

CHAPTER 19

JESUS DINES WITH SIMON THE PHARISEE

AS JAMES LEFT us standing by the doorway of Zebedee's house, John turned to me and said, "Jesus is now on his way to dine with Simon the Pharisee, a powerful influence in Capernaum. Jesus accepts every invitation, whether from poor or rich, feeling it just as important to reach the one as the other, but because so many rich have been inviting him lately, some of the people, especially those who follow the Baptizer, complain that he is becoming a winebibber and a glutton."

"So that is another illustration," I said, "of the way he is always obedient to every call that comes."

"Absolutely!" assured John as we began to walk down the path.

"He even demands that we be obedient in the same way," added Andrew, "and what is more, he believes in the first impression, the first call, the first command that presses itself upon a man's ears, or the first words that spontaneously leave a man's lips."

"Jesus also gets much of his guidance by obeying the first person he meets in a city," said James. "Indeed, when he sends us on preaching missions he tells us to accept the first invitation we receive and no matter how crude the abode, to remain in that home during the entire mission in that city. In some cities it is a rich man and we enjoy fine and sumptuous quarters with servants to attend our every need; in some cities the first person to ask us is the town good-for-nothing and we go to his hovel, even though the second person who invites us might be the richest man in town."

"Just why does Jesus act that way?" snapped Judas.

"Because he is not stiff-necked," said John with a smile. "Because he is so obedient to the command of others."

Judas did not relish this pleasantry, if pleasantry it was intended to be.

"I consider that to be the height of stiff-neckedness!" he countered with a dark frown. "It is a stubbornness to cling to a superstition of that kind, and still greater stubbornness to require all the rest of us to follow the same method."

"It is not so much his command," replied John, "as it is his advice. But if we be sincere pupils eager to learn the true secrets of our Master, we, too, should be obedient to follow him and learn from him. It is remarkable the way he receives guidance from his Father. He uses the same method to secure his Father's complete cooperation in his healing. He trusts the first words that cross the threshold of his patient's lips, the first impulsion of the one who comes to be healed. For instance, when one says, 'If you would only touch your hand to my head I would be healed,' Jesus instantly puts his hand upon the man's head. When a man says, 'If I could only kneel at your feet my sins would roll away,' Jesus lets him kneel. When a man says, 'If I fast for a week and then come to you for healing I know that I could be healed.' Jesus permits him to fast, even though he himself does not observe the fast days that the priests insist upon. In other words, if a person can channel his faith along some outward act in such a way as to manifest the trust that Jesus knows is necessary, he lets him use that particular act, whatever it may be."

"In that case," observed Philip, "people of any faith, accustomed to any ritual, could find a welcome with Jesus and could derive the help and healing he needs through his own religion or rite."

Andrew broke in. "Only one condition does he require of all."

"And what is that?"

"That they love the Lord their God with all their strength and love their neighbor as they love themselves. That is the only religion he preaches."

Come Follow Me

These remarks interested me so immensely that I just had to ask a question: "His first test of guidance, then, is get in tune with the Father and act without the slightest fear, hesitation or doubt?"

"Yes," said John.

"What if you are not in conjunction with the Father?" broke in Thomas.

"Yes," said Judas, "there you have said it. His method of guidance is all right for him, but what about the rest of us who cannot always keep in tune with the Father? My second and third choices are always better for me. It isn't till I fight off the first and second and often third approach to a problem that I begin to get the right one."

"You mean it takes you that long to get in tune with our Father?" asked Andrew.

"Yes, and even then I'm not sure that I am rightly in tune. I may be in tune with the evil one."

"Then wash out the things that block," advised John. "If you have ten hours to work till darkness comes, better take five hours for getting in tune with the Heavenly Father and then work five hours, than to work for ten while out of tune with Him."

"I found that true ever since I have been a follower of Jesus," asserted Simon Peter, who had been strangely silent for him. "Whenever I am out of tune with God I always cast my net on the wrong side to catch any fish. When I am in union with God I throw it out on the right side, and my net nearly breaks with the size of the catch. I have found from experience that better one hour of right-side fishing than a whole night of wrong-side fishing."

"Jesus himself told us," remarked Matthew, "that laborers who start working in the eleventh hour, if they are in tune with the Master, are paid the same amount as those who work all day."

So the conversation waxed on until we reached a little food shop where we ate porridge and fish and ended with a handful of delicious dates. When we were through, Andrew said, "Follow me. I know the way."

As we walked through the narrow Capernaum streets I asked Nathanael where we were going.

"To the house of Simon the Pharisee."

"Have we been invited?"

Nathanael smiled as though I were trying to be facetious and made no reply.

It was sometime later that we arrived at the house of Simon. To my surprise, without knocking the others started to walk right in. "Surely, we are not going in while they are eating and without an invitation!" I said to Nathanael.

"Now I know that you must have come from far distant parts," he replied, still smiling. "You evidently are not acquainted with our customs. In all of Palestine we can enter any home while people are eating. Indeed it is one of the afternoon sources of entertainment for the poor, to sit in rich men's houses and watch them eat and listen to their talk. The very poorest often clutch at the scraps thrown from the rich man's table. When filled with wine, some of the rich guests, to amuse themselves, throw choice bits among the poor to see who can scramble for them the fastest. Sometimes they even make wagers on who will get the most."

"Do you see any of the very poor here?" I asked.

"Very few," replied Nathanael. "We all took special pains to guard the fact that Jesus was coming here, for fear a mob might molest the diners. Indeed, Simon especially requested that no word be sent out about this, as he wanted to talk with Jesus undisturbed. What is more, if there are any poor here they will take pains not to descend to acts of foolishness, as Simon wants everything conducted with dignity when he entertains so distinguished a guest."

"Then Simon appreciates Jesus?" I asked.

"Yes, he is one of the Nicodemus group. I think he is attracted by Jesus' wonderful power in healing. He may have some sick relative that he wishes to see healed. Or he may be interested chiefly in the new discoveries that he thinks Jesus is making in prayer."

Matthew leaned forward and whispered in my ear, "That is the real reason," he said. "I knew Simon well when I was a tax gatherer. He is a man very curious about ideas—a student of Aristotle and the Greeks. He wants to see what constitutes a prophet. As a Pharisee he has made a special study of the Hebrew prophets and feels that Jesus belongs to that class. He said he would be honored to have a prophet in his home."

We were now seated along the edge of the wall on the floor, watching the diners. The meal was only half over and the guests were lingering in long conversation between courses. About ten were present at the table, a very impressive group of merchants and scholars. Jesus reclined nearest us. In his fine garment all of one piece and with his flowing hair and beautiful beard, he looked no less distinguished than the rest—marvelously handsome man. But the moment one looked at the eyes one cared nothing about the handsomeness. I would never get over my wonder at that look of great love and compassion and the glorious light on his face.

After awhile, a Sadducee came in and sat beside us. "I saw you enter and I imagined that your Master must be with you," he said. "He does not suffer for want of fine food, I see."

Judas glowered at him and would have spoken angrily, but Andrew nudged him in the side with his elbow.

Now a woman had entered and sat down also, weeping and holding her head in her hands. She, too, had seen us coming and had guessed our destination. The Sadducee looked at her with disdain and edged close to me, leaving a wide gap between him and her. Still weeping she rose, went forward and, to our amazement, knelt at the feet of Jesus and began to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with strands of her long hair. She opened a little box and shook drops of perfume from it upon his feet.

The Sadducee whispered to me, "Now Simon will know that Jesus is no prophet, for the truest test of a prophet according to Hillel is his power to discern the character of the people one deals with. And this woman is a sinner and should not be allowed to touch a prophet."

John whispered to me, "Watch the way Jesus accepts whatever anyone feels led to do, if it be a spontaneous, first impulse. Watch closely and you will see that he will not send her away. While washing the dust from the feet of Jesus, she is in reality washing the sins away from her own soul, although she herself knows it not."

"How can this be?" asked Judas. The dual between him and John seemed ever to be growing wider. "It is absurd that what one does to another person is being done to oneself."

"Is not that one of the Master's central teachings?" pursued John. "That as you mete out to others it will be measured to you?"

"All that is beyond me," muttered Judas under his breath. And from that moment I knew that Judas would never be changed.

Jesus addressed Simon.

"Simon," he said, "I have something to say to you."

"Speak, teacher," he said.

"There is something in your mind and in the minds of others here that leads me to tell you this. There was a money-lender who had two debtors; one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty. As they were unable to pay, he freely forgave them both. Tell me, now, which of them will love him most?"

"I suppose," said Simon, "the man who had most forgiven."

"Quite right," he said. Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "You see this woman? When I came into your house you did not give me water for my feet, while she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair; you gave me no kiss, while ever since she came in she has kept pressing kisses on my feet; you did not anoint my head with oil, while she has anointed my feet with perfume. Therefore I tell you, many as her sins are, they are forgiven, for her love is great; whereas he to whom little is forgiven has but little love."

And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

The Sadducee beside me sneered, "Who is this, to forgive even sin?"

But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

She rose and slipped silently out of the room, a look of infinite peace and gratitude upon her face. Simon was profoundly moved by what he had heard and seen. So was John. And so was I.

CHAPTER 20

QUELLING STORMS

ONE MORNING the crowd around Jesus was augmented by a vast number from neighboring cities, many of whom seemed to know Simon the Zealot very well.

"They are members of the Revolutionist party," Nathanael explained. "They are the modern Gideon's Band secretly preparing to overthrow the Roman power. They have come to see whether Jesus is the one to lead their revolution."

"God forbid!" said Philip frowning. "Then every one of us will be crucified. We must get rid of this crowd."

"No," said Nathanael. "You will find them very receptive to Jesus' words."

They were indeed very receptive, and Jesus healed many after he had addressed them in parables. One of them, in his enthusiasm cried out, "You are the man we want for King!" Thereupon followed a great roar of approval. The cry became a contagion and presently everyone was shouting at the top of his voice.

Jesus lifted his hand and finally quieted them.

"Do you not know that they that would achieve their ends by the sword shall perish by the sword? No, my friends, seek first the Kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you—even freedom from the Roman yoke. Now go in peace."

He turned to the Twelve, then, and said, "Let us cross to the other side at once." Quickly Peter and Andrew helped him into their boat and with four others pushed off.

"John and I have room for the rest of you in our boat," said James. So another seven of us climbed into his boat. Matthew and I sat in the stern and Thomas sat alone in the bow. Four, seated in pairs, did the rowing. John and James hulled the oars in the forward position while Nathanael and Philip were immediately facing me.

I became fascinated watching the long, powerful arms of Nathanael and the wide sweep of his oar. A wind from the north was rolling whitecaps toward us. Overhead, gathering clouds gave the illusion of night and presently I found myself growing very drowsy. I was sound asleep when a great wave burst upon us, drenching me to the skin and almost filling the boat.

"Start bailing!" shouted James. "You three not rowing, start bailing—fast!"

The waves kept rising in fury until I wondered if our boat—large and strong though it was—could weather the storm. Then, just as suddenly as it came up, the storm subsided. The water became smooth as glass and the oars again took firm grip upon the water.

"I never in my life saw anything happen like this," said Philip.

"That storm almost got us," said Simon Peter when our two crews met on the opposite shore. "But I have something wonderful to tell you! Now I know that Jesus is the Messiah! Even the winds and waves obey him!" In Peter's voice there was awe.

The town of Gadara was set back from the lake and approached by a road along whose sides were cave-like tombs cut out of the rocks. We had hardly landed when a giant figure of a man, completely naked, started rushing down upon us. He had a club in his hands and a wild look in his eyes that boded no good.

Come Follow Me

"We come out of one storm only to meet another," said Simon Peter, surprisingly calm and

unconcerned at this apparition. "Henceforth I am afraid of nothing when Jesus is with us. He calmed one storm. He can calm another."

This confidence was not shared by Nathanael. "I've been here before. This man is known as the Killer of Gadara. He breaks the chains they try to bind him with. No one dares go by this road for fear of him. We must hurry down the beach another way to the city." Then raising his voice he called to all the Twelve, "Let's hurry along the northward shore and avoid these caves that that creature may not harm us."

"No," said Jesus, "let us wait. He seems to be expecting us. Let enough love go forth to this unfortunate one, and no harm shall touch any of you."

The powerful figure was now close upon us, flourishing his club and gnashing his teeth.

For a moment fear seized me and dammed back the flow of love I was trying to send, in self defense, toward him. Then I saw the serene face of Peter upturned toward the sky and I, too, looked up and opened my heart utterly to God. Instantly I felt His great love flow through me and I knew then we were safe. The lunatic stopped in his tracks.

"Your fame has spread before you," he cried. "You are Jesus of Nazareth, who heals the ones beaten down. I am the modern Samson who beats down those who are healed." And he laughed in wild hysteria that made my blood run cold.

"I destroy! I destroy!" he cried and he began to strike his own body with his club and throwing it down, seized a rock and began to gash his cheeks and breast with it.

"Now watch," said John, standing close to me. "You will see that this will not be an easy healing. If the demons are cast out it will be at a price. Someone will suffer. For there is not love enough."

"What do you mean?" I asked, watching the man now wallowing in the dust.
"Jesus loves him."

"Yes, but *he* does not love Jesus. No one in these parts loves Jesus. See, people are coming out of Gadara. They know by the madman's screams that something is happening. They are all staring at Jesus as people stare at a necromancer or a wonder-worker, with eyes popping out of their heads. They are even afraid of him. You see, the fame of his mighty works has traveled faster than the message of his loving heart."

"Is that the reason he so often counsels people not to spread the story of his works?"

"The chief reason, yes. You notice that he does not caution anyone to slow up the spreading of his message of love. That is the 'good tidings' which he urges us to spread in haste. His purpose in selecting us disciples was to do just that thing. But he never takes pains to hasten the story of his mighty works. Love must always lead the way. All his miracles are but the fruits of love."

—and faith," added Nathanael.

"These people here are not countrymen of ours," continued John. "They are Gentiles, or halfbreeds—eaters of swine and worshippers of Astoreth and Baal, not Jehovah. They look upon Jesus as a despised foreigner—a Jew—a magician. Curiosity draws them, curiosity and fear—not love and faith."

The man was now mumbling and screaming, nothing articulate coming from his lips. Jesus suddenly silenced him with a loud voice.

"Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." At once the man relaxed, looked up at Jesus with a wild stare, and fell on his knees.

"Jesus, Son of God," he screamed, "Most High! What business have you with me? By God I adjure you, do not torture me."

"Hush," said John. "It is not the man but the demons, in him that are crying out. They are the ones who will suffer, not he."

"What is your name?" demanded Jesus.

"If one uses the correct name of the demon he can command it," whispered John. "That is the method of all prophets."

"My name is Legion," came from the lips of the one possessed. "There is a host of us. Send us into someone else."

"No," said Jesus, "you don't belong in the habitation of man."

"Let us enter the wild beasts—or even the sheep yonder."

"No," said Jesus.

"Then let us enter the swine."

"You are like swine and would make men swine," said Jesus, and then in a voice of command, "enter where you belong."

Instantly the man fell to the ground and lay relaxed and limp at Jesus' feet. Jesus reached out and gently raised him up. To my surprise the man had not swooned. He was smiling, and his face was simply transformed by the light of that smile. His eyes were bright and glowing and beautiful; I could hardly believe that he was the same creature.

"Put some garments upon him," said Jesus. "This man will be our apostle to the Gadarenes from this time forward."

"Thank you, thank you, thank you," said the man. And his voice was calm and clear.

Someone cast a mantle over him and led him toward the city. All the rest of the citizens followed, leaving Jesus alone with the disciples. Turning to them Jesus spoke:

"There are worse demons than those which I cast out from this man—the worst kind are those that afflict a multitude of people at the same time. When we crossed the lake just now I was running away from demons, only to run into new demons along the way. A storm in the air is only a reflection of the storm in the soul, and one is just as easy to quell as the other. This afternoon you have seen how a legion of demons can enslave one man. This morning across the lake you saw how one demon could enslave a legion of people."

"What do you mean, Master?" asked Thomas.

"I mean that when the multitude pressed upon me the other day begging for another miracle of loaves and fishes, they were possessed by the demon of greed. They have never forgotten that I turned water into wine and have never ceased repeating Satan's request to turn stones into bread. Today the fanatic multitude came seeking to make me king in order that I would destroy their conquerors for them. That was the demon of hate—directed at the Romans. Whenever a thought presses in on a multitude that way it is like a demon—to be cast out. But alas, the fanatics of Galilee don't want it cast out."

"When individuals come asking me and desiring in their heart that I cast out their demons I easily cast them out. But when they don't want to be free it comes with effort or causes loss as when these demons went into the swine. Multitudes come possessed with demons that they do *not* want cast out, clinging to them with all their might. Then only God through His great mercy can save them. Then it is that I turn away and leave them alone for awhile with God."

"So when you had us get into the boats," said Matthew, "we were fleeing from demons, not from people?"

"Yes," said Jesus. "From the demonic desire to destroy the Roman power by force."

Just then we saw the crowd returning from the city.

spread that the demons you cast out from the giant entered into them and destroyed them. Please, we beg of you, leave these parts, immediately lest worse things befall us."

"We shall go," said Jesus.

"Let me go with you," cried a tall, handsome man. I had to look twice to realize that he was the lunatic, now bathed and clothed and in his right mind.

"No," said Jesus gently, "go home to your own people and report to them all the Lord has done for you and how He took pity on you."

And as we turned and trudged northward I found that I was pondering all that Jesus had been telling us. The craving of the multitude for God to produce a king who could raise up, as by magic, an army to move and act with power—oh, how like it was in my own day—the day when the demon of Power Politics was in control of the nations of the world! So fixed are these demon thoughts, these lusts for ease, for wealth, for power, that I wondered how Jesus, then or now, could ever cast them out! And the terrible demon-thoughts of jealousy and hate that possessed the Pharisees! Because the people of Palestine did not make haste to want these demons cast out, because they did not become poor in spirit and pure in heart, and because they did not hunger and thirst eagerly enough for righteousness, the demons in them were destined to destroy both them and him. It seemed as though all Palestine right then was possessed of demons. It was as though all the children of mammon were marshaling their forces to cast out the Son of Light.

As we walked on in thoughtful silence I found John at my side.

"What is a demon?" I asked him. John was the only one who seemed able to answer my deeper questions.

He replied, "The demons are the outer thoughts, the thoughts that destroy and take. The angels are the inner thoughts, the thoughts that save and give. He who lives amid the inward thoughts lives in the Kingdom; he who lives in the outer thoughts lives in hell. Jesus came to put men in heaven and save them from hell, to tell men how to turn within and live in the Kingdom here and now."

"How can he destroy these demon thoughts that do not willingly leave the people and which they do not willingly part with?" I asked.

"If a man clings to rubbish when it is cast out into Gehenna, then he, too, along with the rubbish which he clings to, will also be cast out into Gehenna."

"Then all will be destroyed? Is there no other way?"

"Apparently the only other way to make men lose their clinging to outward thoughts is for one to die, Jesus tells us. For that reason it is beginning to grow very clear to him, he says, that he must let these demon thoughts, these demon desires and demon hates of people that are seeking to make him king, and of the Pharisees seeking to make him a victim—he must let those thoughts lift him up—what he means I do not know—and destroy his body. Only by giving his body a ransom for the many who are obsessed by outer thoughts, he says, can he awaken their love sufficiently for them to look within and find the kingdom. Sometimes it seems clear that it is actual death he means—for he so often speaks of himself as a sheep led to the slaughter—and sometimes it is life I think he means, for he always speaks as though he can pick himself out of the tomb they lay him in. In case they try to kill him, I think he will rise right up above the torture and move away to safety, and they will find they cannot touch him, even as when he moved from the crowd on the Nazareth hill and none could touch him. And yet—and yet—at that time and at other times he says, "They cannot hurt me for my time has not yet come." What means he by this? My time! My time! What is that time?"

TOWARD THE MOUNTAIN

AND NOW I began to realize that this urge of Jesus to leave the people and flee northward, sprang from a deep intuition—his gift of divine guidance—that made everyone who was close to him, even the suspicious Judas and the questioning Thomas, stand in awe and wonder before him. It was a spiritual compulsion so contagious that all those about him were swept up by it—this recurring urge to leave the multitudes and slip away to mountains or desert where there would be silence long and deep enough for a revelation to be born.

As we moved into the north country, into the region of Caesarea Philippi, walking most of the time in silence, it seemed to me that all nature shared the inner knowledge that was sweeping us onward. I could feel it in the very cells and tissues of my body, as a plum tree heavy with plums would feel, if it were a sentient creature, just before the plums fell into the hands reaching out to grasp them. I felt as the salmon must feel in the tissues of their gleaming bodies as they slither upstream to spawn and die. I knew for the first time how the doe must feel as she withdraws into the thicket to cast her young. As I looked at the group walking on in silence, I thought of a gentle mother hen about to hatch a brood of twelve little living creatures out of the symmetrical shells she had been warming under her wings.

It was strange the way this mutual silence persisted. No one felt like speaking. The very atmosphere through which we moved seemed heavy and pregnant, I had a feeling that if anyone should speak overloud it might precipitate a great downpour—a cloudburst—a veritable flood from heaven itself.

Near the outskirts of Caesarea Philippi we came in sight of Mt. Hermon. Everyone gave a sigh of relief. As our eyes were lifted, it seemed that the weight in our hearts was lifted also. We quickened our steps and at last Jesus broke the silence:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." He ceased abruptly and nodded to the others. As actors in a play respond to the cue, they took up the refrain where he had left off. "My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. . . ." and on and on went the chant until the end of the psalm was reached. Jesus himself joined in at the close, his full rich voice pouring soul into the body of the words: "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore."

It was, I had noted, a custom of Jesus on long journeys to start a psalm and then let his followers take it up and continue it to the close much as a Greek chorus reciting the antistrophe following the strophe.

After reciting a few more psalms in this way, each one lifting the consciousness of the Twelve a little higher, he suddenly turned upon them and asked with a deep, new urgency, "Who do the people say that I am?" Now I sensed that the precipitation would start, now the flood would begin.

"Some say you are a prophet," said Simon the Zealot, "that God has sent to become king."

"Some say," said Matthew, "that you are a reincarnation of Elijah in the form of the Forerunner of the coming Messiah."

"Some say you are John the Baptist come back," broke in Andrew.

"All agree," said Philip, "that in some way or other you are the Forerunner that Israel has been looking forward to."

Come Follow Me

Jesus' eyes were very bright and clear as he stood before them, and a glory such as I had

never seen before seemed to shine from his face and head. His voice was strong and insistent.

"And who do you say that I am?"

Like an avalanche suddenly dislodged by the report of some mighty weapon, Simon, son of Jonas, burst forth in a trembling, eager voice,

"You are the Son of the living God—not a reincarnation of prophets of the past, nor a Forerunner of a Messiah of the future—*you are the Messiah himself!*"

The effect of these words on the group was tremendous. Most of the Twelve were trembling. It was as though some gigantic power had been released on earth, something as elemental as the earth itself, as cosmic as the stars in their courses, as celestial as heaven above. All, I thought, must be aware that the divine revelation we had been waiting for was born right here in the shadow of the mountain gleaming above us.

"Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, Simon, son of Jonas,"—every word that Jesus spoke seemed to vibrate the very air we breathed—*"but your Father that is in heaven.* This moment you have been a clear, inspired channel for the Father to speak through even as those rock-ribbed mountains ahead of us are clear channels for the life-giving water that falls from heaven to flow into the Jordan all summer long when other streams run dry. All streams in this land are built on river beds of silt and sand and have their periods of drought. Only the Jordan, whose bed is solid rock, has water eternally flowing. From now on your name shall have new meaning: Peter, the solid rock, hewed out and shaped to be a true channel of God."

He paused and his eyes, filled with the glory of God, fell upon each of us in turn as he continued slowly and impressively as though weighing each word: "Upon this rock I shall establish my church. The only ministry I crave is that of men who can become channels for the heavenly Father to speak the message through them. Such a ministry will form the foundation stones for a church that nothing can destroy. Through such a Church the sick shall be healed, demons shall be cast out, wars shall cease and the Kingdom of heaven itself shall come to earth."

Jesus raised his eyes to the sky. Then he looked again upon his disciples and said, "Because of this revelation you know now what I have meant when I say the Father and I are one and He abides in me and I abide in Him, and what I do is not of myself but of the Father who sent me. Now listen very carefully for what I have to say few of you will believe. Although I am the only *begotten* Son of God, you too can become reborn sons of God."

"How can we become reborn?" exclaimed Philip, who had been following Jesus with rapt attention.

"Yes," said Andrew, "what can take the place of our soul that our mother's womb did for our body?"

"Why the concern about outer things?" asked Jesus. "The womb of the mother is merely the outer manifestation of her inner love. The womb of the soul is the Love of God. Only as you abide in the body of the Love of God as the embryo abides in the body of the mother will you ever be born again."

"This is so confusing to our human minds," said Thomas. "if you could put it all into one word . . ."

"That word," interrupted Jesus, "is meekness. It is meekness to the last degree. Just as the embryo has no will of its own—its only will is the mother's will, so your rebirth will wait until you have completely merged your will into the Father's will. When you have melted and merged your human personality into such humility and selflessness that to serve becomes your only passion, then

you must be as a servant; he that would be greatest of all shall be as a slave."

"But," exclaimed Matthew, "you are the greatest of all who have ever walked this earth and you are our master, not our slave."

"Matthew," said Jesus, and oh, such gentleness and love was in his voice, "you are the one of the twelve that is always scanning the Scriptures to find prophecies regarding this time. Behold in Israel's description of the suffering servant he is really describing me. And you will find in Deuteronomy the price set for a man-slave will someday be the price paid for me. I came not to be ministered unto but to minister. So as I go now to be alone with the Father, remain here as a loving wall of protection about me. If any sick or suffering ones come seeking me, use the channeled power that humility bestows upon you and send them away whole."

Then while the glory of the Father still shone around him, he took Peter and James and John and went up into the high mountain, leaving the rest of us to keep close guard so none of the throng that would soon gather should follow him up the trail.