are fragmentary. During the same period early Greek manuscript copies of books of the New Testament also became available.

In order to take these discoveries into account, along with recent studies of documents in Semitic languages related to Hebrew, in 1974 the Policies Committee of the Revised Standard Version, which is a standing committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., authorized the preparation of a revision of the entire RSV Bible.

For the Old Testament the Committee has made use of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977; ed. sec. emendata, 1983). This is an edition of the Hebrew and Aramaic text as current early in the Christian era and fixed by Jewish scholars (the "Masoretes") of the sixth to the ninth centuries. The vowel signs, which were added by the Masoretes, are accepted in the main, but where a more probable and convincing reading can be obtained by assuming different vowels, this has been done. No notes are given in such cases, because the vowel points are less ancient and reliable than the consonants. When an alternative reading given by the Masoretes is translated in a footnote, this is identified by the words "Another reading is."

Departures from the consonantal text of the best manuscripts have been made only where it seems clear that errors in copying had been made before the text was standardized. Most of the corrections adopted are based on the ancient versions (translations into Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and Latin), which were made prior to the time of the work of the Masoretes and which therefore may reflect earlier forms of the Hebrew text. In such instances a footnote specifies the version or versions from which the correction has been derived and also gives a translation of the Masoretic Text. Where it was deemed appropriate to do so, information is supplied in footnotes from subsidiary Jewish traditions concerning other textual readings (the *Tiqqune Sopherim,* "emendations of the scribes"). These are identified in the footnotes as "Ancient Heb tradition."

Occasionally it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission and that none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text. Such reconstructions are indicated in footnotes by the abbreviation Cn ("Correction"), and a translation of the Masoretic Text is added.

For the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament the Committee has made use of a number of texts. For most of these books the basic Greek text from which the present translation was made is the edition of the Septuagint prepared by Alfred Rahlfs and published by the Württemberg Bible Society (Stuttgart, 1935). For several of the books the more recently published individual volumes of the Göttingen Septuagint project were utilized. For the book of Tobit it was decided to follow the form of the Greek text found in codex Sinaiticus (supported as it is by evidence from Qumran); where this text is defective, it was supplemented and corrected by other Greek manuscripts. For the three Additions to Daniel (namely, Susanna, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews, and Bel and the Dragon) the Committee continued to use the Greek version

attributed to Theodotion (the so-called "Theodotion-Daniel"). In translating Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), while constant reference was made to the Hebrew fragments of a large portion of this book (those discovered at Qumran and Masada as well as those recovered from the Cairo Geniza), the Committee generally followed the Greek text (including verse numbers) published by Joseph Ziegler in the Göttingen Septuagint (1965). But in many places the Committee has translated the Hebrew text when this provides a reading that is clearly superior to the Greek; the Syriac and Latin versions were also consulted throughout and occasionally adopted. The basic text adopted in rendering 2 Esdras is the Latin version given in *Biblia Sacra,* edited by Robert Weber (Stuttgart, 1971). This was supplemented by consulting the Latin text as edited by R. L. Bensly (1895) and by Bruno Violet (1910), as well as by taking into account the several Oriental versions of 2 Esdras, namely, the Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic (two forms, referred to as Arabic 1 and Arabic 2), Armenian, and Georgian versions. Finally, since the Additions to the Book of Esther are disjointed and quite unintelligible as they stand in most editions of the Apocrypha, we have provided them with their original context by translating the whole of the Greek version of Esther from Robert Hanhart's Göttingen edition (1983).

For the New Testament the Committee has based its work on the most recent edition of *The Greek New Testament,* prepared by an interconfessional and international committee and published by the United BibleSocieties (1966; 3rd ed. corrected, 1983; information concerning changes to be introduced into the critical apparatus of the forthcoming 4th edition was available to the Committee). As in that edition, double brackets are used to enclose a few passages that are generally regarded to be later additions to the text, but which we have retained because of their evident antiquity and their importance in the textual tradition. Only in very rare instances have we replaced the text or the punctuation of the Bible Societies' edition by an alternative that seemed to us to be superior. Here and there in the footnotes the phrase, "Other ancient authorities read," identifies alternative readings preserved by Greek manuscripts and early versions. In both Testaments, alternative renderings of the text are indicated by the word "Or."

As for the style of English adopted for the present revision, among the mandates given to the Committee in 1980 by the Division of Education and Ministry of the National Council of Churches of Christ (which now holds the copyright of the RSV Bible) was the directive to continue in the tradition of the King James Bible, but to introduce such changes as are warranted on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony, and current English usage. Within the constraints set by the original texts and by the mandates of the Division, the Committee has followed the maxim, "As literal as possible, as free as necessary." As a consequence, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) remains essentially a literal translation. Paraphrastic renderings have been adopted only sparingly, and then chiefly to compensate for a deficiency in the English language—the lack of a common gender third person singular pronoun.

During the almost half a century since the publication of the RSV, many in the churches have become sensitive to the danger of linguistic sexism arising from the inherent bias of the English language towards the masculine gender, a bias that in the case of the Bible has often restricted or obscured the meaning of the original text. The mandates from the Division specified that, in references to men and women, masculine-oriented language should be eliminated as far as this can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture. As can be appreciated, more than once the Committee found that the several mandates stood in tension and even in conflict. The various concerns had to be balanced case by case in order to provide a faithful and acceptable rendering without using contrived English. Only very occasionally has the pronoun "he" or "him" been retained in passages where the reference may have been to a woman as well as to a man; for example, in several legal texts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In such instances of formal, legal language, the options of either putting the passage in the plural or of introducing additional nouns to avoid masculine pronouns in

English seemed to the Committee to obscure the historic structure and literary character of the original. In the vast majority of cases, however, inclusiveness has been attained by simple rephrasing or by introducing plural forms when this does not distort the meaning of the passage. Of course, in narrative and in parable no attempt was made to generalize the sex of individual persons.

Another aspect of style will be detected by readers who compare the more stately English rendering of the Old Testament with the less formal rendering adopted for the New Testament. For example, the traditional distinction between *shall* and *will* in English has been retained in the Old Testament as appropriate in rendering a document that embodies what may be termed the classic form of Hebrew, while in the New Testament the abandonment of such distinctions in the usage of the future tense in English reflects the more colloquial nature of the koine Greek used by most New Testament authors except when they are quoting the Old Testament.

Careful readers will notice that here and there in the Old Testament the word LORD (or in certain cases GOD) is printed in capital letters. This represents the traditional manner in English versions of rendering the Divine Name, the "Tetragrammaton" (see the notes on Exodus 3.14, 15), following the precedent of the ancient Greek and Latin translators and the long established practice in the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue. While it is almost if not quite certain that the Name was originally pronounced "Yahweh," this pronunciation was not indicated when the Masoretes added vowel sounds to the consonantal Hebrew text. To the four consonants YHWH of the Name, which had come to be regarded as too sacred to be pronounced, they attached vowel signs indicating that in its place should be read the Hebrew word *Adonai* meaning "Lord" (or *Elohim* meaning "God"). Ancient Greek translators employed the word *Kyrios* ("Lord") for the Name. The Vulgate likewise used the Latin word *Dominus* ("Lord"). The form "Jehovah" is of late medieval origin; it is a combination of the consonants of the Divine Name and the vowels attached to it by the Masoretes but belonging to an entirely different word. Although the American Standard Version (1901) had used "Jehovah" to render the Tetragrammaton (the sound of Y being represented by J and the sound of W by V, as in Latin), for two reasons the Committees that produced the RSV and the NRSV returned to the more familiar usage of the King James Version. (1) The word "Jehovah" does not accurately represent any form of the Name ever used in Hebrew. (2) The use of any proper name for the one and only God, as though there were other gods from whom the true God had to be distinguished, began to be discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church.

It will be seen that in the Psalms and in other prayers addressed to God the archaic second person singular pronouns *(thee, thou, thine)* and verb forms *(art, hast, hadst)* are no longer used. Although some readers may regret this change, it should be pointed out that in the original languages neither the Old Testament nor the New makes any linguistic distinction between addressing a human being and addressing the Deity. Furthermore, in the tradition of the King James Version one will not expect to find the use of capital letters for pronouns that refer to the Deity—such capitalization is an unnecessary innovation that has only recently been introduced into a few English translations of the Bible. Finally, we have left to the discretion of the licensed publishers such matters as section headings, cross-references, and clues to the pronunciation of proper names.

This new version seeks to preserve all that is best in the English Bible as it has been known and used through the years. It is intended for use in public reading and congregational worship, as well as in private study, instruction, and meditation. We have resisted the temptation to introduce terms and phrases that merely reflect current moods, and have tried to put the message of the Scriptures in simple, enduring words and expressions that are worthy to stand in the great tradition of the King James Bible and its predecessors.

In traditional Judaism and Christianity, the Bible has been more than a historical document to be preserved or a classic of literature to be cherished and admired; it is recognized as the unique record of God's dealings with people over the ages. The Old Testament sets forth the call of a special people to enter into covenant relation with the God of justice and steadfast love and to bring God's law to the nations. The New Testament records the life and work of Jesus Christ, the one in whom "the Word became flesh," as well as describes the rise and spread of the early Christian Church. The Bible carries its full message, not to those who regard it simply as a noble literary heritage of the past or who wish to use it to enhance political purposes and advance otherwise desirable goals, but to all persons and communities who read it so that they may discern and understand what God is saying to them. That message must not be disguised in phrases that are no longer clear, or hidden under words that have changed or lost their meaning; it must be presented in language that is direct and plain and meaningful to people today. It is the hope and prayer of the translators that this version of the Bible may continue to hold a large place in congregational life and to speak to all readers, young and old alike, helping them to understand and believe and respond to its message.

For the Committee,
Bruce M. Metzger

THE

NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

1 An account of the genealogy[a] of Jesus
the Messiah,[b] the son of David, the son
of Abraham.
2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and
Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father
of Judah and his brothers, [3]and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez
the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father
of Aram, [4]and Aram the father of Aminadab,
and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and
Nahshon the father of Salmon, [5]and Salmon
the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the
father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father
of Jesse, [6]and Jesse the father of King David.
And David was the father of Solomon by
the wife of Uriah, [7]and Solomon the father
of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of
Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,[c]
[8]and Asaph[c] the father of Jehoshaphat, and
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram
the father of Uzziah, [9]and Uzziah the father
of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz,
and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, [10]and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh
the father of Amos,[d] and Amos[d] the father of
Josiah, [11]and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and
his brothers, at the time of the deportation
to Babylon.
12 And after the deportation to Babylon:
Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, [13]and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father
of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor,
[14]and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok
the father of Achim, and Achim the father of
Eliud, [15]and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and
Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan
the father of Jacob, [16]and Jacob the father of
Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus
was born, who is called the Messiah.[e]
17 So all the generations from Abraham
to David are fourteen generations; and from
David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen
generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah,[e] fourteen generations.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah[b] took
place in this way. When his mother Mary had
been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived
together, she was found to be with child from
the Holy Spirit. [19]Her husband Joseph, being
a righteous man and unwilling to expose her
to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. [20]But just when he had resolved to do
this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in
a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do
not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the
child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
[21]She will bear a son, and you are to name him
Jesus, for he will save his people from their
sins." [22]All this took place to fulfill what had
been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:
[23] "Look, the virgin shall conceive
and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"
which means, "God is with us." [24]When Joseph
awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the
Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,
[25]but had no marital relations with her until
she had borne a son;[f] and he named him Jesus.

For Reflection: Matthew 1.23

> Christianity is not merely what a man does with his solitude. It is not even what God does with His solitude. It tells of God descending into the coarse publicity of history and there enacting what can—and must—be talked about.

—from "The Founding of the Oxford Socratic Club," *God in the Dock*

[a] **1.1** Or *birth* [b] **1.1,18** Or *Jesus Christ* [c] **1.7,8** Other ancient authorities read *Asa* [d] **1.10** Other ancient authorities read *Amon* [e] **1.16,17** Or *the Christ* [f] **1.25** Other ancient authorities read *her firstborn son*

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was
born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men[a]
from the East came to Jerusalem, [2]asking,
"Where is the child who has been born king
of the Jews? For we observed his star at its
rising,[b] and have come to pay him homage."
[3]When King Herod heard this, he was fright-
ened, and all Jerusalem with him; [4]and calling
together all the chief priests and scribes of
the people, he inquired of them where the
Messiah[c] was to be born. [5]They told him, "In
Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written
by the prophet:

[6] 'And you, Bethlehem, in the
land of Judah,
are by no means least among
the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd[d] my people Israel.' "

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise
men[a] and learned from them the exact time
when the star had appeared. [8]Then he sent
them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search
diligently for the child; and when you have
found him, bring me word so that I may also
go and pay him homage." [9]When they had
heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead
of them, went the star that they had seen at its
rising,[b] until it stopped over the place where
the child was. [10]When they saw that the star
had stopped,[e] they were overwhelmed with
joy. [11]On entering the house, they saw the
child with Mary his mother; and they knelt
down and paid him homage. Then, opening
their treasure chests, they offered him gifts
of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. [12]And hav-
ing been warned in a dream not to return
to Herod, they left for their own country by
another road.

THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT

13 Now after they had left, an angel of the
Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,
"Get up, take the child and his mother, and

[a] **2.1,7** Or *astrologers*; Gk *magi* [b] **2.2,9** Or *in the East* [c] **2.4** Or *the Christ* [d] **2.6** Or *rule* [e] **2.10** Gk *saw the star*

The Incarnation

In the Christian story God descends to reascend. He comes down; down from the heights of absolute being into time, and space, down into humanity; down further still, if embryologists are right, to recapitulate in the womb ancient and pre-human phases of life; down to the very roots and seabed of the Nature He has created. But He goes down to come up again and bring the whole ruined world up with Him. One has the picture of a strong man stooping lower and lower to get himself underneath some great complicated burden. He must stoop in order to lift, he must almost disappear under the load before he incredibly straightens his back and marches off with the whole mass swaying on his shoulders . . . .

In this descent and reascent everyone will recognise a familiar pattern: a thing written all over the world. It is the pattern of all vegetable life. It must belittle itself into something hard, small and deathlike, it must fall into the ground: thence the new life reascends. It is the pattern of all animal generation too. There is descent from the full and perfect organisms into the spermatozoon and ovum, and in the dark womb a life at first inferior in kind to that of the species which is being reproduced: then the slow ascent to the perfect embryo, to the living, conscious baby, and finally to the adult. So it is also in our moral and emotional life. The first innocent and spontaneous desires have to submit to the deathlike process of control or total denial: but from that there is a reascent to fully formed character in which the strength of the original material all operates but in a new way. Death and Rebirth—go down to go up—it is a key principle. Through this bottleneck, this belittlement, the highroad nearly always lies.

The doctrine of the Incarnation, if accepted, puts this principle even more emphatically at the centre. The pattern is there in Nature because it was first there in God. All the instances of it which I have mentioned turn out to be but transpositions of the Divine theme into a minor key.

—from *Miracles*

For Reflection: Matthew 1.18–25

flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you;
for Herod is about to search for the child, to
destroy him." 14Then Joseph[a] got up, took the
child and his mother by night, and went to
Egypt, 15and remained there until the death
of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been
spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out
of Egypt I have called my son."

THE MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked
by the wise men,[b] he was infuriated, and he
sent and killed all the children in and around
Bethlehem who were two years old or under,
according to the time that he had learned from
the wise men.[b] 17Then was fulfilled what had
been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:
18 "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because
they are no more."

THE RETURN FROM EGYPT

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord
suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in
Egypt and said, 20"Get up, take the child and
his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for
those who were seeking the child's life are
dead." 21Then Joseph[a] got up, took the child
and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.
22But when he heard that Archelaus was rul-
ing over Judea in place of his father Herod, he
was afraid to go there. And after being warned
in a dream, he went away to the district of
Galilee. 23There he made his home in a town
called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken
through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He
will be called a Nazorean."

THE PROCLAMATION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

3 In those days John the Baptist appeared
in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,
2"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come
near."[c] 3This is the one of whom the prophet
Isaiah spoke when he said,
"The voice of one crying out in
the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.' "
4Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with
a leather belt around his waist, and his food
was locusts and wild honey. 5Then the people
of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to
him, and all the region along the Jordan, 6and
they were baptized by him in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sad-
ducees coming for baptism, he said to them,
"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee
from the wrath to come? 8Bear fruit worthy of
repentance. 9Do not presume to say to your-
selves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor';
for I tell you, God is able from these stones to
raise up children to Abraham. 10Even now the
ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree
therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut
down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with[d] water for repentance,
but one who is more powerful than I is coming
after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals.
He will baptize you with[d] the Holy Spirit and
fire. 12His winnowing fork is in his hand, and
he will clear his threshing floor and will gather
his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he
will burn with unquenchable fire."

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John
at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14John
would have prevented him, saying, "I need
to be baptized by you, and do you come to
me?" 15But Jesus answered him, "Let it be
so now; for it is proper for us in this way to
fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.
16And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he
came up from the water, suddenly the heavens
were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of
God descending like a dove and alighting on
him. 17And a voice from heaven said, "This is
my Son, the Beloved,[e] with whom I am well
pleased."

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into
the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
2He fasted forty days and forty nights, and
afterwards he was famished. 3The tempter
came and said to him, "If you are the Son of
God, command these stones to become loaves
of bread." 4But he answered, "It is written,
'One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes
from the mouth of God.' "

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city
and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,

[a] **2.14,21** Gk *he* [b] **2.16** Or *astrologers*; Gk *magi*
[c] **3.2** Or *is at hand* [d] **3.11** Or *in* [e] **3.17** Or *my beloved Son*

6saying to him, "If you are the Son of God,
throw yourself down; for it is written,
'He will command his angels
concerning you,'
and 'On their hands they
will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your
foot against a stone.' "
7Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not
put the Lord your God to the test.' "
8 Again, the devil took him to a very high
mountain and showed him all the kingdoms
of the world and their splendor; 9and he said
to him, "All these I will give you, if you will
fall down and worship me." 10Jesus said to
him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,
'Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.' "
11Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels
came and waited on him.

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY IN GALILEE

12 Now when Jesus[a] heard that John had
been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. 13He
left Nazareth and made his home in Caper-
naum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun
and Naphtali, 14so that what had been spoken
through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:
15 "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the
Jordan, Galilee of the
Gentiles—
16 the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region
and shadow of death
light has dawned."
17From that time Jesus began to proclaim,
"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come
near."[b]

JESUS CALLS THE FIRST DISCIPLES

18 As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he
saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter,
and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the
sea—for they were fishermen. 19And he said
to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish
for people." 20Immediately they left their nets
and followed him. 21As he went from there, he
saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee
and his brother John, in the boat with their
father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he
called them. 22Immediately they left the boat
and their father, and followed him.

JESUS MINISTERS TO CROWDS OF PEOPLE

23 Jesus[c] went throughout Galilee, teach-
ing in their synagogues and proclaiming the
good news[d] of the kingdom and curing every
disease and every sickness among the people.
24So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and
they brought to him all the sick, those who
were afflicted with various diseases and pains,
demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he
cured them. 25And great crowds followed him
from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea,
and from beyond the Jordan.

THE BEATITUDES

5 When Jesus[a] saw the crowds, he went
up the mountain; and after he sat down,
his disciples came to him. 2Then he began to
speak, and taught them, saying:
3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs
is the kingdom of heaven.
4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they
will be comforted.
5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit
the earth.
6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness, for they will be filled.
7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will
receive mercy.
8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they
will see God.
9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they
will be called children of God.
10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for
righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom
of heaven.
11 "Blessed are you when people revile you
and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil
against you falsely[e] on my account. 12Rejoice
and be glad, for your reward is great in heav-
en, for in the same way they persecuted the
prophets who were before you.

SALT AND LIGHT

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt
has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be re-
stored? It is no longer good for anything, but
is thrown out and trampled under foot.
14 "You are the light of the world. A city
built on a hill cannot be hid. 15No one after
lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel bas-
ket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light

[a] 4.12; 5.1 Gk *he* [b] 4.17 Or *is at hand* [c] 4.23 Gk *He*
[d] 4.23 Gk *gospel* [e] 5.11 Other ancient authorities lack *falsely*

For Reflection: Matthew 5.8

> Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to.
>
> —from *The Problem of Pain*

to all in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,[a] not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. 19Therefore, whoever breaks[b] one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

CONCERNING ANGER

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' 22But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister,[c] you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult[d] a brother or sister,[e] you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell[f] of fire. 23So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister[g] has something against you, 24leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister,[g] and then come and offer your gift. 25Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court[h] with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. 26Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

CONCERNING ADULTERY

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.[f] 30And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.[f]

CONCERNING DIVORCE

31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

CONCERNING OATHS

33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear

[a] **5.18** Gk *one iota* [b] **5.19** Or *annuls* [c] **5.22** Gk *a brother*; other ancient authorities add *without cause*
[d] **5.22** Gk *say Raca to* (an obscure term of abuse)
[e] **5.22** Gk *a brother* [f] **5.22,29,30** Gk *Gehenna*
[g] **5.23,24** Gk *your brother* [h] **5.25** Gk lacks *to court*

Not to Abolish but to Fulfill

This is one of the rewards of reading the Old Testament regularly. You keep on discovering more and more what a tissue of quotations from it the New Testament is; how constantly Our Lord repeated, reinforced, continued, refined, and sublimated, the Judaic ethics, how very seldom He introduced a novelty.

—from *Reflections on the Psalms*

For Reflection: Matthew 5.17–18

falsely, but carry out the vows you have made
to the Lord.' 34But I say to you, Do not swear
at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of
God, 35or by the earth, for it is his footstool,
or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great
King. 36And do not swear by your head, for
you cannot make one hair white or black. 37Let
your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything
more than this comes from the evil one.[a]

CONCERNING RETALIATION

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An
eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39But
I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if
anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn
the other also; 40and if anyone wants to sue
you and take your coat, give your cloak as well;
41and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go
also the second mile. 42Give to everyone who
begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who
wants to borrow from you.

LOVE FOR ENEMIES

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You
shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
44But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray
for those who persecute you, 45so that you
may be children of your Father in heaven; for
he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the
good, and sends rain on the righteous and on
the unrighteous. 46For if you love those who
love you, what reward do you have? Do not
even the tax collectors do the same? 47And
if you greet only your brothers and sisters,[b]
what more are you doing than others? Do not
even the Gentiles do the same? 48Be perfect,
therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

CONCERNING ALMSGIVING

6 "Beware of practicing your piety before
others in order to be seen by them; for
then you have no reward from your Father
in heaven.

2 "So whenever you give alms, do not sound
a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do
in the synagogues and in the streets, so that
they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you,
they have received their reward. 3But when
you give alms, do not let your left hand know
what your right hand is doing, 4so that your

[a] *5.37* Or *evil* [b] *5.47* Gk *your brothers*

Be Perfect

I find a good many people have been bothered by . . . Our Lord's words, "Be ye perfect." Some people seem to think this means "Unless you are perfect, I will not help you"; and as we cannot be perfect, then, if He meant that, our position is hopeless. But I do not think He did mean that. I think He meant "The only help I will give is help to become perfect. You may want something less: but I will give you nothing less."

Let me explain. When I was a child I often had toothache, and I knew that if I went to my mother she would give me something which would deaden the pain for that night and let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother—at least, not till the pain became very bad. And the reason I did not go was this. I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin; but I knew she would also do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist next morning. I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more, which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from pain: but I could not get it without having my teeth set permanently right. And I knew those dentists: I knew they started fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth which had not yet begun to ache. They would not let sleeping dogs lie, if you gave them an inch they took an ell.

Now, if I may put it that way, Our Lord is like the dentists. If you give Him an inch, He will take an ell. Dozens of people go to Him to be cured of some one particular sin which they are ashamed of (like masturbation or physical cowardice) or which is obviously spoiling daily life (like bad temper or drunkenness). Well, He will cure it all right: but He will not stop there. That may be all you asked; but if once you call Him in, He will give you the full treatment.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 5.43–48

alms may be done in secret; and your Father
who sees in secret will reward you.[a]

CONCERNING PRAYER

5 "And whenever you pray, do not be like
the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray
in the synagogues and at the street corners,
so that they may be seen by others. Truly I
tell you, they have received their reward. 6 But
whenever you pray, go into your room and
shut the door and pray to your Father who is
in secret; and your Father who sees in secret
will reward you.[a]
7 "When you are praying, do not heap up
empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they
think that they will be heard because of their
many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Fa-
ther knows what you need before you ask him.
9 "Pray then in this way:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.[b]
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven
our debtors.
13 And do not bring us to the
time of trial,[c]
but rescue us from the evil one.[d]
14 For if you forgive others their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

[a] 6.4,6 Other ancient authorities add *openly*
[b] 6.11 Or *our bread for tomorrow* [c] 6.13 Or *us into temptation* [d] 6.13 Or *from evil.* Other ancient authorities add, in some form, *For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours forever. Amen.*

When to Forgive

We believe that God forgives us our sins; but also that He will not do so unless we forgive other people their sins against us. There is no doubt about the second part of this statement. It is in the Lord's Prayer; it was emphatically stated by our Lord. If you don't forgive, you will not be forgiven. No part of His teaching is clearer, and there are no exceptions to it. He doesn't say that we are to forgive other people's sins provided they are not too frightful, or provided there are extenuating circumstances, or anything of that sort. We are to forgive them all, however spiteful, however mean, however often they are repeated. If we don't, we shall be forgiven none of our own.

—from "On Forgiveness," *The Weight of Glory*

To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.

This is hard. It is perhaps not so hard to forgive a single great injury. But to forgive the incessant provocations of daily life—to keep on forgiving the bossy mother-in-law, the bullying husband, the nagging wife, the selfish daughter, the deceitful son—how can we do it? Only, I think, by remembering where we stand, by meaning our words when we say in our prayers each night "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." We are offered forgiveness on no other terms. To refuse it is to refuse God's mercy for ourselves. There is no hint of exceptions and God means what He says.

—from "On Forgiveness," *The Weight of Glory*

To forgive for the moment is not difficult. But to go on forgiving, to forgive the same offence again every time it recurs to the memory—there's the real tussle. My resource is to look for some action of my own which is open to the same charge as the one I'm resenting, If I still smart to remember how A let me down, I must still remember how I let B down. If I find it difficult to forgive those who bullied me at school, let me, at that very moment, remember, and pray for, those I bullied.

—from *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*

For Reflection: Matthew 6.12

15but if you do not forgive others, neither will
your Father forgive your trespasses.

CONCERNING FASTING

16 "And whenever you fast, do not look
dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure
their faces so as to show others that they are
fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received
their reward. 17But when you fast, put oil on
your head and wash your face, 18so that your
fasting may be seen not by others but by your
Father who is in secret; and your Father who
sees in secret will reward you.[a]

CONCERNING TREASURES

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures
on earth, where moth and rust[b] consume and
where thieves break in and steal; 20but store
up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where
neither moth nor rust[b] consumes and where
thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where
your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

For Reflection: Matthew 6.1–4,16–21

> A man is never so proud as when striking an attitude of humility!
>
> —from "Christianity and Culture," *Christian Reflections*

THE SOUND EYE

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if
your eye is healthy, your whole body will be
full of light; 23but if your eye is unhealthy,
your whole body will be full of darkness. If
then the light in you is darkness, how great
is the darkness!

SERVING TWO MASTERS

24 "No one can serve two masters; for a
slave will either hate the one and love the
other, or be devoted to the one and despise
the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.[c]

DO NOT WORRY

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about
your life, what you will eat or what you will
drink,[d] or about your body, what you will
wear. Is not life more than food, and the body
more than clothing? 26Look at the birds of
the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather
into barns, and yet your heavenly Father
feeds them. Are you not of more value than
they? 27And can any of you by worrying add
a single hour to your span of life?[e] 28And why
do you worry about clothing? Consider the
lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither
toil nor spin, 29yet I tell you, even Solomon
in all his glory was not clothed like one of
these. 30But if God so clothes the grass of the
field, which is alive today and tomorrow is
thrown into the oven, will he not much more
clothe you—you of little faith? 31Therefore
do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?'
or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we
wear?' 32For it is the Gentiles who strive for
all these things; and indeed your heavenly
Father knows that you need all these things.
33But strive first for the kingdom of God[f] and
his[g] righteousness, and all these things will
be given to you as well.

34 "So do not worry about tomorrow, for
tomorrow will bring worries of its own. To-
day's trouble is enough for today.

JUDGING OTHERS

7 "Do not judge, so that you may not be
judged. 2For with the judgment you
make you will be judged, and the measure
you give will be the measure you get. 3Why
do you see the speck in your neighbor's[h] eye,
but do not notice the log in your own eye?
4Or how can you say to your neighbor,[i] 'Let
me take the speck out of your eye,' while the
log is in your own eye? 5You hypocrite, first
take the log out of your own eye, and then
you will see clearly to take the speck out of
your neighbor's[h] eye.

PROFANING THE HOLY

6 "Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do
not throw your pearls before swine, or they
will trample them under foot and turn and
maul you.

ASK, SEARCH, KNOCK

7 "Ask, and it will be given you; search,
and you will find; knock, and the door will

[a] **6.18** Other ancient authorities add *openly*
[b] **6.19,20** Gk *eating* [c] **6.24** Gk *mammon*
[d] **6.25** Other ancient authorities lack *or what you will drink* [e] **6.27** Or *add one cubit to your height* [f] **6.33** Other ancient authorities lack *of God* [g] **6.33** Or *its* [h] **7.3,5** Gk *brother's*
[i] **7.4** Gk *brother*

be opened for you. 8For everyone who asks
receives, and everyone who searches finds,
and for everyone who knocks, the door will be
opened. 9Is there anyone among you who, if
your child asks for bread, will give a stone? 10Or
if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake?
11If you then, who are evil, know how to give
good gifts to your children, how much more
will your Father in heaven give good things
to those who ask him!

THE GOLDEN RULE

12 "In everything do to others as you would
have them do to you; for this is the law and
the prophets.

THE NARROW GATE

13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the
gate is wide and the road is easy[a] that leads
to destruction, and there are many who take
it. 14For the gate is narrow and the road is
hard that leads to life, and there are few who
find it.

A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to
you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are rav-
enous wolves. 16You will know them by their
fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs
from thistles? 17In the same way, every good
tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears
bad fruit. 18A good tree cannot bear bad fruit,
nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19Every tree
that does not bear good fruit is cut down and
thrown into the fire. 20Thus you will know
them by their fruits.

CONCERNING SELF-DECEPTION

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord,
Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but
only the one who does the will of my Father
in heaven. 22On that day many will say to me,
'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name,
and cast out demons in your name, and do
many deeds of power in your name?' 23Then

[a] 7.13 Other ancient authorities read *for the road is wide and easy*

Into the Future

Screwtape explains:

Our business is to get them away from the eternal, and from the Present. With this in view, we sometimes tempt a human (say a widow or a scholar) to live in the Past. But this is of limited value, for they have some real knowledge of the past and it has a determinate nature and, to that extent, resembles eternity. It is far better to make them live in the Future . . . . In a word, the Future is, of all things, the thing *least like* eternity. It is the most completely temporal part of time—for the Past is frozen and no longer flows, and the Present is all lit up with eternal rays . . . .

To be sure, the Enemy wants men to think of the Future too—just so much as is necessary for *now* planning the acts of justice or charity which will probably be their duty tomorrow. The duty of planning the morrow's work is *today's* duty; though its material is borrowed from the future, the duty, like all duties, is in the Present. This is now straw splitting. He does not want men to give the Future their hearts, to place their treasure in it. We do. His ideal is a man who, having worked all day for the good of posterity (if that is his vocation), washes his mind of the whole subject, commits the issue to Heaven, and returns at once to the patience or gratitude demanded by the moment that is passing over him. But we want a man hag-ridden by the Future—haunted by visions of an imminent heaven or hell upon earth—ready to break the Enemy's commands in the present if by so doing we make him think he can attain the one or avert the other—dependent for his faith on the success or failure of schemes whose end he will not live to see. We want a whole race perpetually in pursuit of the rainbow's end, never honest, nor kind, nor happy *now,* but always using as mere fuel wherewith to heap the altar of the future every real gift which is offered them in the Present.

—from *The Screwtape Letters*

For Reflection: Matthew 6.34

I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go
away from me, you evildoers.'

HEARERS AND DOERS

24 "Everyone then who hears these words of
mine and acts on them will be like a wise man
who built his house on rock. 25 The rain fell, the
floods came, and the winds blew and beat on
that house, but it did not fall, because it had
been founded on rock. 26 And everyone who
hears these words of mine and does not act on
them will be like a foolish man who built his
house on sand. 27 The rain fell, and the floods
came, and the winds blew and beat against
that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"
28 Now when Jesus had finished saying
these things, the crowds were astounded at his
teaching, 29 for he taught them as one having
authority, and not as their scribes.

JESUS CLEANSES A LEPER

8 When Jesus[a] had come down from the
mountain, great crowds followed him;
2 and there was a leper[b] who came to him and
knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose,
you can make me clean." 3 He stretched out his
hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose.
Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy[b] was
cleansed. 4 Then Jesus said to him, "See that you
say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself
to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses
commanded, as a testimony to them."

JESUS HEALS A CENTURION'S SERVANT

5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion
came to him, appealing to him 6 and saying,
"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed,
in terrible distress." 7 And he said to him, "I
will come and cure him." 8 The centurion an-
swered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you
come under my roof; but only speak the word,
and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am
a man under authority, with soldiers under
me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and
to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my
slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." 10 When
Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to
those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in
no one[c] in Israel have I found such faith. 11 I
tell you, many will come from east and west
and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and
Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 while the
heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the
outer darkness, where there will be weeping
and gnashing of teeth." 13 And to the centurion
Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according
to your faith." And the servant was healed
in that hour.

JESUS HEALS MANY AT PETER'S HOUSE

14 When Jesus entered Peter's house, he
saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a
fever; 15 he touched her hand, and the fever
left her, and she got up and began to serve
him. 16 That evening they brought to him
many who were possessed with demons;
and he cast out the spirits with a word, and
cured all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill
what had been spoken through the prophet
Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore
our diseases."

[a] **8.1** Gk *he* [b] **8.2,3** The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases [c] **8.10** Other ancient authorities read *Truly I tell you, not even*

Bearing Good Fruit

The terrible thing, the almost impossible thing, is to hand over your whole self—all your wishes and precautions—to Christ. But it is far easier than what we are all trying to do instead. For what we are trying to do is to remain what we call "ourselves," to keep personal happiness as our great aim in life, and yet at the same time be "good." We are all trying to let our mind and heart go their own way—centred on money or pleasure or ambition—and hoping, in spite of this, to behave honestly and chastely and humbly. And that is exactly what Christ warned us you could not do. As He said, a thistle cannot produce figs. If I am a field that contains nothing but grass-seed, I cannot produce wheat. Cutting the grass may keep it short: but I shall still produce grass and no wheat. If I want to produce wheat, the change must go deeper than the surface. I must be ploughed up and re-sown.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 7.16–20

WOULD-BE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

18 Now when Jesus saw great crowds
around him, he gave orders to go over to the
other side. 19A scribe then approached and
said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you
go." 20And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes,
and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of
Man has nowhere to lay his head." 21Another
of his disciples said to him, "Lord, first let me
go and bury my father." 22But Jesus said to
him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their
own dead."

JESUS STILLS THE STORM

23 And when he got into the boat, his disci-
ples followed him. 24A windstorm arose on the
sea, so great that the boat was being swamped
by the waves; but he was asleep. 25And they
went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save
us! We are perishing!" 26And he said to them,
"Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then
he got up and rebuked the winds and the
sea; and there was a dead calm. 27They were
amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this,
that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

JESUS HEALS THE GADARENE DEMONIACS

28 When he came to the other side, to the
country of the Gadarenes,[a] two demoniacs
coming out of the tombs met him. They were
so fierce that no one could pass that way.
29Suddenly they shouted, "What have you to
do with us, Son of God? Have you come here
to torment us before the time?" 30Now a large
herd of swine was feeding at some distance
from them. 31The demons begged him, "If you
cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."
32And he said to them, "Go!" So they came
out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the
whole herd rushed down the steep bank into
the sea and perished in the water. 33The swine-
herds ran off, and on going into the town, they
told the whole story about what had happened
to the demoniacs. 34Then the whole town came
out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him,
they begged him to leave their neighborhood.
9 1And after getting into a boat he crossed
the sea and came to his own town.

JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC

2 And just then some people were carrying
a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus
saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take
heart, son; your sins are forgiven." 3Then some
of the scribes said to themselves, "This man
is blaspheming." 4But Jesus, perceiving their
thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your
hearts? 5For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins
are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?
6But so that you may know that the Son of
Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—
he then said to the paralytic—"Stand up, take
your bed and go to your home." 7And he stood
up and went to his home. 8When the crowds
saw it, they were filled with awe, and they
glorified God, who had given such authority
to human beings.

[a] **8.28** Other ancient authorities read *Gergesenes*; others, *Gerasenes*

Religious Pride

How is it that people who are quite obviously eaten up with Pride can say they believe in God and appear to themselves very religious? I am afraid it means they are worshipping an imaginary God. They theoretically admit themselves to be nothing in the presence of this phantom God, but are really all the time imagining how He approves of them and thinks them far better than ordinary people: that is, they pay a pennyworth of imaginary humility to Him and get out of it a pound's worth of Pride towards their fellow-men. I suppose it was of those people Christ was thinking when He said that some would preach about Him and cast out devils in His name, only to be told at the end of the world that He had never known them. And any of us may at any moment be in this death-trap. Luckily, we have a test. Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good—above all, that we are better than someone else—I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil. The real test of being in the presence of God is, that you either forget about yourself altogether or see yourself as a small, dirty object. It is better to forget about yourself altogether.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 7.21–23

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man
called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he
said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and
followed him.
10 And as he sat at dinner[a] in the house,
many tax collectors and sinners came and were
sitting[b] with him and his disciples. **11**When the
Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples,
"Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors
and sinners?" **12**But when he heard this, he said,
"Those who are well have no need of a physician,
but those who are sick. **13**Go and learn what this
means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have
come to call not the righteous but sinners."

THE QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

14 Then the disciples of John came to him,
saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast
often,[c] but your disciples do not fast?" **15**And
Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot
mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them,
can they? The days will come when the bride-
groom is taken away from them, and then they
will fast. **16**No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth
on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from
the cloak, and a worse tear is made. **17**Neither
is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise,
the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the
skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into
fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

A GIRL RESTORED TO LIFE AND A WOMAN HEALED

18 While he was saying these things to
them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue[d]
came in and knelt before him, saying, "My
daughter has just died; but come and lay your
hand on her, and she will live." **19**And Jesus
got up and followed him, with his disciples.
20Then suddenly a woman who had been
suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years
came up behind him and touched the fringe
of his cloak, **21**for she said to herself, "If I only
touch his cloak, I will be made well." **22**Jesus
turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart,
daughter; your faith has made you well." And
instantly the woman was made well. **23**When
Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the
flute players and the crowd making a com-
motion, **24**he said, "Go away; for the girl is not
dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him.
25But when the crowd had been put outside,
he went in and took her by the hand, and the
girl got up. **26**And the report of this spread
throughout that district.

JESUS HEALS TWO BLIND MEN

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind
men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mer-
cy on us, Son of David!" **28**When he entered
the house, the blind men came to him; and
Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I
am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes,
Lord." **29**Then he touched their eyes and said,
"According to your faith let it be done to
you." **30**And their eyes were opened. Then
Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one
knows of this." **31**But they went away and
spread the news about him throughout that
district.

[a] **9.10** Gk *reclined* [b] **9.10** Gk *were reclining*
[c] **9.14** Other ancient authorities lack *often* [d] **9.18** Gk lacks *of the synagogue*

He Taught With Authority

We may observe that the teaching of Our Lord Himself, in which there is no imperfection, is not given us in that cut-and-dried, fool-proof, systematic fashion we might have expected or desired. He wrote no book. We have only reported sayings, most of them uttered in answer to questions, shaped in some degree by their context. And when we have collected them all we cannot reduce them to a system. He preaches but He does not lecture. He uses paradox, proverb, exaggeration, parable, irony; even (I mean no irreverence) the "wise-crack." He utters maxims which, like popular proverbs, if rigorously taken, may seem to contradict one another. His teaching therefore cannot be grasped by the intellect alone, cannot be "got up" as if it were a "subject." If we try to do that with it, we shall find Him the most elusive of teachers. He hardly ever gave a straight answer to a straight question. He will not be, in the way we want, "pinned down." The attempt is (again, I mean no irreverence) like trying to bottle a sunbeam.

—from *Reflections on the Psalms*

For Reflection: Matthew 7.28–29

JESUS HEALS ONE WHO WAS MUTE

32 After they had gone away, a demoniac
who was mute was brought to him. 33And
when the demon had been cast out, the one
who had been mute spoke; and the crowds
were amazed and said, "Never has anything
like this been seen in Israel." 34But the Phari-
sees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts
out the demons."[a]

THE HARVEST IS GREAT, THE LABORERS FEW

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and
villages, teaching in their synagogues, and
proclaiming the good news of the kingdom,
and curing every disease and every sickness.
36When he saw the crowds, he had compas-
sion for them, because they were harassed
and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
37Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is
plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38therefore
ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers
into his harvest."

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

10 Then Jesus[b] summoned his twelve
disciples and gave them authority
over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and
to cure every disease and every sickness.
2These are the names of the twelve apostles:
first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his
brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and
his brother John; 3Philip and Bartholomew;
Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James
son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;[c] 4Simon the
Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who
betrayed him.

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the fol-
lowing instructions: "Go nowhere among the
Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans,
6but go rather to the lost sheep of the house
of Israel. 7As you go, proclaim the good news,
'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'[d] 8Cure
the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers,[e] cast
out demons. You received without payment;
give without payment. 9Take no gold, or sil-
ver, or copper in your belts, 10no bag for your
journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff;
for laborers deserve their food. 11Whatever
town or village you enter, find out who in it
is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 12As
you enter the house, greet it. 13If the house is
worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it
is not worthy, let your peace return to you.
14If anyone will not welcome you or listen to
your words, shake off the dust from your feet
as you leave that house or town. 15Truly I tell
you, it will be more tolerable for the land of
Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment
than for that town.

COMING PERSECUTIONS

16 "See, I am sending you out like sheep into
the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and
innocent as doves. 17Beware of them, for they
will hand you over to councils and flog you in
their synagogues; 18and you will be dragged
before governors and kings because of me, as
a testimony to them and the Gentiles. 19When

[a] **9.34** Other ancient authorities lack this verse
[b] **10.1** Gk *he* [c] **10.3** Other ancient authorities read *Lebbaeus*, or *Lebbaeus called Thaddaeus* [d] **10.7** Or *is at hand* [e] **10.8** The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases

An Actual Hell

About Hell. All I have ever said is that the N.T. plainly implies the possibility of some being finally left in "the outer darkness." Whether this means (horror of horror) being left to a purely mental existence, left with nothing at all but one's own envy, prurience, resentment, loneliness & self conceit, or whether there is still some sort of environment, something you cd. call a world or a reality, I wd. never pretend to know. But I wouldn't put the question in the form "do I believe in an *actual* Hell." One's own mind is actual enough. If it doesn't seem fully actual *now* that is because you can always escape from it a bit into the physical world—look out of the window, smoke a cigarette, go to sleep. But when there is nothing for you *but* your own mind (no body to go to sleep, no books or landscape, no sounds, no drugs) it will be as actual as—as—well, as a coffin is actual to a man buried alive.

—from a letter to Arthur Greeves, May 13, 1946

For Reflection: Matthew 8.11–12

they hand you over, do not worry about how
you are to speak or what you are to say; for
what you are to say will be given to you at
that time; 20for it is not you who speak, but
the Spirit of your Father speaking through
you. 21Brother will betray brother to death,
and a father his child, and children will rise
against parents and have them put to death;
22and you will be hated by all because of my
name. But the one who endures to the end
will be saved. 23When they persecute you in
one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you,
you will not have gone through all the towns
of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

24 "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor
a slave above the master; 25it is enough for the
disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave
like the master. If they have called the master
of the house Beelzebul, how much more will
they malign those of his household!

WHOM TO FEAR

26 "So have no fear of them; for nothing
is covered up that will not be uncovered, and
nothing secret that will not become known.
27What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light;
and what you hear whispered, proclaim from
the housetops. 28Do not fear those who kill the
body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him
who can destroy both soul and body in hell.[a]
29Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet
not one of them will fall to the ground apart
from your Father. 30And even the hairs of your
head are all counted. 31So do not be afraid; you
are of more value than many sparrows.

32 "Everyone therefore who acknowledges
me before others, I also will acknowledge
before my Father in heaven; 33but whoever
denies me before others, I also will deny before
my Father in heaven.

NOT PEACE, BUT A SWORD

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring
peace to the earth; I have not come to bring
peace, but a sword.
35 For I have come to set a man
against his father,
and a daughter against her
mother,
and a daughter-in-law against
her mother-in-law;
36 and one's foes will be members of
one's own household.
37Whoever loves father or mother more than
me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son
or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;
38and whoever does not take up the cross and
follow me is not worthy of me. 39Those who
find their life will lose it, and those who lose
their life for my sake will find it.

[a] 10.28 Gk *Gehenna*

Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves

Prudence means practical common sense, taking the trouble to think out what you are doing and what is likely to come of it. Nowadays most people hardly think of Prudence as one of the "virtues." In fact, because Christ said we could only get into His world by being like children, many Christians have the idea that, provided you are "good," it does not matter being a fool. But that is a misunderstanding. In the first place, most children show plenty of "prudence" about doing the things they are really interested in, and think them out quite sensibly. In the second place, as St. Paul points out, Christ never meant that we were to remain children in *intelligence:* on the contrary. He told us to be not only "as harmless as doves," but also "as wise as serpents." He wants a child's heart, but a grown-up's head. He wants us to be simple, single-minded, affectionate, and teachable, as good children are; but He also wants every bit of intelligence we have to be alert at its job, and in first-class fighting trim. The fact that you are giving money to a charity does not mean that you need not try to find out whether that charity is a fraud or not. The fact that what you are thinking about is God Himself (for example, when you are praying) does not mean that you can be content with the same babyish ideas which you had when you were a five-year-old. It is, of course, quite true that God will not love you any the less, or have less use for you, if you happen to have been born with a very second-rate brain. He has room for people with very little sense, but He wants every one to use what sense they have.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 10.16

REWARDS

40 "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one
who sent me. 41Whoever welcomes a prophet in
the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's
reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous
person in the name of a righteous person will
receive the reward of the righteous; 42and who-
ever gives even a cup of cold water to one of
these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly
I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

11 Now when Jesus had finished instruct-
ing his twelve disciples, he went on
from there to teach and proclaim his message
in their cities.

MESSENGERS FROM JOHN THE BAPTIST

2 When John heard in prison what the Mes-
siah[a] was doing, he sent word by his[b] disciples
3and said to him, "Are you the one who is to
come, or are we to wait for another?" 4Jesus
answered them, "Go and tell John what you
hear and see: 5the blind receive their sight, the
lame walk, the lepers[c] are cleansed, the deaf
hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have
good news brought to them. 6And blessed is
anyone who takes no offense at me."

JESUS PRAISES JOHN THE BAPTIST

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak
to the crowds about John: "What did you go out
into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken
by the wind? 8What then did you go out to see?
Someone[d] dressed in soft robes? Look, those
who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9What
then did you go out to see? A prophet?[e] Yes,
I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10This is
the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger
ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

11Truly I tell you, among those born of women
no one has arisen greater than John the Bap-
tist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is
greater than he. 12From the days of John the
Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has
suffered violence,[f] and the violent take it by
force. 13For all the prophets and the law proph-
esied until John came; 14and if you are willing
to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15Let
anyone with ears[g] listen!

16 "But to what will I compare this genera-
tion? It is like children sitting in the market-
places and calling to one another,

17 'We played the flute for you, and
you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

18For John came neither eating nor drinking,
and they say, 'He has a demon'; 19the Son of
Man came eating and drinking, and they say,
'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax
collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindi-
cated by her deeds."[h]

WOES TO UNREPENTANT CITIES

20 Then he began to reproach the cities in
which most of his deeds of power had been
done, because they did not repent. 21"Woe to
you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if
the deeds of power done in you had been done
in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented
long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22But I tell
you, on the day of judgment it will be more tol-
erable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23And
you, Capernaum,

will you be exalted to heaven?
No, you will be brought
down to Hades.

For if the deeds of power done in you had been
done in Sodom, it would have remained until
this day. 24But I tell you that on the day of
judgment it will be more tolerable for the land
of Sodom than for you."

JESUS THANKS HIS FATHER

25 At that time Jesus said, "I thank[i] you,
Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because
you have hidden these things from the wise
and the intelligent and have revealed them to
infants; 26yes, Father, for such was your gra-
cious will.[j] 27All things have been handed over
to me by my Father; and no one knows the
Son except the Father, and no one knows the
Father except the Son and anyone to whom
the Son chooses to reveal him.

28 "Come to me, all you that are weary and
are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give
you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you, and learn
from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my
yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

[a] **11.2** Or *the Christ* [b] **11.2** Other ancient authorities read *two of his* [c] **11.5** The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases [d] **11.8** Or *Why then did you go out? To see someone* [e] **11.9** Other ancient authorities read *Why then did you go out? To see a prophet?* [f] **11.12** Or *has been coming violently* [g] **11.15** Other ancient authorities add *to hear* [h] **11.19** Other ancient authorities read *children* [i] **11.25** Or *praise* [j] **11.26** Or *for so it was well-pleasing in your sight*

PLUCKING GRAIN ON THE SABBATH

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. [2]When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." [3]He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? [4]He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. [5]Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? [6]I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. [7]But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. [8]For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND

9 He left that place and entered their synagogue; [10]a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure

The Christian Way

The ordinary idea which we all have before we become Christians is this. We take as starting point our ordinary self with its various desires and interests. We then admit that something else—call it "morality" or "decent behaviour," or "the good of society"—has claims on this self: claims which interfere with its own desires. What we mean by "being good" is giving in to those claims. Some of the things the ordinary self wanted to do turn out to be what we call "wrong": well, we must give them up. Other things, which the self did not want to do, turn out to be what we call "right": well, we shall have to do them. But we are hoping all the time that when all the demands have been met, the poor natural self will still have some chance, and some time, to get on with its own life and do what it likes. In fact, we are very like an honest man paying his taxes. He pays them all right, but he does hope that there will be enough left over for him to live on. Because we are still taking our natural self as the starting point.

As long as we are thinking that way, one or other of two results is likely to follow. Either we give up trying to be good, or else we become very unhappy indeed. For, make no mistake: if you are really going to try to meet all the demands made on the natural self, it will not have enough left over to live on. The more you obey your conscience, the more your conscience will demand of you. And your natural self, which is thus being starved and hampered and worried at every turn, will get angrier and angrier. In the end, you will either give up trying to be good, or else become one of those people who, as they say, "live for others" but always in a discontented, grumbling way—always wondering why the others do not notice it more and always making a martyr of yourself. And once you have become that you will be a far greater pest to anyone who has to live with you than you would have been if you had remained frankly selfish.

The Christian way is different: harder, and easier. Christ says "Give me All. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours."

Both harder and easier than what we are all trying to do. You have noticed, I expect, that Christ Himself sometimes describes the Christian way as very hard, sometimes as very easy. He says, "Take up your Cross"—in other words, it is like going to be beaten to death in a concentration camp. Next minute he says, "My yoke is easy and my burden light." He means both.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 11.28–30

on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. 11He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." 13Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other. 14But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

GOD'S CHOSEN SERVANT

15 When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds[a] followed him, and he cured all of them, 16and he ordered them not to make him known. 17This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

18 "Here is my servant, whom
I have chosen,
my beloved, with whom my
soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice
to the Gentiles.
19 He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his
voice in the streets.
20 He will not break a bruised reed
or quench a smoldering wick
until he brings justice to victory.
21 And in his name the Gentiles
will hope."

JESUS AND BEELZEBUL

22 Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see. 23All the crowds were amazed and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" 24But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons." 25He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? 27If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists[b] cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. 29Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. 30Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. 31Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

33 "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. 36I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; 37for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

THE SIGN OF JONAH

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." 39But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. 41The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! 42The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

THE RETURN OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT

43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. 44Then it says, 'I will return to my house from

[a] **12.15** Other ancient authorities lack *crowds*
[b] **12.27** Gk *sons*

which I came.' When it comes, it finds it empty,
swept, and put in order. 45Then it goes and
brings along seven other spirits more evil than
itself, and they enter and live there; and the
last state of that person is worse than the first.
So will it be also with this evil generation."

THE TRUE KINDRED OF JESUS

46 While he was still speaking to the crowds,
his mother and his brothers were standing out-
side, wanting to speak to him. 47Someone told
him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are
standing outside, wanting to speak to you."[a]
48But to the one who had told him this, Jesus[b]
replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my
brothers?" 49And pointing to his disciples, he
said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!
50For whoever does the will of my Father in
heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

13 That same day Jesus went out of the
house and sat beside the sea. 2Such
great crowds gathered around him that he
got into a boat and sat there, while the whole
crowd stood on the beach. 3And he told them
many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A
sower went out to sow. 4And as he sowed,
some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came
and ate them up. 5Other seeds fell on rocky
ground, where they did not have much soil,
and they sprang up quickly, since they had
no depth of soil. 6But when the sun rose, they
were scorched; and since they had no root, they
withered away. 7Other seeds fell among thorns,
and the thorns grew up and choked them.
8Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth
grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some
thirty. 9Let anyone with ears[c] listen!"

THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES

10 Then the disciples came and asked him,
"Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11He
answered, "To you it has been given to know
the secrets[d] of the kingdom of heaven, but to
them it has not been given. 12For to those who
have, more will be given, and they will have
an abundance; but from those who have noth-
ing, even what they have will be taken away.
13The reason I speak to them in parables is that
'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they
do not listen, nor do they understand.' 14With
them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah
that says:

'You will indeed listen, but
never understand,
and you will indeed look, but
never perceive.
15 For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
so that they might not look
with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and understand with their
heart and turn—
and I would heal them.'

16But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and
your ears, for they hear. 17Truly I tell you, many
prophets and righteous people longed to see
what you see, but did not see it, and to hear
what you hear, but did not hear it.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower.
19When anyone hears the word of the king-
dom and does not understand it, the evil one
comes and snatches away what is sown in the
heart; this is what was sown on the path. 20As
for what was sown on rocky ground, this is
the one who hears the word and immediately
receives it with joy; 21yet such a person has no
root, but endures only for a while, and when
trouble or persecution arises on account of the
word, that person immediately falls away.[e]

[a] **12.47** Other ancient authorities lack verse 47
[b] **12.48** Gk *he* [c] **13.9** Other ancient authorities add *to hear* [d] **13.11** Or *mysteries* [e] **13.21** Gk *stumbles*

Teaching Through Parable

It is perhaps idle to speak here of spirit and letter. There is almost no "letter" in the words of Jesus. Taken by a literalist, He will always prove the most elusive of teachers. Systems cannot keep up with that darting illumination. No net less wide than a man's whole heart, nor less fine of mesh than love, will hold the sacred Fish.

—from *Reflections on the Psalms*

For Reflection: Matthew 13.10–17

22As for what was sown among thorns, this
is the one who hears the word, but the cares
of the world and the lure of wealth choke
the word, and it yields nothing. 23But as for
what was sown on good soil, this is the one
who hears the word and understands it, who
indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a
hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another
thirty."

THE PARABLE OF WEEDS AMONG THE WHEAT

24 He put before them another parable:
"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to
someone who sowed good seed in his field;
25but while everybody was asleep, an enemy
came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and
then went away. 26So when the plants came
up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared
as well. 27And the slaves of the householder
came and said to him, 'Master, did you not
sow good seed in your field? Where, then,
did these weeds come from?' 28He answered,
'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to
him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather
them?' 29But he replied, 'No; for in gathering
the weeds you would uproot the wheat along
with them. 30Let both of them grow together
until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell
the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind
them in bundles to be burned, but gather the
wheat into my barn.' "

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

31 He put before them another parable: "The
kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that
someone took and sowed in his field; 32it is
the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has
grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes
a tree, so that the birds of the air come and
make nests in its branches."

THE PARABLE OF THE YEAST

33 He told them another parable: "The king-
dom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took
and mixed in with[a] three measures of flour
until all of it was leavened."

THE USE OF PARABLES

34 Jesus told the crowds all these things
in parables; without a parable he told them
nothing. 35This was to fulfill what had been
spoken through the prophet:[b]

"I will open my mouth to
speak in parables;
I will proclaim what has been
hidden from the foundation
of the world."[c]

JESUS EXPLAINS THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

36 Then he left the crowds and went into
the house. And his disciples approached him,
saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds
of the field." 37He answered, "The one who sows
the good seed is the Son of Man; 38the field is
the world, and the good seed are the children
of the kingdom; the weeds are the children
of the evil one, 39and the enemy who sowed
them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the
age, and the reapers are angels. 40Just as the
weeds are collected and burned up with fire,
so will it be at the end of the age. 41The Son of
Man will send his angels, and they will collect
out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all
evildoers, 42and they will throw them into the
furnace of fire, where there will be weeping
and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous
will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their
Father. Let anyone with ears[d] listen!

THREE PARABLES

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure
hidden in a field, which someone found and
hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that
he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a
merchant in search of fine pearls; 46on finding
one pearl of great value, he went and sold all
that he had and bought it.

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a
net that was thrown into the sea and caught
fish of every kind; 48when it was full, they
drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into
baskets but threw out the bad. 49So it will be
at the end of the age. The angels will come out
and separate the evil from the righteous 50and
throw them into the furnace of fire, where
there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

TREASURES NEW AND OLD

51 "Have you understood all this?" They
answered, "Yes." 52And he said to them,

[a] **13.33** Gk *hid in* [b] **13.35** Other ancient authorities read *the prophet Isaiah* [c] **13.35** Other ancient authorities lack *of the world* [d] **13.43** Other ancient authorities add *to hear*

"Therefore every scribe who has been trained
for the kingdom of heaven is like the master
of a household who brings out of his treasure
what is new and what is old." 53When Jesus
had finished these parables, he left that place.

THE REJECTION OF JESUS AT NAZARETH

54 He came to his hometown and began to
teach the people[a] in their synagogue, so that
they were astounded and said, "Where did
this man get this wisdom and these deeds of
power? 55Is not this the carpenter's son? Is
not his mother called Mary? And are not his
brothers James and Joseph and Simon and
Judas? 56And are not all his sisters with us?
Where then did this man get all this?" 57And
they took offense at him. But Jesus said to
them, "Prophets are not without honor ex-
cept in their own country and in their own
house." 58And he did not do many deeds of
power there, because of their unbelief.

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

14 At that time Herod the ruler[b] heard
reports about Jesus; 2and he said to
his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has
been raised from the dead, and for this reason
these powers are at work in him." 3For Herod
had arrested John, bound him, and put him
in prison on account of Herodias, his brother
Philip's wife,[c] 4because John had been tell-
ing him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."
5Though Herod[d] wanted to put him to death,
he feared the crowd, because they regarded
him as a prophet. 6But when Herod's birthday
came, the daughter of Herodias danced before
the company, and she pleased Herod 7so much
that he promised on oath to grant her what-
ever she might ask. 8Prompted by her mother,
she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist
here on a platter." 9The king was grieved, yet
out of regard for his oaths and for the guests,
he commanded it to be given; 10he sent and
had John beheaded in the prison. 11The head
was brought on a platter and given to the girl,
who brought it to her mother. 12His disciples
came and took the body and buried it; then
they went and told Jesus.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he with-
drew from there in a boat to a deserted place
by himself. But when the crowds heard it,
they followed him on foot from the towns.
14When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd;
and he had compassion for them and cured
their sick. 15When it was evening, the disci-
ples came to him and said, "This is a desert-
ed place, and the hour is now late; send the
crowds away so that they may go into the
villages and buy food for themselves." 16Jesus
said to them, "They need not go away; you
give them something to eat." 17They replied,
"We have nothing here but five loaves and
two fish." 18And he said, "Bring them here
to me." 19Then he ordered the crowds to sit
down on the grass. Taking the five loaves
and the two fish, he looked up to heaven,
and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave
them to the disciples, and the disciples gave
them to the crowds. 20And all ate and were
filled; and they took up what was left over of
the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21And
those who ate were about five thousand men,
besides women and children.

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

22 Immediately he made the disciples get
into the boat and go on ahead to the other
side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23And
after he had dismissed the crowds, he went
up the mountain by himself to pray. When
evening came, he was there alone, 24but by
this time the boat, battered by the waves, was
far from the land,[e] for the wind was against
them. 25And early in the morning he came
walking toward them on the sea. 26But when
the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they
were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they
cried out in fear. 27But immediately Jesus spoke
to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not
be afraid."

28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you,
command me to come to you on the water."
29He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat,
started walking on the water, and came to-
ward Jesus. 30But when he noticed the strong
wind,[f] he became frightened, and beginning
to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31Jesus
immediately reached out his hand and caught
him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why
did you doubt?" 32When they got into the boat,
the wind ceased. 33And those in the boat wor-
shiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son
of God."

[a] **13.54** Gk *them* [b] **14.1** Gk *tetrarch* [c] **14.3** Other ancient authorities read *his brother's wife* [d] **14.5** Gk *he* [e] **14.24** Other ancient authorities read *was out on the sea* [f] **14.30** Other ancient authorities read *the wind*

JESUS HEALS THE SICK IN GENNESARET

34 When they had crossed over, they came
to land at Gennesaret. 35After the people of
that place recognized him, they sent word
throughout the region and brought all who
were sick to him, 36and begged him that they
might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and
all who touched it were healed.

THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS

15 Then Pharisees and scribes came to
Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2"Why
do your disciples break the tradition of the el-
ders? For they do not wash their hands before
they eat." 3He answered them, "And why do
you break the commandment of God for the
sake of your tradition? 4For God said,[a] 'Honor
your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever
speaks evil of father or mother must surely
die.' 5But you say that whoever tells father or
mother, 'Whatever support you might have
had from me is given to God,'[b] then that person
need not honor the father.[c] 6So, for the sake
of your tradition, you make void the word[d]
of God. 7You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied
rightly about you when he said:

8 'This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
9 in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts
as doctrines.' "

THINGS THAT DEFILE

10 Then he called the crowd to him and said
to them, "Listen and understand: 11it is not
what goes into the mouth that defiles a per-
son, but it is what comes out of the mouth that
defiles." 12Then the disciples approached and
said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees
took offense when they heard what you said?"
13He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly
Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14Let
them alone; they are blind guides of the blind.[e]
And if one blind person guides another, both
will fall into a pit." 15But Peter said to him,
"Explain this parable to us." 16Then he said,
"Are you also still without understanding?
17Do you not see that whatever goes into the
mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into
the sewer? 18But what comes out of the mouth
proceeds from the heart, and this is what de-
files. 19For out of the heart come evil inten-
tions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft,
false witness, slander. 20These are what defile
a person, but to eat with unwashed hands
does not defile."

THE CANAANITE WOMAN'S FAITH

21 Jesus left that place and went away to
the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22Just then a
Canaanite woman from that region came out
and started shouting, "Have mercy on me,
Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented
by a demon." 23But he did not answer her at
all. And his disciples came and urged him,
saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting
after us." 24He answered, "I was sent only to
the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25But
she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord,
help me." 26He answered, "It is not fair to take
the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

[a] **15.4** Other ancient authorities read *commanded, saying* [b] **15.5** Or *is an offering* [c] **15.5** Other ancient authorities add *or the mother* [d] **15.6** Other ancient authorities read *law*; others, *commandment* [e] **15.14** Other ancient authorities lack *of the blind*

When We Receive Grace

I *do* get that sudden feeling that the whole thing is hocus pocus and it now worries me hardly at all. Surely the mechanism is quite simple? Sceptical, incredulous, materialistic *ruts* have been deeply engraved in our thought, perhaps even in our physical brains by all our earlier lives. At the slightest jerk our thought will flow down those old ruts. And notice when the jerks come. Usually at the precise moment when we might receive Grace. And if you were a devil would you not give the jerk just at those moments? I think that all Christians have found that he is v. active near the altar or on the eve of conversion: worldly anxieties, physical discomforts, lascivious fancies, doubt, are often poured in at such junctures . . . But the Grace is not frustrated. One gets *more* by pressing steadily on through these interruptions than on occasions when all goes smoothly . . . .

—from a letter to "Mrs. Lockley," March 5, 1951

For Reflection: Matthew 14.22–33

27She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat
the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."
28Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is
your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."
And her daughter was healed instantly.

JESUS CURES MANY PEOPLE

29 After Jesus had left that place, he passed
along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the
mountain, where he sat down. 30Great crowds
came to him, bringing with them the lame,
the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many
others. They put them at his feet, and he cured
them, 31so that the crowd was amazed when
they saw the mute speaking, the maimed
whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing.
And they praised the God of Israel.

FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND

32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him
and said, "I have compassion for the crowd,
because they have been with me now for three
days and have nothing to eat; and I do not
want to send them away hungry, for they
might faint on the way." 33The disciples said to
him, "Where are we to get enough bread in the
desert to feed so great a crowd?" 34Jesus asked
them, "How many loaves have you?" They said,
"Seven, and a few small fish." 35Then ordering
the crowd to sit down on the ground, 36he
took the seven loaves and the fish; and after
giving thanks he broke them and gave them
to the disciples, and the disciples gave them
to the crowds. 37And all of them ate and were
filled; and they took up the broken pieces left
over, seven baskets full. 38Those who had eaten
were four thousand men, besides women and
children. 39After sending away the crowds,
he got into the boat and went to the region
of Magadan.[a]

THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came,
and to test Jesus[b] they asked him to
show them a sign from heaven. 2He answered
them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will
be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3And in
the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the
sky is red and threatening.' You know how
to interpret the appearance of the sky, but
you cannot interpret the signs of the times.[c]
4An evil and adulterous generation asks for
a sign, but no sign will be given to it except
the sign of Jonah." Then he left them and
went away.

THE YEAST OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

5 When the disciples reached the other side,
they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6Jesus
said to them, "Watch out, and beware of the
yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 7They
said to one another, "It is because we have
brought no bread." 8And becoming aware of
it, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why are you
talking about having no bread? 9Do you still
not perceive? Do you not remember the five
loaves for the five thousand, and how many
baskets you gathered? 10Or the seven loaves
for the four thousand, and how many baskets
you gathered? 11How could you fail to perceive
that I was not speaking about bread? Beware
of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"
12Then they understood that he had not told
them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of
the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of
Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who
do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14And
they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but oth-
ers Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of
the prophets." 15He said to them, "But who do
you say that I am?" 16Simon Peter answered,
"You are the Messiah,[d] the Son of the living
God." 17And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are
you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood
has not revealed this to you, but my Father
in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter,[e]
and on this rock[f] I will build my church, and
the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.
19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of
heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will
be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose
on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20Then he
sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone
that he was[g] the Messiah.[d]

JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

21 From that time on, Jesus began to show
his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and
undergo great suffering at the hands of the
elders and chief priests and scribes, and be

[a] **15.39** Other ancient authorities read *Magdala* or *Magdalan* [b] **16.1** Gk *him* [c] **16.3** Other ancient authorities lack [2]*When it is . . . of the times* [d] **16.16,20** Or *the Christ* [e] **16.18** Gk *Petros* [f] **16.18** Gk *petra* [g] **16.20** Other ancient authorities add *Jesus*

killed, and on the third day be raised. 22And
Peter took him aside and began to rebuke
him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must
never happen to you." 23But he turned and
said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are
a stumbling block to me; for you are setting
your mind not on divine things but on human
things."

THE CROSS AND SELF-DENIAL

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want
to become my followers, let them deny them-
selves and take up their cross and follow me.
25For those who want to save their life will lose
it, and those who lose their life for my sake will
find it. 26For what will it profit them if they
gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or
what will they give in return for their life?
27 "For the Son of Man is to come with his
angels in the glory of his Father, and then he
will repay everyone for what has been done.
28Truly I tell you, there are some standing here
who will not taste death before they see the
Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

THE TRANSFIGURATION

17 Six days later, Jesus took with him Pe-
ter and James and his brother John and
led them up a high mountain, by themselves.
2And he was transfigured before them, and his
face shone like the sun, and his clothes became
dazzling white. 3Suddenly there appeared to
them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.
4Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for
us to be here; if you wish, I[a] will make three
dwellings[b] here, one for you, one for Moses,
and one for Elijah." 5While he was still speak-
ing, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed
them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This
is my Son, the Beloved;[c] with him I am well
pleased; listen to him!" 6When the disciples
heard this, they fell to the ground and were
overcome by fear. 7But Jesus came and touched
them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."
8And when they looked up, they saw no one
except Jesus himself alone.
9 As they were coming down the mountain,
Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the
vision until after the Son of Man has been
raised from the dead." 10And the disciples
asked him, "Why, then, do the scribes say that
Elijah must come first?" 11He replied, "Elijah
is indeed coming and will restore all things;
12but I tell you that Elijah has already come,
and they did not recognize him, but they did
to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son
of Man is about to suffer at their hands." 13Then
the disciples understood that he was speaking
to them about John the Baptist.

JESUS CURES A BOY WITH A DEMON

14 When they came to the crowd, a man
came to him, knelt before him, 15and said,
"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an
epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls
into the fire and often into the water. 16And I
brought him to your disciples, but they could
not cure him." 17Jesus answered, "You faithless
and perverse generation, how much longer
must I be with you? How much longer must I
put up with you? Bring him here to me." 18And
Jesus rebuked the demon,[d] and it[e] came out of
him, and the boy was cured instantly. 19Then
the disciples came to Jesus privately and said,
"Why could we not cast it out?" 20He said to
them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I
tell you, if you have faith the size of a[f] mustard
seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from
here to there,' and it will move; and nothing
will be impossible for you."[g]

For Reflection: Matthew 16.21–23

> "When natural things look most divine, the demoniac is just round the corner."
>
> —from *The Four Loves*

JESUS AGAIN FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

22 As they were gathering[h] in Galilee, Jesus
said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be
betrayed into human hands, 23and they will
kill him, and on the third day he will be raised."
And they were greatly distressed.

JESUS AND THE TEMPLE TAX

24 When they reached Capernaum, the col-
lectors of the temple tax[i] came to Peter and

[a] **17.4** Other ancient authorities read *we* [b] **17.4** Or *tents* [c] **17.5** Or *my beloved Son* [d] **17.18** Gk *it* or *him* [e] **17.18** Gk *the demon* [f] **17.20** Gk *faith as a grain of* [g] **17.20** Other ancient authorities add verse 21, *But this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting* [h] **17.22** Other ancient authorities read *living* [i] **17.24** Gk *didrachma*

said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple
tax?"[a] 25He said, "Yes, he does." And when
he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking,
"What do you think, Simon? From whom do
kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From
their children or from others?" 26When Peter[b]
said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then
the children are free. 27However, so that we
do not give offense to them, go to the sea and
cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up;
and when you open its mouth, you will find
a coin;[c] take that and give it to them for you
and me."

TRUE GREATNESS

18 At that time the disciples came to
Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest
in the kingdom of heaven?" 2He called a child,
whom he put among them, 3and said, "Truly
I tell you, unless you change and become like
children, you will never enter the kingdom
of heaven. 4Whoever becomes humble like
this child is the greatest in the kingdom of
heaven. 5Whoever welcomes one such child
in my name welcomes me.

TEMPTATIONS TO SIN

6 "If any of you put a stumbling block before
one of these little ones who believe in me, it
would be better for you if a great millstone
were fastened around your neck and you were
drowned in the depth of the sea. 7Woe to the
world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions
for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to
the one by whom the stumbling block comes!
8 "If your hand or your foot causes you to
stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is bet-
ter for you to enter life maimed or lame than to
have two hands or two feet and to be thrown
into the eternal fire. 9And if your eye causes
you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away;
it is better for you to enter life with one eye
than to have two eyes and to be thrown into
the hell[d] of fire.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

10 "Take care that you do not despise one of
these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their
angels continually see the face of my Father in
heaven.[e] 12What do you think? If a shepherd
has a hundred sheep, and one of them has
gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine
on the mountains and go in search of the one
that went astray? 13And if he finds it, truly I
tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the
ninety-nine that never went astray. 14So it is
not the will of your[f] Father in heaven that one
of these little ones should be lost.

REPROVING ANOTHER WHO SINS

15 "If another member of the church[g] sins
against you,[h] go and point out the fault when
the two of you are alone. If the member listens
to you, you have regained that one.[i] 16But if
you are not listened to, take one or two others
along with you, so that every word may be
confirmed by the evidence of two or three
witnesses. 17If the member refuses to listen to
them, tell it to the church; and if the offender
refuses to listen even to the church, let such
a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collec-
tor. 18Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on
earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever
you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
19Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on
earth about anything you ask, it will be done
for you by my Father in heaven. 20For where
two or three are gathered in my name, I am
there among them."

FORGIVENESS

21 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord,
if another member of the church[j] sins against
me, how often should I forgive? As many as
seven times?" 22Jesus said to him, "Not seven
times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven[k] times.

THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven
may be compared to a king who wished to
settle accounts with his slaves. 24When he
began the reckoning, one who owed him ten
thousand talents[l] was brought to him; 25and,
as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to
be sold, together with his wife and children
and all his possessions, and payment to be
made. 26So the slave fell on his knees before
him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I
will pay you everything.' 27And out of pity for
him, the lord of that slave released him and

[a] **17.24** Gk *didrachma* [b] **17.26** Gk *he* [c] **17.27** Gk *stater*; the stater was worth two didrachmas
[d] **18.9** Gk *Gehenna* [e] **18.10** Other ancient authorities add verse 11, *For the Son of Man came to save the lost*
[f] **18.14** Other ancient authorities read *my* [g] **18.15** Gk *If your brother* [h] **18.15** Other ancient authorities lack *against you* [i] **18.15** Gk *the brother* [j] **18.21** Gk *if my brother* [k] **18.22** Or *seventy times seven*
[l] **18.24** A talent was worth more than fifteen years' wages of a laborer

forgave him the debt. 28But that same slave,
as he went out, came upon one of his fellow
slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;[a] and
seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what
you owe.' 29Then his fellow slave fell down
and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with
me, and I will pay you.' 30But he refused; then
he went and threw him into prison until he
would pay the debt. 31When his fellow slaves
saw what had happened, they were greatly
distressed, and they went and reported to their
lord all that had taken place. 32Then his lord
summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked
slave! I forgave you all that debt because you
pleaded with me. 33Should you not have had

[a] 18.28 The denarius was the usual day's wage for a laborer

Hate the Sin, Not the Sinner

It is made perfectly clear that if we do not forgive we shall not be forgiven. There are no two ways about it. What are we to do?

It is going to be hard enough, anyway, but I think there are two things we can do to make it easier. When you start mathematics you do not begin with the calculus; you begin with simple addition. In the same way, if we really want (but all depends on really wanting) to learn how to forgive, perhaps we had better start with something easier than the Gestapo. One might start with forgiving one's husband or wife, or parents or children, or the nearest N.C.O., for something they have done or said in the last week. That will probably keep us busy for the moment. And secondly, we might try to understand exactly what loving your neighbour as yourself means. I have to love him as I love myself. Well, how exactly do I love myself?

Now that I come to think of it, I have not exactly got a feeling of fondness or affection for myself, and I do not even always enjoy my own society. So apparently "Love your neighbour" does not mean "feel fond of him" or "find him attractive." I ought to have seen that before, because, of course, you cannot feel fond of a person by trying. Do I think well of myself, think myself a nice chap? Well, I am afraid I sometimes do (and those are, no doubt, my worst moments) but that is not why I love myself. In fact it is the other way round: my self-love makes me think myself nice, but thinking myself nice is not why I love myself. So loving my enemies does not apparently mean thinking them nice either. That is an enormous relief. For a good many people imagine that forgiving your enemies means making out that they are really not such bad fellows after all, when it is quite plain that they are. Go a step further. In my most clear-sighted moments not only do I not think myself a nice man, but I know that I am a very nasty one. I can look at some of the things I have done with horror and loathing. So apparently I am allowed to loathe and hate some of the things my enemies do. Now that I come to think of it, I remember Christian teachers telling me long ago that I must hate a bad man's actions, but not hate the bad man: or, as they would say, hate the sin but not the sinner.

For a long time I used to think this a silly, straw-splitting distinction: how could you hate what a man did and not hate the man? But years later it occurred to me that there was one man to whom I had been doing this all my life—namely myself. However much I might dislike my own cowardice or conceit or greed, I went on loving myself. There had never been the slightest difficulty about it. In fact the very reason why I hated the things was that I loved the man. Just because I loved myself, I was sorry to find that I was the sort of man who did those things. Consequently, Christianity does not want us to reduce by one atom the hatred we feel for cruelty and treachery. We ought to hate them. Not one word of what we have said about them needs to be unsaid. But it does want us to hate them in the same way in which we hate things in ourselves: being sorry that the man should have done such things, and hoping, if it is anyway possible, that somehow, sometime, somewhere he can be cured and made human again.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 18.21–35

mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on
you?' 34And in anger his lord handed him over
to be tortured until he would pay his entire
debt. 35So my heavenly Father will also do to
every one of you, if you do not forgive your
brother or sister[a] from your heart."

TEACHING ABOUT DIVORCE

19 When Jesus had finished saying these
things, he left Galilee and went to the
region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2Large
crowds followed him, and he cured them there.

3 Some Pharisees came to him, and to test
him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?" 4He answered,
"Have you not read that the one who made
them at the beginning 'made them male and
female,' 5and said, 'For this reason a man shall
leave his father and mother and be joined to his
wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6So
they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore
what God has joined together, let no one separate." 7They said to him, "Why then did Moses
command us to give a certificate of dismissal
and to divorce her?" 8He said to them, "It was
because you were so hard-hearted that Moses
allowed you to divorce your wives, but from
the beginning it was not so. 9And I say to you,
whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery."[b]

10 His disciples said to him, "If such is the
case of a man with his wife, it is better not to
marry." 11But he said to them, "Not everyone
can accept this teaching, but only those to
whom it is given. 12For there are eunuchs who
have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs
who have been made eunuchs by others, and
there are eunuchs who have made themselves
eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.
Let anyone accept this who can."

JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN

13 Then little children were being brought
to him in order that he might lay his hands
on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly
to those who brought them; 14but Jesus said,
"Let the little children come to me, and do not
stop them; for it is to such as these that the
kingdom of heaven belongs." 15And he laid his
hands on them and went on his way.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

16 Then someone came to him and said,
"Teacher, what good deed must I do to have
eternal life?" 17And he said to him, "Why do
you ask me about what is good? There is only
one who is good. If you wish to enter into life,
keep the commandments." 18He said to him,
"Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not
murder; You shall not commit adultery; You
shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness;
19Honor your father and mother; also, You
shall love your neighbor as yourself." 20The
young man said to him, "I have kept all these;[c]
what do I still lack?" 21Jesus said to him, "If
you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money[d] to the poor, and
you will have treasure in heaven; then come,
follow me." 22When the young man heard this
word, he went away grieving, for he had many
possessions.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly
I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to
enter the kingdom of heaven. 24Again I tell

[a] **18.35** Gk *brother* [b] **19.9** Other ancient authorities read *except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery*; others add at the end of the verse *and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery* [c] **19.20** Other ancient authorities add *from my youth* [d] **19.21** Gk lacks *the money*

Reflecting God Perfectly

The command *Be ye perfect* is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command. He said (in the Bible) that we were "gods" and He is going to make good His words. If we let Him—for we can prevent Him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 19.21

you, it is easier for a camel to go through
the eye of a needle than for someone who is
rich to enter the kingdom of God." 25When
the disciples heard this, they were greatly
astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?"
26But Jesus looked at them and said, "For
mortals it is impossible, but for God all things
are possible."

27 Then Peter said in reply, "Look, we have
left everything and followed you. What then
will we have?" 28Jesus said to them, "Truly
I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when
the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his
glory, you who have followed me will also sit
on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes
of Israel. 29And everyone who has left houses
or brothers or sisters or father or mother or
children or fields, for my name's sake, will
receive a hundredfold,[a] and will inherit eternal
life. 30But many who are first will be last, and
the last will be first.

For Reflection: Matthew 19.24

> He who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only.

—from "The Weight of Glory," *The Weight of Glory*

THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a
landowner who went out early in the
morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.
2After agreeing with the laborers for the usu-
al daily wage,[b] he sent them into his vine-
yard. 3When he went out about nine o'clock,
he saw others standing idle in the market-
place; 4and he said to them, 'You also go into
the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is
right.' So they went. 5When he went out again
about noon and about three o'clock, he did
the same. 6And about five o'clock he went
out and found others standing around; and
he said to them, 'Why are you standing here
idle all day?' 7They said to him, 'Because no
one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also
go into the vineyard.' 8When evening came,
the owner of the vineyard said to his man-
ager, 'Call the laborers and give them their
pay, beginning with the last and then going
to the first.' 9When those hired about five
o'clock came, each of them received the usual
daily wage.[b] 10Now when the first came, they
thought they would receive more; but each
of them also received the usual daily wage.[b]
11And when they received it, they grumbled
against the landowner, 12saying, 'These last
worked only one hour, and you have made
them equal to us who have borne the burden
of the day and the scorching heat.' 13But he
replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing
you no wrong; did you not agree with me for
the usual daily wage?[b] 14Take what belongs
to you and go; I choose to give to this last the
same as I give to you. 15Am I not allowed to
do what I choose with what belongs to me?
Or are you envious because I am generous?'[c]
16So the last will be first, and the first will
be last."[d]

A THIRD TIME JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

17 While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he
took the twelve disciples aside by themselves,
and said to them on the way, 18"See, we are
going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man
will be handed over to the chief priests and
scribes, and they will condemn him to death;
19then they will hand him over to the Gentiles
to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and
on the third day he will be raised."

THE REQUEST OF THE MOTHER OF JAMES AND JOHN

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee
came to him with her sons, and kneeling be-
fore him, she asked a favor of him. 21And he
said to her, "What do you want?" She said to
him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will
sit, one at your right hand and one at your left,
in your kingdom." 22But Jesus answered, "You
do not know what you are asking. Are you able
to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"[e]
They said to him, "We are able." 23He said to
them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to
sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not
mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it
has been prepared by my Father."

24 When the ten heard it, they were angry
with the two brothers. 25But Jesus called them
to him and said, "You know that the rulers
of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their

[a] **19.29** Other ancient authorities read *manifold*
[b] **20.2,9,10,13** Gk *a denarius* [c] **20.15** Gk *is your eye evil because I am good?* [d] **20.16** Other ancient authorities add *for many are called but few are chosen* [e] **20.22** Other ancient authorities add *or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*

great ones are tyrants over them. [26]It will not
be so among you; but whoever wishes to be
great among you must be your servant, [27]and
whoever wishes to be first among you must
be your slave; [28]just as the Son of Man came
not to be served but to serve, and to give his
life a ransom for many."

JESUS HEALS TWO BLIND MEN

29 As they were leaving Jericho, a large
crowd followed him. [30]There were two blind
men sitting by the roadside. When they heard
that Jesus was passing by, they shouted,
"Lord,[a] have mercy on us, Son of David!"
[31]The crowd sternly ordered them to be qui-
et; but they shouted even more loudly, "Have
mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" [32]Jesus
stood still and called them, saying, "What do
you want me to do for you?" [33]They said to
him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." [34]Moved
with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes.
Immediately they regained their sight and
followed him.

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

21 When they had come near Jerusalem
and had reached Bethphage, at the
Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,
[2]saying to them, "Go into the village ahead
of you, and immediately you will find a don-
key tied, and a colt with her; untie them and
bring them to me. [3]If anyone says anything to
you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And
he will send them immediately."[b] [4]This took
place to fulfill what had been spoken through
the prophet, saying,

[5] "Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a
donkey."

[6]The disciples went and did as Jesus had di-
rected them; [7]they brought the donkey and
the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he
sat on them. [8]A very large crowd[c] spread their
cloaks on the road, and others cut branches
from the trees and spread them on the road.
[9]The crowds that went ahead of him and that
followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in
the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

[10]When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city
was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" [11]The
crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus
from Nazareth in Galilee."

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

12 Then Jesus entered the temple[d] and drove
out all who were selling and buying in the
temple, and he overturned the tables of the
money changers and the seats of those who
sold doves. [13]He said to them, "It is written,

'My house shall be called a
house of prayer';
but you are making it a
den of robbers."

14 The blind and the lame came to him in
the temple, and he cured them. [15]But when the
chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing
things that he did, and heard[e] the children
crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the
Son of David," they became angry [16]and said
to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?"
Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read,

'Out of the mouths of infants
and nursing babies
you have prepared praise
for yourself'?"

[17]He left them, went out of the city to Bethany,
and spent the night there.

JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE

18 In the morning, when he returned to the
city, he was hungry. [19]And seeing a fig tree by
the side of the road, he went to it and found
nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to
it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!"
And the fig tree withered at once. [20]When the
disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying,
"How did the fig tree wither at once?" [21]Jesus
answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have
faith and do not doubt, not only will you do
what has been done to the fig tree, but even
if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and
thrown into the sea,' it will be done. [22]What-
ever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will
receive."

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED

23 When he entered the temple, the chief
priests and the elders of the people came to
him as he was teaching, and said, "By what

[a] **20.30** Other ancient authorities lack *Lord*
[b] **21.3** Or *'The Lord needs them and will send them back immediately.'* [c] **21.8** Or *Most of the crowd* [d] **21.12** Other ancient authorities add *of God*
[e] **21.15** Gk lacks *heard*

authority are you doing these things, and
who gave you this authority?" 24Jesus said to
them, "I will also ask you one question; if you
tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by
what authority I do these things. 25Did the
baptism of John come from heaven, or was
it of human origin?" And they argued with
one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will
say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'
26But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid
of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet."
27So they answered Jesus, "We do not know."
And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you
by what authority I am doing these things.

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

28 "What do you think? A man had two
sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and
work in the vineyard today.' 29He answered,
'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and
went. 30The father[a] went to the second and said
the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he
did not go. 31Which of the two did the will of
his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to
them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and
the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of
God ahead of you. 32For John came to you in the
way of righteousness and you did not believe
him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes
believed him; and even after you saw it, you
did not change your minds and believe him.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS

33 "Listen to another parable. There was a
landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence
around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a
watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and
went to another country. 34When the harvest
time had come, he sent his slaves to the ten-
ants to collect his produce. 35But the tenants
seized his slaves and beat one, killed another,
and stoned another. 36Again he sent other
slaves, more than the first; and they treated
them in the same way. 37Finally he sent his
son to them, saying, 'They will respect my
son.' 38But when the tenants saw the son, they
said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let
us kill him and get his inheritance.' 39So they
seized him, threw him out of the vineyard,
and killed him. 40Now when the owner of
the vineyard comes, what will he do to those
tenants?" 41They said to him, "He will put those
wretches to a miserable death, and lease the
vineyard to other tenants who will give him
the produce at the harvest time."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read
in the scriptures:

'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;[b]
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes'?

43Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will
be taken away from you and given to a people
that produces the fruits of the kingdom.[c] 44The
one who falls on this stone will be broken to
pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it
falls."[d]

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees
heard his parables, they realized that he was
speaking about them. 46They wanted to arrest
him, but they feared the crowds, because they
regarded him as a prophet.

THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in par-
ables, saying: 2"The kingdom of heaven
may be compared to a king who gave a wed-
ding banquet for his son. 3He sent his slaves to
call those who had been invited to the wedding
banquet, but they would not come. 4Again
he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who
have been invited: Look, I have prepared my
dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been
slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to
the wedding banquet.' 5But they made light of
it and went away, one to his farm, another to
his business, 6while the rest seized his slaves,
mistreated them, and killed them. 7The king
was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed
those murderers, and burned their city. 8Then
he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but
those invited were not worthy. 9Go therefore
into the main streets, and invite everyone you
find to the wedding banquet.' 10Those slaves
went out into the streets and gathered all
whom they found, both good and bad; so the
wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to see the
guests, he noticed a man there who was not
wearing a wedding robe, 12and he said to him,
'Friend, how did you get in here without a
wedding robe?' And he was speechless. 13Then
the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him
hand and foot, and throw him into the outer
darkness, where there will be weeping and
gnashing of teeth.' 14For many are called, but
few are chosen."

[a] **21.30** Gk *He* [b] **21.42** Or *keystone* [c] **21.43** Gk *the fruits of it* [d] **21.44** Other ancient authorities lack verse *44*

THE QUESTION ABOUT PAYING TAXES

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to
entrap him in what he said. [16]So they sent
their disciples to him, along with the Hero-
dians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you
are sincere, and teach the way of God in ac-
cordance with truth, and show deference to
no one; for you do not regard people with
partiality. [17]Tell us, then, what you think. Is
it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?"
[18]But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why
are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites?
[19]Show me the coin used for the tax." And they
brought him a denarius. [20]Then he said to
them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?"
[21]They answered, "The emperor's." Then he
said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor
the things that are the emperor's, and to God
the things that are God's." [22]When they heard
this, they were amazed; and they left him and
went away.

THE QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

23 The same day some Sadducees came to
him, saying there is no resurrection;[a] and
they asked him a question, saying, [24]"Teach-
er, Moses said, 'If a man dies childless, his
brother shall marry the widow, and raise up
children for his brother.' [25]Now there were
seven brothers among us; the first married,
and died childless, leaving the widow to his
brother. [26]The second did the same, so also
the third, down to the seventh. [27]Last of all,
the woman herself died. [28]In the resurrection,
then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For
all of them had married her."

29 Jesus answered them, "You are wrong,
because you know neither the scriptures nor
the power of God. [30]For in the resurrection
they neither marry nor are given in marriage,
but are like angels[b] in heaven. [31]And as for the
resurrection of the dead, have you not read
what was said to you by God, [32]'I am the God
of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of
Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the
living." [33]And when the crowd heard it, they
were astounded at his teaching.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

34 When the Pharisees heard that he had
silenced the Sadducees, they gathered togeth-
er, [35]and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a
question to test him. [36]"Teacher, which com-
mandment in the law is the greatest?" [37]He
said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God

[a] **22.23** Other ancient authorities read *who say that there is no resurrection* [b] **22.30** Other ancient authorities add *of God*

Where Fullness Awaits Us

The letter and spirit of scripture, and of all Christianity, forbid us to suppose that life in the New Creation will be a sexual life; and this reduces our imagination to the withering alternative either of bodies which are hardly recognisable as human bodies at all or else of a perpetual fast. As regards the fast, I think our present outlook might be like that of a small boy who, on being told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure should immediately ask whether you ate chocolates at the same time. On receiving the answer "No," he might regard absence of chocolates as the chief characteristic of sexuality. In vain would you tell him that the reason why lovers in their carnal raptures don't bother about chocolates is that they have something better to think of. The boy knows chocolate: he does not know the positive thing that excludes it. We are in the same position. We know the sexual life; we do not know, except in glimpses, the other thing which, in Heaven, will leave no room for it. Hence where fullness awaits us we anticipate fasting. In denying that sexual life, as we now understand it, makes any part of the final beatitude, it is not of course necessary to suppose that the distinction of sexes will disappear. What is no longer needed for biological purposes may be expected to survive for splendour. Sexuality is the instrument both of virginity and of conjugal virtue; neither men nor women will be asked to throw away weapons they have used victoriously. It is the beaten and the fugitives who throw away their swords. The conquerors sheathe theirs and retain them.

—from *Miracles*

For Reflection: Matthew 22.24–30

with all your heart, and with all your soul, and
with all your mind.' 38This is the greatest and
first commandment. 39And a second is like
it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
40On these two commandments hang all the
law and the prophets."

THE QUESTION ABOUT DAVID'S SON

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered
together, Jesus asked them this question:
42"What do you think of the Messiah?[a] Whose
son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David."
43He said to them, "How is it then that David
by the Spirit[b] calls him Lord, saying,
44 'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies
under your feet" '?
45If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be
his son?" 46No one was able to give him an
answer, nor from that day did anyone dare
to ask him any more questions.

JESUS DENOUNCES SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his
disciples, 2"The scribes and the Phari-
sees sit on Moses' seat; 3therefore, do whatever
they teach you and follow it; but do not do as
they do, for they do not practice what they
teach. 4They tie up heavy burdens, hard to
bear,[c] and lay them on the shoulders of oth-
ers; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a
finger to move them. 5They do all their deeds to
be seen by others; for they make their phylac-

For Reflection: Matthew 22.37

> An old saint, being asked whether it is easy or hard to love God, replied: "It is easy *to those who do it.*"

—from "Williams and the Arthuriad," *Arthurian Torso*

teries broad and their fringes long. 6They love
to have the place of honor at banquets and the
best seats in the synagogues, 7and to be greeted
with respect in the marketplaces, and to have
people call them rabbi. 8But you are not to be
called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you
are all students.[d] 9And call no one your father
on earth, for you have one Father—the one in
heaven. 10Nor are you to be called instructors,
for you have one instructor, the Messiah.[e] 11The
greatest among you will be your servant. 12All
who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all
who humble themselves will be exalted.

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,
hypocrites! For you lock people out of the king-
dom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves,
and when others are going in, you stop them.[f]
15Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you cross sea and land to make a single

[a] **22.42** Or *Christ* [b] **22.43** Gk *in spirit* [c] **23.4** Other ancient authorities lack *hard to bear* [d] **23.8** Gk *brothers* [e] **23.10** Or *the Christ* [f] **23.13** Other authorities add here (or after verse 12) verse 14, *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance you make long prayers; therefore you will receive the greater condemnation*

Wanting to Be Seen by Others

We must not think Pride is something God forbids because He is offended at it, or that Humility is something He demands as due to His own dignity—as if God Himself was proud. He is not in the least worried about His dignity. The point is, He wants you to know Him: wants to give you Himself. And He and you are two things of such a kind that if you really get into any kind of touch with Him you will, in fact, be humble—delightedly humble, feeling the infinite relief of having for once got rid of all the silly nonsense about your own dignity which has made you restless and unhappy all your life. He is trying to make you humble in order to make this moment possible: trying to take off a lot of silly, ugly, fancy-dress in which we have all got ourselves up and are strutting about like the little idiots we are. I wish I had got a bit further with humility myself: if I had, I could probably tell you more about the relief, the comfort, of taking the fancy dress off—getting rid of the false self, with all its "Look at me" and "Aren't I a good boy?" and all its posing and posturing. To get even near it, even for a moment, is like a drink of cold water to a man in a desert.

—from *Mere Christianity*

For Reflection: Matthew 23.5–7

convert, and you make the new convert twice
as much a child of hell[a] as yourselves.
16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say,
'Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound
by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold
of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.' 17You
blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or
the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred?
18And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar is
bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the
gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.'
19How blind you are! For which is greater, the
gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?
20So whoever swears by the altar, swears by
it and by everything on it; 21and whoever
swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and
by the one who dwells in it; 22and whoever
swears by heaven, swears by the throne of
God and by the one who is seated upon it.
23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hyp-
ocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin,
and have neglected the weightier matters of
the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these
you ought to have practiced without neglect-
ing the others. 24You blind guides! You strain
out a gnat but swallow a camel!
25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hyp-
ocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup
and of the plate, but inside they are full of
greed and self-indulgence. 26You blind Phar-
isee! First clean the inside of the cup,[b] so that
the outside also may become clean.
27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hyp-
ocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs,
which on the outside look beautiful, but inside
they are full of the bones of the dead and of
all kinds of filth. 28So you also on the outside
look righteous to others, but inside you are
full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hyp-
ocrites! For you build the tombs of the proph-
ets and decorate the graves of the righteous,
30and you say, 'If we had lived in the days
of our ancestors, we would not have taken
part with them in shedding the blood of the
prophets.' 31Thus you testify against your-
selves that you are descendants of those who
murdered the prophets. 32Fill up, then, the
measure of your ancestors. 33You snakes, you
brood of vipers! How can you escape being
sentenced to hell?[a] 34Therefore I send you
prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom
you will kill and crucify, and some you will
flog in your synagogues and pursue from
town to town, 35so that upon you may come
all the righteous blood shed on earth, from
the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of
Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you mur-
dered between the sanctuary and the altar.
36Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this
generation.

THE LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills
the prophets and stones those who are sent
to it! How often have I desired to gather your
children together as a hen gathers her brood
under her wings, and you were not willing!
38See, your house is left to you, desolate.[c] 39For
I tell you, you will not see me again until you
say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name
of the Lord.' "

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD

24 As Jesus came out of the temple and
was going away, his disciples came to
point out to him the buildings of the temple.
2Then he asked them, "You see all these, do you
not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left
here upon another; all will be thrown down."

SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE

3 When he was sitting on the Mount of
Olives, the disciples came to him privately,
saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what
will be the sign of your coming and of the end
of the age?" 4Jesus answered them, "Beware
that no one leads you astray. 5For many will
come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!'[d]
and they will lead many astray. 6And you will
hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you
are not alarmed; for this must take place, but
the end is not yet. 7For nation will rise against
nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and
there will be famines[e] and earthquakes in
various places: 8all this is but the beginning
of the birth pangs.

PERSECUTIONS FORETOLD

9 "Then they will hand you over to be tor-
tured and will put you to death, and you will
be hated by all nations because of my name.
10Then many will fall away,[f] and they will
betray one another and hate one another.
11And many false prophets will arise and lead
many astray. 12And because of the increase of

[a] **23.15,33** Gk *Gehenna* [b] **23.26** Other ancient authorities add *and of the plate* [c] **23.38** Other ancient authorities lack *desolate* [d] **24.5** Or *the Christ* [e] **24.7** Other ancient authorities add *and pestilences* [f] **24.10** Or *stumble*

lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold.
13But the one who endures to the end will be
saved. 14And this good news[a] of the kingdom
will be proclaimed throughout the world, as
a testimony to all the nations; and then the
end will come.

THE DESOLATING SACRILEGE

15 "So when you see the desolating sacrilege
standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by
the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand),
16then those in Judea must flee to the moun-
tains; 17the one on the housetop must not go
down to take what is in the house; 18the one
in the field must not turn back to get a coat.
19Woe to those who are pregnant and to those
who are nursing infants in those days! 20Pray
that your flight may not be in winter or on a
sabbath. 21For at that time there will be great
suffering, such as has not been from the be-
ginning of the world until now, no, and never
will be. 22And if those days had not been cut
short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of
the elect those days will be cut short. 23Then if
anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!'[b]
or 'There he is!'—do not believe it. 24For false
messiahs[c] and false prophets will appear and
produce great signs and omens, to lead astray,
if possible, even the elect. 25Take note, I have
told you beforehand. 26So, if they say to you,
'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out.
If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,' do
not believe it. 27For as the lightning comes from
the east and flashes as far as the west, so will
be the coming of the Son of Man. 28Wherever
the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

29 "Immediately after the suffering of those
days
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from
heaven,
and the powers of heaven
will be shaken.
30Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear
in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth
will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man
coming on the clouds of heaven' with power
and great glory. 31And he will send out his
angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will
gather his elect from the four winds, from one
end of heaven to the other.

THE LESSON OF THE FIG TREE

32 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon
as its branch becomes tender and puts forth
its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33So
also, when you see all these things, you know
that he[d] is near, at the very gates. 34Truly I tell
you, this generation will not pass away until
all these things have taken place. 35Heaven
and earth will pass away, but my words will
not pass away.

THE NECESSITY FOR WATCHFULNESS

36 "But about that day and hour no one
knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the
Son,[e] but only the Father. 37For as the days of
Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son
of Man. 38For as in those days before the flood
they were eating and drinking, marrying and
giving in marriage, until the day Noah en-
tered the ark, 39and they knew nothing until
the flood came and swept them all away, so
too will be the coming of the Son of Man.
40Then two will be in the field; one will be
taken and one will be left. 41Two women will
be grinding meal together; one will be taken

[a] **24.14** Or *gospel* [b] **24.23** Or *the Christ* [c] **24.24** Or *christs* [d] **24.33** Or *it* [e] **24.36** Other ancient authorities lack *nor the Son*

When the End Feels Near

War creates no absolutely new situation: it simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it. Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice. Human culture has always had to exist under the shadow of something infinitely more important than itself. If men had postponed the search for knowledge and beauty until they were secure, the search would never have begun. We are mistaken when we compare war with "normal life." Life has never been normal.

—from "Learning in War-Time," *The Weight of Glory*

For Reflection: Matthew 24.6

For Reflection: Matthew 24.34–35

> We must at all costs not move with the times. We serve One who said, "Heaven and Earth shall move with the times, but my words shall not move with the times."

—from "Christian Apologetics," *God in the Dock*

and one will be left. 42Keep awake therefore,
for you do not know on what day[a] your Lord
is coming. 43But understand this: if the owner
of the house had known in what part of the
night the thief was coming, he would have
stayed awake and would not have let his house
be broken into. 44Therefore you also must be
ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an
unexpected hour.

THE FAITHFUL OR THE UNFAITHFUL SLAVE

45 "Who then is the faithful and wise
slave, whom his master has put in charge of
his household, to give the other slaves[b] their
allowance of food at the proper time? 46Blessed
is that slave whom his master will find at work
when he arrives. 47Truly I tell you, he will
put that one in charge of all his possessions.
48But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My
master is delayed,' 49and he begins to beat his
fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunk-
ards, 50the master of that slave will come on
a day when he does not expect him and at an
hour that he does not know. 51He will cut him
in pieces[c] and put him with the hypocrites,
where there will be weeping and gnashing
of teeth.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN BRIDESMAIDS

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be
like this. Ten bridesmaids[d] took their
lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.[e]
2Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.
3When the foolish took their lamps, they took
no oil with them; 4but the wise took flasks of
oil with their lamps. 5As the bridegroom was
delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept.
6But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look!
Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet
him.' 7Then all those bridesmaids[d] got up and
trimmed their lamps. 8The foolish said to the
wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps
are going out.' 9But the wise replied, 'No! there
will not be enough for you and for us; you
had better go to the dealers and buy some for
yourselves.' 10And while they went to buy it,
the bridegroom came, and those who were
ready went with him into the wedding ban-
quet; and the door was shut. 11Later the other
bridesmaids[d] came also, saying, 'Lord, lord,

[a] **24.42** Other ancient authorities read *at what hour*
[b] **24.45** Gk *to give them* [c] **24.51** Or *cut him off*
[d] **25.1,7,11** Gk *virgins* [e] **25.1** Other ancient authorities add *and the bride*

Keep Awake

Precisely because we cannot predict the moment, we must be ready at all moments. Our Lord repeated this practical conclusion again and again; as if the promise of the Return had been made for the sake of this conclusion alone. Watch, watch, is the burden of his advice. I shall come like a thief. You will not, I most solemnly assure you you will not see me approaching. If the householder had known at what time the burglar would arrive, he would have been ready for him. If the servant had known when his absent employer would come home, he would not have been found drunk in the kitchen. But they didn't. Nor will you. Therefore you must be ready at all times. The point is surely simple enough. The schoolboy does not know which part of his Virgil lesson he will be made to translate: that is why he must be prepared to translate *any* passage. The sentry does not know at what time an enemy will attack, or an officer inspect, his post: that is why he must keep awake *all* the time. The Return is wholly unpredictable. There will be wars and rumours of wars and all kinds of catastrophes, as there always are. Things will be, in that sense, normal, the hour before the heavens roll up like a scroll. You cannot guess it.

—from "The World's Last Night," *The World's Last Night and Other Essays*

For Reflection: Matthew 24.36–44

open to us.' 12But he replied, 'Truly I tell you,
I do not know you.' 13Keep awake therefore,
for you know neither the day nor the hour.[a]

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey,
summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15to one he gave five talents,[b] to another two, to another one, to each according to
his ability. Then he went away. 16The one who
had received the five talents went off at once
and traded with them, and made five more
talents. 17In the same way, the one who had
the two talents made two more talents. 18But
the one who had received the one talent went
off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his
master's money. 19After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts
with them. 20Then the one who had received
the five talents came forward, bringing five
more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over
to me five talents; see, I have made five more
talents.' 21His master said to him, 'Well done,
good and trustworthy slave; you have been
trustworthy in a few things, I will put you
in charge of many things; enter into the joy
of your master.' 22And the one with the two
talents also came forward, saying, 'Master,
you handed over to me two talents; see, I have
made two more talents.' 23His master said to
him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave;
you have been trustworthy in a few things, I
will put you in charge of many things; enter
into the joy of your master.' 24Then the one
who had received the one talent also came
forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were
a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow,
and gathering where you did not scatter seed;
25so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent
in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'
26But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy
slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I
did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter?
27Then you ought to have invested my money
with the bankers, and on my return I would
have received what was my own with interest.
28So take the talent from him, and give it to
the one with the ten talents. 29For to all those
who have, more will be given, and they will
have an abundance; but from those who have
nothing, even what they have will be taken
away. 30As for this worthless slave, throw him
into the outer darkness, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his
glory, and all the angels with him, then he

[a] 25.13 Other ancient authorities add *in which the Son of Man is coming* [b] 25.15 A talent was worth more than fifteen years' wages of a laborer

Hiding Our Talents

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.

I believe that the most lawless and inordinate loves are less contrary to God's will than a self-invited and self-protective lovelessness. It is like hiding the talent in a napkin and for much the same reason. "I knew thee that thou wert a hard man." Christ did not teach and suffer that we might become, even in the natural loves, more careful of our own happiness. If a man is not uncalculating towards the earthly beloveds whom he has seen, he is none the more likely to be so towards God whom he has not. We shall draw nearer to God, not by trying to avoid the sufferings inherent in all loves, but by accepting them and offering them to Him; throwing away all defensive armour. If our hearts need to be broken, and if He chooses this as the way in which they should break, so be it.

—from *The Four Loves*

For Reflection: Matthew 25.14–30

will sit on the throne of his glory. 32All the
nations will be gathered before him, and he
will separate people one from another as a
shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,
33and he will put the sheep at his right hand
and the goats at the left. 34Then the king will
say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you
that are blessed by my Father, inherit the
kingdom prepared for you from the foun-
dation of the world; 35for I was hungry and
you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave
me something to drink, I was a stranger and
you welcomed me, 36I was naked and you
gave me clothing, I was sick and you took
care of me, I was in prison and you visited
me.' 37Then the righteous will answer him,
'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry
and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you
something to drink? 38And when was it that
we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or
naked and gave you clothing? 39And when
was it that we saw you sick or in prison and
visited you?' 40And the king will answer
them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to
one of the least of these who are members of
my family,[a] you did it to me.' 41Then he will
say to those at his left hand, 'You that are
accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire
prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I
was hungry and you gave me no food, I was
thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
43I was a stranger and you did not welcome
me, naked and you did not give me clothing,
sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'
44Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when
was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty
or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison,
and did not take care of you?' 45Then he will
answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you
did not do it to one of the least of these, you
did not do it to me.' 46And these will go away
into eternal punishment, but the righteous
into eternal life."

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

26 When Jesus had finished saying all
these things, he said to his disciples,
2"You know that after two days the Passover
is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed
over to be crucified."

3 Then the chief priests and the elders of
the people gathered in the palace of the high
priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4and they
conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill
him. 5But they said, "Not during the festival,
or there may be a riot among the people."

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

6 Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the
house of Simon the leper,[b] 7a woman came to
him with an alabaster jar of very costly oint-
ment, and she poured it on his head as he sat
at the table. 8But when the disciples saw it,
they were angry and said, "Why this waste?
9For this ointment could have been sold for a
large sum, and the money given to the poor."
10But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why
do you trouble the woman? She has performed
a good service for me. 11For you always have
the poor with you, but you will not always
have me. 12By pouring this ointment on my
body she has prepared me for burial. 13Truly
I tell you, wherever this good news[c] is pro-
claimed in the whole world, what she has done
will be told in remembrance of her."

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

14 Then one of the twelve, who was called
Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15and
said, "What will you give me if I betray him

[a] **25.40** Gk *these my brothers* [b] **26.6** The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases
[c] **26.13** Or *gospel*

When Did We Feed You?

I think that every prayer which is sincerely made even to a false god or to a v. imperfectly conceived true God, is accepted by the true God and that Christ saves many who do not think they know Him. For He is (dimly) present in the *good* side of the inferior teachers they follow. In the parable of the Sheep & Goats (Matt. 25.31 and following) those who are saved do not seem to know that they have served Christ. But of course our anxiety about unbelievers is most usefully employed when it leads us not to speculation but to earnest prayer for them and the attempt to be in our own lives such good advertisements for Christianity as will make it attractive.

—from a letter to Mrs. Johnson, November 8, 1952

For Reflection: Matthew 25.31–46

to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver.
16And from that moment he began to look for
an opportunity to betray him.

THE PASSOVER WITH THE DISCIPLES

17 On the first day of Unleavened Bread the
disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you
want us to make the preparations for you to
eat the Passover?" 18He said, "Go into the city
to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher
says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover
at your house with my disciples.' " 19So the
disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and
they prepared the Passover meal.

20 When it was evening, he took his place
with the twelve;[a] 21and while they were eating,
he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray
me." 22And they became greatly distressed and
began to say to him one after another, "Surely
not I, Lord?" 23He answered, "The one who has
dipped his hand into the bowl with me will be-
tray me. 24The Son of Man goes as it is written
of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of
Man is betrayed! It would have been better for
that one not to have been born." 25Judas, who
betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He
replied, "You have said so."

THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf
of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave
it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is
my body." 27Then he took a cup, and after giv-
ing thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink
from it, all of you; 28for this is my blood of the[b]
covenant, which is poured out for many for the
forgiveness of sins. 29I tell you, I will never again
drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when
I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

30 When they had sung the hymn, they
went out to the Mount of Olives.

PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD

31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all
become deserters because of me this night;
for it is written,

'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock
will be scattered.'

32But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of
you to Galilee." 33Peter said to him, "Though all
become deserters because of you, I will never
desert you." 34Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell
you, this very night, before the cock crows,
you will deny me three times." 35Peter said to
him, "Even though I must die with you, I will
not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

36 Then Jesus went with them to a place
called Gethsemane; and he said to his disci-
ples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."
37He took with him Peter and the two sons of
Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated.
38Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved,
even to death; remain here, and stay awake
with me." 39And going a little farther, he threw
himself on the ground and prayed, "My Fa-
ther, if it is possible, let this cup pass from
me; yet not what I want but what you want."
40Then he came to the disciples and found
them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could
you not stay awake with me one hour? 41Stay
awake and pray that you may not come into
the time of trial;[c] the spirit indeed is willing,
but the flesh is weak." 42Again he went away
for the second time and prayed, "My Father,
if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will
be done." 43Again he came and found them
sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44So leav-
ing them again, he went away and prayed for

[a] **26.20** Other ancient authorities add *disciples*
[b] **26.28** Other ancient authorities add *new*
[c] **26.41** Or *into temptation*

Take, Eat

I hope I do not offend God by making my Communions in the frame of mind I have been describing. The command, after all, was Take, eat: not Take, understand. Particularly, I hope I need not be tormented by the question "What is this?"—this wafer, this sip of wine. That has a dreadful effect on me. It invites me to take "this" out of its holy context and regard it as an object among objects, indeed as part of nature. It is like taking a red coal out of the fire to examine it: it becomes a dead coal. To me, I mean. All this is autobiography, not theology.

—from *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*

For Reflection: Matthew 26.26

the third time, saying the same words. 45Then
he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are
you still sleeping and taking your rest? See,
the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is
betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46Get up,
let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUS

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one
of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large
crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief
priests and the elders of the people. 48Now the
betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The
one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." 49At
once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings,
Rabbi!" and kissed him. 50Jesus said to him,
"Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they
came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.
51Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his
hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave
of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52Then
Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into
its place; for all who take the sword will perish
by the sword. 53Do you think that I cannot
appeal to my Father, and he will at once send
me more than twelve legions of angels? 54But
how then would the scriptures be fulfilled,
which say it must happen in this way?" 55At
that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you
come out with swords and clubs to arrest me
as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat
in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest
me. 56But all this has taken place, so that the
scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled."
Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST

57 Those who had arrested Jesus took him
to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house
the scribes and the elders had gathered. 58But
Peter was following him at a distance, as far
as the courtyard of the high priest; and going
inside, he sat with the guards in order to see
how this would end. 59Now the chief priests
and the whole council were looking for false
testimony against Jesus so that they might put
him to death, 60but they found none, though
many false witnesses came forward. At last
two came forward 61and said, "This fellow said,
'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to
build it in three days.'" 62The high priest stood
up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it
that they testify against you?" 63But Jesus was
silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put
you under oath before the living God, tell us if
you are the Messiah,[a] the Son of God." 64Jesus
said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of Power
and coming on the clouds of heaven."

[a] 26.63 Or *Christ*

Not What I Want but What You Want

Our act, when we pray, must not, any more than all our other acts, be separated from the continuous act of God Himself, in which alone all finite causes operate. It would be even worse to think of those who get what they pray for as a sort of court favorites, people who have influence with the throne. The refused prayer of Christ in Gethsemane is answer enough to that. And I dare not leave out the hard saying which I once heard from an experienced Christian: "I have seen many striking answers to prayer and more than one that I thought miraculous. But they usually come at the beginning: before conversion, or soon after it. As the Christian life proceeds, they tend to be rarer. The refusals, too, are not only more frequent; they become more unmistakable, more emphatic."

Does God then forsake just those who serve him best? Well, He who served Him best of all said, near His tortured death, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" When God becomes man, that Man, of all others, is least comforted by God, at His greatest need. There is a mystery here which, even if I had the power, I might not have the courage to explore. Meanwhile, little people like you and me, if our prayers are sometimes granted, beyond all hope and probability, had better not draw hasty conclusions to our own advantage. If we were stronger, we might be less tenderly treated. If we were braver, we might be sent, with far less help, to defend far more desperate posts in the great battle.

—from "The Efficacy of Prayer," *The World's Last Night and Other Essays*

For Reflection: Matthew 26.36–46

65Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." 67Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, 68saying, "Prophesy to us, you Messiah![a] Who is it that struck you?"

PETER'S DENIAL OF JESUS

69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." 70But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." 71When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."[b] 72Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." 73After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. 75Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

JESUS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. 2They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

THE SUICIDE OF JUDAS

3 When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus[c] was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. 4He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent[d] blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." 5Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. 6But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." 7After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. 8For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah,[e] "And they took[f] the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set,[g] on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, 10and they gave[h] them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

PILATE QUESTIONS JESUS

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." 12But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. 13Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" 14But he gave him no

[a] **26.68** Or *Christ* [b] **26.71** Gk *the Nazorean* [c] **27.3** Gk *he* [d] **27.4** Other ancient authorities read *righteous* [e] **27.9** Other ancient authorities read *Zechariah* or *Isaiah* [f] **27.9** Or *I took* [g] **27.9** Or *the price of the precious One* [h] **27.10** Other ancient authorities read *I gave*

Pilate's Choice

Screwtape weighs his options:

There is here a cruel dilemma before us. If we promoted justice and charity among men, we should be playing directly into the Enemy's hands; but if we guide them to the opposite behaviour, this sooner or later produces (for He permits it to produce) a war or a revolution, and the undisguisable issue of cowardice or courage awakes thousands of men from moral stupor.

This, indeed, is probably one of the Enemy's motives for creating a dangerous world—a world in which moral issues really come to the point. He sees as well as you do that courage is not simply *one* of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality. A chastity or honesty, or mercy, which yields to danger will be chaste or honest or merciful only on conditions. Pilate was merciful till it became risky.

—from *The Screwtape Letters*

For Reflection: Matthew 27.19–26

answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

BARABBAS OR JESUS?

15 Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. [16]At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus[a] Barabbas. [17]So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus[a] Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"[b] [18]For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. [19]While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." [20]Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. [21]The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." [22]Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"[b] All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" [23]Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

PILATE HANDS JESUS OVER TO BE CRUCIFIED

24 So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood;[c] see to it yourselves." [25]Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" [26]So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters,[d] and they gathered the whole cohort around him. [28]They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, [29]and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" [30]They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. [31]After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

32 As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. [33]And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), [34]they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. [35]And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots;[e] [36]then they sat down there and kept watch over him. [37]Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

38 Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. [39]Those who passed by derided[f] him, shaking

[a] **27.16,17** Other ancient authorities lack *Jesus*
[b] **27.17,22** Or *the Christ* [c] **27.24** Other ancient authorities read *this righteous blood*, or *this righteous man's blood* [d] **27.27** Gk *the praetorium*
[e] **27.35** Other ancient authorities add *in order that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."* [f] **27.39** Or *blasphemed*

HEREIN IS LOVE

God, who needs nothing, loves into existence wholly superfluous creatures in order that He may love and perfect them. He creates the universe, already foreseeing . . . the buzzing cloud of flies about the cross, the flayed back pressed against the uneven stake, the nails driven through the mesial nerves, the repeated incipient suffocation as the body droops, the repeated torture of back and arms as it is time after time, for breath's sake, hitched up. If I may dare the biological image, God is a "host" who deliberately creates His own parasites, causes us to be that we may exploit and "take advantage of" Him. Herein is love. This is the diagram of Love Himself, the inventor of all loves.

—from *The Four Loves*

For Reflection: Matthew 27.27–50

their heads 40and saying, "You who would
destroy the temple and build it in three days,
save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come
down from the cross." 41In the same way the
chief priests also, along with the scribes and
elders, were mocking him, saying, 42"He saved
others; he cannot save himself.[a] He is the King
of Israel; let him come down from the cross
now, and we will believe in him. 43He trusts
in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants
to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" 44The bandits
who were crucified with him also taunted him
in the same way.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

45 From noon on, darkness came over the
whole land[b] until three in the afternoon.
46And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a
loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that
is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken
me?" 47When some of the bystanders heard it,
they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." 48At
once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled
it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it
to him to drink. 49But the others said, "Wait,
let us see whether Elijah will come to save
him."[c] 50Then Jesus cried again with a loud
voice and breathed his last.[d] 51At that moment
the curtain of the temple was torn in two,
from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the
rocks were split. 52The tombs also were opened,
and many bodies of the saints who had fallen
asleep were raised. 53After his resurrection
they came out of the tombs and entered the
holy city and appeared to many. 54Now when
the centurion and those with him, who were
keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake
and what took place, they were terrified and
said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"[e]

55 Many women were also there, looking on
from a distance; they had followed Jesus from
Galilee and had provided for him. 56Among
them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the
mother of James and Joseph, and the mother
of the sons of Zebedee.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

57 When it was evening, there came a rich
man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who
was also a disciple of Jesus. 58He went to Pilate
and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate
ordered it to be given to him. 59So Joseph took
the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth
60and laid it in his own new tomb, which he
had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great
stone to the door of the tomb and went away.
61Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were
there, sitting opposite the tomb.

THE GUARD AT THE TOMB

62 The next day, that is, after the day of
Preparation, the chief priests and the Phari-
sees gathered before Pilate 63and said, "Sir,
we remember what that impostor said while
he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise
again.' 64Therefore command the tomb to be
made secure until the third day; otherwise
his disciples may go and steal him away, and
tell the people, 'He has been raised from the
dead,' and the last deception would be worse
than the first." 65Pilate said to them, "You have
a guard[f] of soldiers; go, make it as secure as
you can."[g] 66So they went with the guard and
made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

[a] **27.42** Or *is he unable to save himself?* [b] **27.45** Or *earth* [c] **27.49** Other ancient authorities add *And another took a spear and pierced his side, and out came water and blood* [d] **27.50** Or *gave up his spirit* [e] **27.54** Or *a son of God* [f] **27.65** Or *Take a guard* [g] **27.65** Gk *you know how*

The Ultimate Law

What God sends us must be sent in love and will all be for the best if we have the grace to use it so. My *mind* doesn't waver on this point; my *feelings* sometimes do. That's why it does me good to hear what *I* believe repeated in your voice—it being the rule of the universe that others can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves and one can paddle every canoe except one's own. That is why Christ's suffering for us is not mere theological dodge but the supreme case of the law that governs the whole world: and when they mocked him by saying "He saved others, himself he cannot save" they were really uttering, little as they knew it, the ultimate law of the spiritual world.

—from a letter to Arthur Greeves, July 2, 1949

For Reflection: Matthew 27.42

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

28 After the sabbath, as the first day of the
week was dawning, Mary Magdalene
and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2And
suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an
angel of the Lord, descending from heaven,
came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.
3His appearance was like lightning, and his
clothing white as snow. 4For fear of him the
guards shook and became like dead men. 5But
the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid;
I know that you are looking for Jesus who
was crucified. 6He is not here; for he has been
raised, as he said. Come, see the place where
he[a] lay. 7Then go quickly and tell his disciples,
'He has been raised from the dead,[b] and indeed
he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you
will see him.' This is my message for you." 8So
they left the tomb quickly with fear and great
joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9Suddenly
Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And
they came to him, took hold of his feet, and
worshiped him. 10Then Jesus said to them, "Do
not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to
Galilee; there they will see me."

THE REPORT OF THE GUARD

11 While they were going, some of the guard
went into the city and told the chief priests
everything that had happened. 12After the
priests[c] had assembled with the elders, they
devised a plan to give a large sum of money to
the soldiers, 13telling them, "You must say, 'His
disciples came by night and stole him away
while we were asleep.' 14If this comes to the
governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep
you out of trouble." 15So they took the money
and did as they were directed. And this story
is still told among the Jews to this day.

THE COMMISSIONING OF THE DISCIPLES

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee,
to the mountain to which Jesus had directed
them. 17When they saw him, they worshiped
him; but some doubted. 18And Jesus came and
said to them, "All authority in heaven and on
earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and
make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to
obey everything that I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always, to the
end of the age."[d]

[a] **28.6** Other ancient authorities read *the Lord*
[b] **28.7** Other ancient authorities lack *from the dead*
[c] **28.12** Gk *they* [d] **28.20** Other ancient authorities add *Amen*