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The Mental Condition and Career

OF

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Examined in the Light of Modern Knowledge

HENRY LEFFMANN, A. M., M. D.

119 South Fourth Street
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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Manuscript

The text of this essay, in a cruder form, was read to an audience of about fifty persons, men and women, representative of the learned professions, science, literature and general culture. It was subsequently printed slightly amended, and distributed to persons who had not heard it. The commendations that I have received from competent critics, have been so expressed that I cannot doubt their sincerity. I have thought it best to modify the essay before giving it wider distribution, eliminating some irrelevant matters.

The fundamental views, namely, that Jesus was a megalomaniac, and that many of the phenomena of his career are instances of hypnosis and suggestion, are derived from my own studies, but I am not unaware that hints of such doctrines are to be found in the writings of Renan and Lombroso. My knowledge of their views is subsequent to forming my own conclusions. Similarly, I am familiar with the essay by Holtzmann, of Giessen, "Was Jesus Ekstatiker?" issued in latter part of last year, but this also came to my knowledge subsequent to the completion of my essay and is developed along a different line.

I am fully cognizant of the antagonism that this essay will induce in some circles, but I am quite sufficiently familiar with the writings of present-day Protestant theologians, high in church circles in this country, England and Germany, to know that their statements, followed to logical conclusions, leave no more of the ancient faith than that which is the basis of this essay. Orthodox critics treat the fundamental dogmas with great caution but none the less destructively. They tear the Bible to pieces and then, holding the fragments up to the multitude, cry, "Behold the word of God."

An instance of this is to be found in Sayce's recent work "**Monumental Facts and Higher Critical Fallacies.**"

"We have learnt that the Old Testament Scriptures are as truly a literature as the classical productions of Greece and Rome, that they were written by men, not by machines, and that they reflect the individual qualities of those who wrote them, and the coloring of the various ages at which they were composed."

If these words mean anything, they mean that the Bible is an imperfect, human document.

119 South Fourth Street,
Philadelphia, Pa., June, 1904.

The Mental Condition and Career of Jesus of Nazareth

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No man that has trodden this earth has influenced the course of human history as profoundly as has Jesus of Nazareth. If the controlling powers of nature have insight into the future, we need not wonder that the order of the universe was disturbed at his birth, and that portents excited the inhabitants of land. The star that rose in the east, and fixed itself in the zenith above his humble village, might be as bright as the sun at noonday, and be no more than commensurate with the light that was to shine upon the Roman Empire. Within less than a half-century, public and private institutions that had been growing up to might for over five hundred years, were to be challenged by a host of devoted men and women, who stood ready to suffer anything in furtherance of their endeavors.

I dismiss, as unworthy of belief, the stories of the portents, and hold that neither Jesus himself, nor any of his immediate followers appreciated the scope of the events in which they were concerned. Indirectly, through his ministry, the Hebrew Scriptures have become the basis of the greatest propaganda of religion that the world has ever seen. It is true that a careful study of the events immediately following the death of the founder leads to the view that the influence of Paul was largely responsible for the extension of Christianity. He knew nothing personally of Jesus, but in some way that cannot be explained (and which he, himself, does not seem to

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have understood) he was changed suddenly from a zealous antagonist to a zealous advocate, illustrating vividly the well known "zeal of the convert." It is to Paul, largely, that the world owes the broadening of the mission of Christianity, so as to include others than those of the circumcision. We may partly account for this by Paul's education. He was born and reared in Asia Minor, far away from the narrow life of Judea, and in close association with an intellectual Greek community. He spoke the Gentile languages, Latin and Greek in their cultivated form, as well as Hebrew, while Jesus and his immediate disciples spoke only a dialect of Hebrew. That Jesus came only to the lost sheep of Israel, as he said on one occasion, was held in Jewry for a long time, for the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews.

In studying the career of Jesus of Nazareth in the light of modern knowledge, we must take into consideration the results of modern criticism, but it will not be necessary to adopt in full the tenets of any particular critic or school. The literature of the subject is immense. The British Museum catalogue of printed books has about 40,000 items under the title "Bible," and 1500 under that of "Jesus Christ." More than ninety per cent. of all this can be passed without notice for it is merely dogmatic or homiletic, developed without regard to textual criticism or the facts of history. Although some of the earlier fathers had doubts as to the validity of some portions of the Christian writings, the establishment of the canon and the extinguishment of the great heresies, suppressed the opportunity for free inquiry, and the books were accepted as literally correct until a comparatively recent period. The higher criticism of the Old Testament has become familiar to English speaking people; the composite nature of the Hebrew scriptures and the late origin of most of them are now almost universally acknowledged, but the destructive nature of New Testament criticism is not so widely known, although it has been sufficient as to impair materially the historic value of the books.

The trustworthy material for the study of the life of Jesus, is to be found in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, the former being the earliest narrative form that has come down to us. The latter is not the original account of Matthew the publican, who was early chosen as a disciple. He prepared a collection of the sayings of Jesus, in the language in which they were uttered, that is, in Aramaic. The Gospel of Luke is, by its own testimony, late in origin, and not by one of the immediate attendants of Jesus. The Gospel of John was written late in the first century, or early in the second, gives a view of Jesus that is strongly tinged with metaphysical speculation, and shows also marked antisemitic feeling. All critics have recognized the difference between the first three Gospels and the fourth. For reasons that need not be discussed here, modern theologians have been strongly inclined to take the fourth Gospel in preference as the basis of the exemplification of the life and work of Jesus, but I believe that the synoptics will be safer guides. In addition to the Gospel narratives, the Book of Acts of the Apostles throws an interesting light on the condition of affairs during the close of Jesus' ministry, and some further information may be gleaned from other New Testament books and contemporary Gentile history.

This literature cannot be accepted in its entirety. It has suffered much by the vicissitudes of the early centuries, and, unintentionally at the hands of copyists, it has been intentionally modified by dogmatists and zealots, and it is inherently incomplete on account of the lack of the historic sense on the part of the original writers. Some of the interpolations and misrepresentations can be noted by any observant reader, but many are so dextrously interwoven with the original text that no degree of critical acumen can distinguish them with certainty. In my opinion, no one untrammelled by theologic dogmas can read these writings without justifying Strauss' judgment that in interpreting them a large allowance must be made for the hypothesis of conscious and intentional falsification. Out of this uncertainty and obscur-

ity some facts are ascertainable that can be used as a basis.

The facts are briefly as follows: Jesus was born of humble parents in Galilee about the year of Rome 750. His childhood was uneventful, but possibly he showed a tendency to brood over religious questions. During this childhood, he witnessed at least two popular movements in response to the preaching of false Messiahs. About his thirtieth year he became interested in the work of another agitator, who did not claim messianic function, but proclaimed the near approach of the vengeance of God, and sought to lead men to repentance and a better life. By reason of the rite which this man employed in receiving converts, he was known as John the Baptizer. Jesus accepted John's baptism, but became soon dissatisfied with such a limited ministry, and after some intense internal struggles, he entered upon an independent career, which, in about a year, terminated in his arrest and punishment for sedition.

The gospel history cannot be understood without some knowledge of the Messianic ideas prevalent at the time. The Jewish kingdom had declined in the course of centuries from a dominating power in Western Asia, exhibiting all the grandeur of oriental absolutism, to a province of the Roman Empire under the control of pagans. It is true that at the time of the birth of Jesus, Judea was not directly under Roman control, but it was substantially in the Caesar's power, and the local ruler, Herod the King, was but nominally Jewish. A people of strongly emotional character, with memories of past glories and dominion, memories that were kept vivid by a rich literature, much of which was contemporaneous with the events it described, would naturally cherish hopes of restoration and of release from alien oppressors. These hopes were nourished by many allusions, some evident and some vague, in these scriptures, declaring the purpose of the God of Israel to restore his chosen nation to its glories. The general trend of opinion among the learned Jews was that such restoration would be brought about by the direct intervention of the

deity. It must not be overlooked that at this period the doctrine of an orderly course of nature in strict obedience to natural laws was not prevalent. All nations and all classes of men, from the most learned to the most ignorant, freely assumed the existence of beings possessing free will and capacities above those of humanity, who could at any time interrupt the order of events. The Jews believed that their God was a being of great power, who could sway the entire universe to his wishes, and had taken them under his protection, and would, in his own time, move against their enemies, confound their politics, frustrate their knavish tricks, and restore the former glories. It is not possible to obtain at the present day a clear view of all the phases that this hope exhibited in the minds of the people of Israel. Probably some believed that the change would be brought about by purely spiritual means. God had hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and, at the challenge of Satan, the enemy of God and mankind, had afflicted a pious and good man, in many ways, and he could certainly conquer the enemies of the seed of Jacob. Bearing in mind, however, that the masses were largely anthropomorphic in their opinions, it is likely that they expected that the arrival of the Messiah would be attended with portents, great terrestrial and celestial disturbances, and that God himself, accompanied by cherubim and seraphim and followed by the heavenly host, would come in glory and overwhelm all but the true believers. It seems that a not inconsiderable portion of the Jewish people believed that the Messiah, who was to be king, must be a descendant of the line of David, hence the genealogies which some enthusiasts interpolated into the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, for which zeal, modern orthodox critics are probably anything but thankful, for these lists have given a deal of trouble to the harmonizers, and the end is not yet.

Historians seem to be agreed that at this period the controlling theologic influences among the Jews had reduced the religion to a dry and spiritless form. The rabbis found the religious books and commentaries thereon, sufficient for all intellectual activity. They cared little or nothing for natural

science or deductive philosophy. In proportion as they pushed the material, living, pulsing world away, they drew to them the person of deity, and, incapable, as all men are, of developing from the imagination anything that is not correlated with experience, their idea of God became merely that of a man of higher functions. Some of the rabbis taught that God spends three hours a day in study of the law, observes the Sabbath, makes and fulfills vows.

This messianic hope, a widespread intense longing, stimulated both well-balanced and ill-balanced minds, and led some of the latter class to assume the claim to messianic function. Two such are specifically mentioned in Acts. Whether either or both of these were deliberate deceivers, or were honest enthusiasts who believed themselves chosen of God, cannot now be ascertained, but the latter supposition is the more charitable and the more probable. The information at hand is scanty, but nevertheless throws a strong light on the temper of the times, and could not have been without influence on the child Jesus. Gamaliel mentions Theudas and Judas. Both secured followers, but were soon arrested and executed, and their adherents scattered.

Into this environment Jesus was born. The date cannot be fixed for the chronology of the Gospels is confused. The pious monk who centuries later established the system of reckoning by "the year of our Lord," was somewhat in error in his retrograde counting. It is generally supposed that the year 1 of the Christian era, corresponds with the fourth year after the birth of Jesus, but chronologists do not agree. That the birth did not occur in December is an opinion of many critics. The exact date and time are unimportant here. It is sufficient to note that he was born when the power of Augustus Caesar was fully established. Rome was mistress of the civilized world. Greek civilization had been for at least two centuries spread over the region in which Jesus lived. He could not be entirely uninfluenced by it, but his teachings show but little of it. He was a Jew, he knew no literature but Jewish literature, no standards of life but Jewish standards.

Bethlehem is indicated as the place of his birth, but this is probably a falsification of later years. His parents were of Nazareth and he is called a Nazarene. A prophetic allusion that was applied to him possibly long after his death, required that he should be born at Bethlehem, and it was easy to insert this in the narrative. It was, however, more difficult to produce a reason for the temporary change of residence, and the clumsy expedient of the enrollment ordered by Augustus, was devised, an incident not known to profane history, improbable, and further, one that would seemingly not have required Mary to have made the journey.

I reject, without hesitation, the story of his conception. A more monstrous fiction has never been related to mankind. No intelligent person can be deceived by it, but it is lamentable that any should pretend to believe it and endeavor to induce a belief in others. In addition to the biologic objections it is not an essential part of the narrative. It is not in evidence except where it has been interpolated. Mark, who, according to tradition, obtained the data for his Gospel from Peter, knows nothing of the story. Paul, who was so zealous and so urgent in injecting the personality of Jesus into his preaching, never mentions it. The fourth Gospel, which comes nearest of any to a presenting a mystic view of Jesus, does not detail the incident. Even if we assume, as some zealous apologists have suggested, that the exceptional incident was not generally known, it cannot have been concealed from his parents; at least, the mother must have known it, yet his family whenever their attitude is presented to us, has not the least notion that he is of different nature from others. They expect no more from him than from his brothers and sisters. Indeed, his attempts to step outside the home circle are viewed with alarm as well as astonishment.

We have no Gospel accounts of his life up to the period of his maturity, except the incident recorded in Luke, and that does not mean much. It is often given as evidence of wonderful precocity, but that a boy of twelve who had been reared amidst strong religious longings and turmoil, should

formulate views on theology, and endeavor to puzzle wiser heads, is not remarkable. It has occurred at all periods of the world's history. Even if we suppose that the conversation was more than usually intelligent, we have still no unique phenomenon.

I cannot accept the story of Luke in its entirety. Three days seem much too long for a search by anxious parents in a small city. They surely would have gone to the Temple at first. I am tempted to follow a custom of the higher critics and amend the text by reading "hours" for "days," but a more important phase of the narrative deserves attention, namely its bearing on the doctrine of the conception. The parents, evidently astonished that the child should interest himself in such a discussion, upbraid him for his neglect of them. His reply was unintelligible to them, but the incident warned them; they deemed it necessary to assert their authority, and his mother fretted over the matter. She kept, says the text, "the sayings in her heart."

The incompleteness of the history of the infancy and childhood of Jesus appealed strongly to the early Christians, and they did not hesitate to fill the gap by bold and extravagant inventions. There is an abundant literature on this point, but it has long since been abandoned even by the orthodox theologians. A perusal of it will justify this decision, and it would be a waste of time to discuss it.

Giving, then, no useful information of his early life, the Gospels bring him before us when he had arrived at maturity. He began by espousing the cause of an agitator, who seems to have differed materially from most of those that appeared in that age. The personality of John the Baptizer stands prominently among the figures of the Gospels. His historicity is attested by the narrative of Josephus, and his mission and its relation to Jesus are mentioned by all the evangelists. I cannot accept the extravagant language of the fourth Gospel, nor Luke's story of the annunciation of John's birth.

John did not claim to be the Messiah. It is not unlikely that he had lived longer, and met with much success in secur-

ing converts, he would have developed some ideas of messianic functions and the world might have been afforded the interesting spectacle of contemporary rival claimants to this honor. At the time Jesus came under the influence of John's teaching the latter was leading the life of self-denial and exhortation, preaching "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He lived apart from men, was clothed in camel's hair garments, wore a leather girdle about his loins, and fed on locusts and wild honey.

John's preaching was successful, a result that need not astonish us, for similar phenomena have been observed in many lands and at many times. Not only from the countryside, but from the cities, the throngs poured forth, confessing their sins and receiving baptism in the Jordan, believing that they were absolved and fitted for the enjoyments of the glories at hand. It is declared by the first Gospel that even the intellectual classes were influenced, the devout Pharisees and the skeptical Sadducees, but that John refused his offices to these, and abused them roundly.

The success of John's work originated an opinion that he was the Messiah, but he protested against this. Later, he was thrown into jail, and, while there, sent word to ask if Jesus was the Messiah, or was another expected. John must have heard of the deeds of his convert, but incidentally this incident contradicts the extravagant words that the author of the fourth Gospel puts into the mouth of John.

The critical literature dealing with the Gospel history, represents almost every possible variety of opinion, ranging from the orthodox view of the literal, plenary inspiration of the text, to the extreme skepticism that seeks to reduce the personality of Jesus to a myth. Much of the literature is not worth serious consideration, except as exemplification of the range of aberration of the human reason, but some of it is sincere, scientific and cautious. An examination of the later works of the latter character seems to me to show that the view is gaining ground that the messianic aspirations of Jesus were an evolution; that is, that in his earlier work he

was merely a man filled with zeal for bettering the condition of his people.

At all times religion has had associations with medicine. Even in this age, which boasts of its enlightenment, and of its scientific pathology and etiology, millions of people believe that disease is due to supernatural beings, and may be cured by prayers, offerings or sacrifices. These opinions are not limited to Amerinds, Hottentots or Igorrotes, but are abundantly exemplified in the intellectual circles of America and Europe. This aspect of religion has led to a constant exercise of the healing art by religious propagandists. The Hebrew scriptures abound in illustrations of such performances, but it is to be noted that there is often an accessory element, the administration of a medicine or the enforcement of a regimen. Two instances of this may be cited: the healing of Naaman's leprosy by Elisha, and of Hezekiah's abscess by Isaiah. In the former no strictly religious services were enjoined, but the seven-fold immersion in the Jordan has a mystical suggestiveness. In the latter case the prophet interceded with the Lord in the King's behalf (presumably by prayer) but he also applied a fig-poultice to the abscess.

There is no scientific objection to accepting as true many of the stories of healing by prayer or exorcism. Modern investigation has shown that the so-called "suggestion" with or without hypnotism has a wide range of applicability in therapeutics. I need not discuss the details. They will be found fully set forth in recent works issued under the most exacting scientific auspices. Many diseases, even many that show severe symptoms and apparent pathologic changes, are but functional disturbances, and can be cured or, at least, alleviated by influences upon the mind. It must also not be forgotten that many affections are subject to an ebb and flow of severity. Symptoms may remit or intermit, even though the disease is not one of the true periodic type. A toothache, for example, will be suspended for hours without apparent cause, and appear again with apparently equal spontaneity. A cessation of some symptom, or combination of symptoms,

may be mistaken for a cure. Many a patient who has been registered in a hospital record or in a physician's private docket as cured, has been only temporarily relieved. Nothing is more commonly observed in medical practice than the apparent improvement that follows the initial visit of the doctor.

The calling and election of a disciple of the Baptizer did not meet the aspirations of Jesus. The spirit of independent energetic religious work was in his heart, and drove him forward to an active ministry. He struggled with the question, and was so intensely wrought up that he separated himself for some time from everyone, and in the solitude of a remote, unpeopled section, finally threw off the trammels of his baptism and found the strength to enter upon an independent life. He called this a period of temptation, and we can easily believe that one to whom the existence of Satan and his servant demons was an unquestioned doctrine, would see and hear the arch-fiend, and be perfectly honest in regarding himself as having resisted his personal efforts. He was borne up by the faith that good angels were watching over him, and when the days of his struggle were over, he returned to the haunts of men to begin his work. At first he preached somewhat in the manner of John, but without specific rites and without any of John's ascetic habits. Indeed, if we accept the narrative of the miracle at Cana, and the incident of the calling of Matthew to the discipleship, we will consider Jesus the opposite of an ascetic.

His preaching was at once successful; he gathered a few active supporters whose names have been preserved. He did not separate himself from his co-religionists. He entered into the synagogue at Capernaum and assumed the role of a teacher. Here occurred an incident that exercised a powerful effect on his career. A man suffering from an active neurosis became susceptible of some hypnotic power on the part of Jesus and was apparently healed. This incident could not fail to attract attention, to develop new and strange feelings in the mind of the young preacher, and to add to his influence

with the populace. We see the effect at once. He went from the synagogue, doubtless flushed with pardonable pride, direct to the bedside of a member of the family of one of his followers, to again exercise his powers as a healer, and again with success. His fame was established and for most of the remainder of his brief career, he was busy in this work. On the first day he was engaged in healing the sick, even to the set of sun, and all the city, we are told, was gathered at his door.

The explanation of these cures is to be sought along several lines. Many were probably only temporarily relieved, the effect being due to the psychic influence. I have referred to the manner in which powerful nervous impressions may abate severe symptoms. I saw a man grasp a rope in an effort to save himself from drowning, and when he was rescued and taken into the engine-room of a tug-boat, it was found that a large portion of the skin of the fingers had been stripped off, yet he did not know it until he looked at his hands.

That faith-healing is likely to be successful only when the patient has confidence in the healer is well-known. Even in the ordinary practice of medicine, every doctor, however much of a medical skeptic he may be, recognizes the value of confidence and hopefulness. It is well understood that the success of some members of the profession is due in part to their personal influence upon the minds of their patients. An encouraging, cheerful, hopeful manner is one of the most valuable assets of the physician. Jesus came on the scene at a great psychologic moment, and to use one of his own comparisons, he sowed the seed of his work in good ground. Religious agitators had preceded him and others were to follow him, but no one was to equal him in the work that he had chosen. It is not unlikely that his personal appearance and bearing had much to do with his success. There is no reason to believe that he was unattractive. He was no eccentric like John, who wore skins for garments and fed on wild fruits. Jesus dressed in the attire of the people, indeed, somewhat

more elegantly than many, for his tunic was of one piece and of such value that the Roman soldiers who divided his effects at the crucifixion, cast lots for it, that it might not be cut. He took part in the livelier customs of the world. He did not disdain to go to a wedding feast at which much wine was consumed, and he accepted the honors of a banquet tendered him by Matthew, his newly-appointed disciple. The learned Dr. Lardner assures us that there is no reason to suppose that the expense of this banquet was defrayed out of any funds that Matthew might have obtained in the course of his service as a tax-gatherer.

There is no doubt that Jesus exercised a strong influence over the female portion of the community. He spoke with them freely, even entering without hesitation into conversation with a Samaritan woman, who did not know him and with whom conversation was forbidden by Jewish ethics. Nor was he insusceptible to the appreciation of him by the gentler sex. He rebuked Martha for complaining that Mary was listening to him and neglecting her household duties. He praised the action of the woman who poured the costly ointment over him.

Another point in the explanation of the cures wrought by Jesus is that many who appealed to him were probably merely pretending illness. His triumphal progress would lead many to seek to attract his attention out of mere vanity.

It is an established principle of faith-healing that the presence of antagonistic persons, especially those strongly skeptical, may interfere with the success of the method. Jesus clearly recognized this fact. When called upon for the difficult task of restoring to life the daughter of Jairus, he found the house filled with skeptical neighbors, who laughed at him when he said she was living. He began by expelling all these leaving only the parents and their nearest friends.

It is obvious from these considerations that I hold the opinion that Jesus' healing was a manifestation of high psychic power, supplemented by extremely favorable condi-

tions, but in no sense due to divine inspiration. A proof of the purely human limitations of Jesus' work is to be found in the Gospels themselves. It is one of those interesting remainders of the natural features of the story, the significance of which escaped the notice of the early Christians who modified the books to make them more acceptable from a dogmatic point of view. When Jesus attempted to exercise his powers among those with whom he had been brought up, his work failed. Now a divine gift could not have been limited by such bounds, but they are precisely the limits of human influences. That he accomplished but little in his own neighborhood is one of the best attested incidents of his life. It is noticed by all four evangelists, being one of the few points on which they agree, and it is referred to in the recently discovered Logia. In the third and fourth Gospels, and in the Logia, it is simply in the dogmatic form that a prophet is not honored in his own home, but in the first and second Gospels, the explanation is given in the fact that his family and neighbors disbelieved in him, and he could do no mighty works there.

It would be interesting to speculate as to what might have been the history of this life if it had run an ordinary course. Nothing in this universe, as we know it, escapes the sequence of birth, maturation and death. The principles of biology and sociology indicate and the history of mankind demonstrates that the result of Jesus' work would have shown a culmination and a decline, with an arrest at obscurity, inactivity or the dead level of the commonplace. The course of events was suddenly changed. A mental feature of a different type appeared. In the brief period between his baptism and the final catastrophe, this mental feature colors the whole narrative. Unfortunately, the incompleteness of the Gospels renders this new phase less conspicuous than it would have been in a critically written history, still as the manifestations of Jesus' condition were frequent and well-marked, sufficient of them have come down to us to lead to the correct diagnosis.

An account of an early manifestation of this condition is in

Mark iii:20. The text is another one of those accidental survivals of the original simple narrative, which are like islands in an area that has been swept by a deluge. It has come to us through the ages without its significance being noted. The alarm of his friends at his eccentric conduct is here clearly indicated. The dangerous exaltation of the self-consciousness is exhibited. He promptly delivered himself of a denunciatory speech directed against those who exhibited a disposition to ignore him. The narrative in Mark is probably the fragmentary report of a striking scene, for the failure of his friends to control him leads at once to similar efforts by his immediate family, and as might be expected, instead of exercising a favorable influence, his irritation is increased and he repudiates his mother and brothers.

Again, in the journey into Caesarea Philippi, he exhibited a degree of self-consciousness, strangely in contrast with that humility that we are so constantly told was his great characteristic. He asked his disciples the question, "Who do men say that I am?" The answer does not appease him. He is told, "Some say that you are John the Baptist, some Elijah, others one of the prophets risen again." Then follows the closer, egoistic question, "But who do you say that I am?" The confident answer of Peter, "Thou art the anointed one," is received with great approval. It is declared to be a revelation from heaven, and Peter receives that blessing from which his successors derive those powers to bind and loosen at their sweet will, that they have for so many centuries enjoyed.

Perceiving, probably, the favorable state of mind of certain disciples, Jesus now carries out a procedure that I regard as the most interesting and striking example of hypnotic suggestion on record. It shows clearly his power in this respect. The incident is vividly described by all the synoptics, but not in the fourth Gospel, which omission is of interest to the textual critic, because all the accounts mention the presence of the reputed author of the fourth Gospel. A brief reference is made to it also in the second epistle of Peter. The accounts

agree very well, but that in Luke is the best, and gives us the clue clearly. Jesus made a selection of the three apostles, Peter, James and John, presumably those whom he recognized as the most susceptible to his influence, and took them to a desolate mountain top. It must not be overlooked that a mountain top was a sacred spot. Olympus, Sinai and the Mount of Olives are well known instances. The disciples must, therefore, have been deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and must have anticipated a display of the supernatural of more than ordinary impressiveness. When I say that Jesus selected the more susceptible of his followers and selected an unusually impressive environment, I do not wish to be understood as insinuating deliberate fraud. The powerful mental pressure under which he labored controlled his actions unconsciously, and he was obeying emotions rather than judgment.

By his power he put his three companions into hypnotic sleep, and then imposed upon them a series of suggestions, which they accepted. As I have elsewhere remarked the purely human limitations of all parties prevented any suggestion outside of the limits of human experience, hence we find that the phenomenon known as the Transfiguration was a crude manifestation, exhibiting nothing that an intelligent modern can accept as suggestive of divinity. In fact, the description indicates that his garments were more profoundly transfigured than his person. To this suggestion was added that of the appearance of two noted Hebrew leaders, Moses and Elijah, the latter probably because, as we note in the Gospels, his appearance was expected in connection with that of the Messiah. The three disciples were aroused from their sleep. Under the influence of the post-hypnotic suggestion, Peter became incoherent, seeking to establish places of worship, as the text says, not knowing what he said. They were again put under the influence, now probably an easy task, and the bolder suggestion impressed; a voice from God himself, saying "This is my son, my chosen, hear him." The spell was then dissolved, and the disciples returning to normal consciousness saw no one but their master.

A prominent characteristic of unbalanced minds is sudden and extreme changes of temper not commensurate with external conditions. The individual varies from cheerfulness or quietude to anger or excitement, or the reverse in a most unexpected manner, and is not amenable to reason. Religious insanity, however, frequently manifests itself as a marked depression from which periods of cheerfulness or quiet are absent. Another form of religious mania, is that of exaltation, accompanied with delusions of grandeur. Here will be found no thought of disfavor with Deity. On the contrary, the patient enjoys the special confidence of God, receives frequent communications from him, and is often charged with some great mission. Such a mental condition does not withdraw the patient from the world, as may occur in the melancholia, but tends to publicity. Outbursts of passion occur, sometimes without apparent cause, but often as a sequence to the antagonism or indifference of the public to the extravagant claims. Sudden and extreme passion, such as are termed by alienists "episodes of frenzy," are to be noted several times in the Gospel narrative, and others are suggested by the tone of the narrative. It is frequently stated that Jesus inspired fear in those with whom he came in contact. The Gerasenes begged that he would depart from their land. The disciples were sometimes quite unable to understand his utterances or actions and were "sore afraid."

Of specific instances, I will mention the rebuking of Peter (Mat. 16:21); the prediction in Mat. 10:34, and the cursing of the fig tree. Denunciations of those who did not admit his claims to a divine mission are very common. As is almost always the case with those of humble origin and poor who undertake such public work, Jesus finds the ruling and wealthy classes his greatest enemies. We may readily admit that in his age and country, perhaps more than in this, much wealth was acquired dishonestly, and we can sympathize with much of his denunciation, but he goes far beyond reasonable bounds, for he rails against thrift and industry. His maxim that we should take no thought for the morrow and his declaration

that any one who wishes to be wholly righteous should acquire no property are destructive of all practical life, and the world is fortunate in the fact that while it has pretended for centuries to approve these doctrines, it has never seriously followed them.

The rebuking of Peter is a noticeable incident, following as it did upon an equally unreasonable approval of another utterance of that apostle. Both utterances exemplify the highly emotional tension of the Master's mind.

The cursing of the fig tree is an incident that must give pain to every Christian. In no part of his life does the Master appear to more disadvantage. It is acknowledged by the evangelist that the season for fruiting was not at hand. From the point of view of orthodox Christianity the incident is inexplicable, but it is intelligible from a psychiatric point of view. It followed close upon a series of events that were sure to lead to exaggerated self-esteem, namely the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Even a normal mind would have been disturbed by such enthusiasm. How much more then must have been the upsetting effect upon the poor megalomaniac who, surrounded by a multitude, spreading garments and branches before him, was entering the city of the great king, the abode of Jahve, amidst the shouts "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," "Hosanna in the highest." No wonder that he assumed dominion over the powers of nature, and in the disappointment the next day at not being able to gather figs, an episode of frenzy caused him to pronounce a deep and lasting curse.

The scene in the garden at Gethsemane, commonly known as the Agony, presents much difficulty. It bears some resemblance to the transfiguration. The same three disciples are selected, Peter, James and John. Whether his actions were due to a temporary condition of collapse as a reaction from the intense exaltation of the immediately preceding period or from the consciousness that his career had at last brought about a conflict with authorities, is an open question. It is plain that his arrest on serious charges was near and that he

knew it, for the incident closes with the arrival of Judas and the police. The scene is described in some detail in the first and second Gospels, more briefly in the third Gospel which introduces the appearance of an angel, but is not mentioned in the fourth Gospel. It is from the first two Gospels that we learn the names of the disciples present, the same as were present at the transfiguration, Peter, James and John. I have already alluded to the critical interest which attaches to the non-mention of the transfiguration by the fourth Gospel, and here is another equally puzzling incident. It does seem to me reasonable to assume that the author of the fourth Gospel could not have been one of the persons who took part in either the transfiguration or the agony.

A striking feature of the latter incident is the evidence of the high susceptibility to hypnotic influences that had been acquired by the disciples. Jesus fell on his face, and immediately all three went into a condition of unconsciousness from which they were aroused by their master. The mere sight of him in an apparent condition of repose was sufficient to induce an actual state of unconsciousness in them.

Two aberrations often observed in the insane are delusions of the special senses and uncleanly habits. The former are not infrequently exhibited as auditory delusions, the patient hearing voices either of human or supernatural beings. Jesus showed marked evidence of this aberration. At the time of his baptism he heard the voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." The auditory delusions in the period called the Temptation were numerous and vivid. He heard Satan himself, not in broken or rhapsodical utterances, but in connected conversation and argument. Jesus' frequent allusions to the Father, indicate that he believed himself to be in direct communication with the deity. There is no evidence that he based his utterances on experiences in dream or trance states. He received his communications during his waking hours. In one instance, mentioned in the fourth Gospel, he heard a voice from heaven, but the bystanders heard only a thunderclap. It is not diffi-

cult to understand that in the highly disturbed condition of his mind, he would misconceive some ordinary noise, and interpret it as the voice of God.

The tendency to unclean habits is expressed also by a few incidents in the Gospels. Jesus omitted some of the Jewish ritual, notably that which imposes the duty of washing the hands before eating. There could be no scientific or religious justification of this. Modern science has shown clearly that eating with unclean hands is a fertile cause of serious disease. Statistics recently published prove that in tropical and subtropical regions, thousands of death occur annually from eating with the hands contaminated with earth. In thus departing from the Jewish ritual, Jesus might have set a most destructive example, but, fortunately in this, as in many other instances, mankind has not followed his suggestions.

The insanity of Jesus may have been of that form known as "circular insanity." In this, periods of excitement, depression and lucidity are exhibited in varying succession. In some cases, lucid intervals occur between all abnormal phases, in other cases, the abnormal conditions follow in direct succession. In the case of Jesus, we may distinguish in the occurrences at the baptism, a period of excitement, followed quickly by one of marked depression, the temptation, then a period of elation as recorded in the third chapter of Mark. The success as a healer maintained for some time this period of elation. Episodes of frenzy occasionally developed. The period of high exaltation attending the entrance into Jerusalem, was followed by an episode of frenzy, the cursing of the fig tree, and by a period of profound depression, the agony at Gethsemane.

The crucifixion and resurrection are features peculiar to Christianity. So far as I can judge, these do not form a part of the Jewish messianic hope. That was essentially the belief in the establishment of the Jewish kingdom in a state of holiness and independence of everything but direct loyalty to Jahve. It would be a long task to determine the methods by which these features were engrafted upon the new faith, but a large part of this change was due to the influence of actual

incidents. We need not doubt that Jesus was crucified. It was a common method of punishment, finding its popularity not only the delight of cruelty, a tendency by no means eradicated at the present day, but also its great deterrent quality recommended it to the Romans in dealing with insurgents. While not a punishment approved by the Jews, yet the leading Jews were probably not unwilling to leave the matter to the Romans, regarding Jesus as dangerous to themselves as well as to Roman supremacy.

More than one critic has raised the suggestion that Jesus was not dead when taken down from the cross. Strauss discussed this theory and rejected it, but I think not on sufficient grounds. It finds some support from an incident related by Josephus. In the course of a journey through Palestine, he found a number of rebels who had been crucified by their Roman captors, and recognized several of them as his friends. He returned to Titus and begged him to order the release of these. The Emperor immediately granted the request and ordered that the best medical attendance should be given to the unfortunates. Some of them were saved. It is probable that they had been hanging for many hours before they were relieved. Jesus was on the cross six hours. Great as is the suffering in such a condition, it does not seem likely that he would die in that time, although he might become lethargic and be regarded as dead. It is not impossible that some of the high officials, especially Pilate, would connive at an attempt to take him down before death, under the condition that his friends should keep him out of further activity. In this way he would have been seen by several who could be trusted. It is to be noticed that no independent person, Jew or Roman, was favored by a sight of him after the crucifixion. He was tenderly cared for, probably by the mother and brothers whom he had disowned and scorned, and quietly buried after his death, which may have occurred very soon afterwards.

It is customary to present Jesus as an exemplification of the highest type of human character. His humility, tenderness, sincerity, forgiving spirit and self-denial have been pro-

claimed from thousands of pulpits, and by hundreds of thousands of preachers and writers. It is a quality of humanity that by persistent, strenuous iteration of any opinion, it will come finally to general acceptance, and be in turn the axiomatic basis of further dogmatism. The declarations in regard to Jesus have been so loud and long, that not only have all professing Christians been won over to the firm belief in his greatness in every respect, but even Jews and free-thinkers have been drawn under the spell. In the extensive literature relating to this subject, but little of challenge to the extreme view is seen, but the voice of intelligent, free criticism is not wholly silent. Strauss pointed out that the character as presented in the Gospels is by no means complete. One very important feature, the life of a man as husband and father, is left by the teacher, himself solitary, wholly unexemplified. Huxley has more strenuously expressed dissent from the general view. In a discussion of the affair of the Gadarene swine he declares that the act of Jesus was highly unethical, if not illegal. No better example of Huxley's ability as a scholar and polemic can be found than his essay on the ownership of the Gaderene swine.

I confess that my reading of the Gospels has reduced considerably the favorable view I formed, from my early teaching and reading of the character of the founder of Christianity. I have not been able to find as much of those admirable qualities as the voluminous homilies set forth. On the contrary, he appears often as narrow, unforgiving and inconsiderate. He denounces those who thwart his efforts. In his bursts of passion, he is willing to inflict disaster on the innocent as well as on the guilty. Witness his threats against the communities and houses that do not receive the teaching of the Apostles, and his denunciations of those cities which met his mission with unbelief (Matt. 10:13; 11:20). His words, in many cases, bear an unpleasant foreshadowing of those uttered many centuries later, by one of his orthodox followers. "Kill all, the Lord will know his own."

Even the specific instances of fortitude and forgiveness,

which are so favorite a theme with the orthodox, fade much in the light of careful reading and textual criticism. According to Matthew and Mark both the malefactors that were crucified with him, bore their sufferings as well as he did, and mocked him. Luke alone records the famous utterance, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and this is absent from the best manuscripts of that Gospel.

There is no indication that Jesus had any interest in the phenomena of nature, or that he possessed any artistic sense. The grandeur of sky and earth, the beauties of dawn and sunset, attracted him not. The year grew green and the year grew brown, but the changing panorama awakened no feeling in him. He took himself too seriously to share himself with nature. He finds in the flowers no lesson but that of idleness. As a matter of fact his biology is as far wrong as that of Paul. The flowers do toil and spin assiduously. Throughout the Gospels we see no effort or suggestion that would lead man to a real interest in nature, nor even anything that would lead to the broadly charitable doctrines that in our own time take in not only all men but all living creatures.

