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**Box 11, Folder 42 - "How Christ Handled Gangsters"?"A
Gangsters Life in Christ"Includes essays: Jesus is accused of
blasphemy; paralytic at Capharneum.**

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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CHAPTER IV . JESUS IS ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY

For several months, now, Jesus had left his home in Nazareth and had made Capharneum his headquarters . Several of his disciples lived there , Simon (afterwards known as Peter) and his brother Andrew , and James and John the sons of Zebedee , - all of them fishermen . But Jesus had many friends besides these, for worked many miracles of healing in that town who were most grateful for what He had done for them .

Jesus however did not spend all his time in Capharneum and used to go off on excursions in the villages round about preaching in the synagogues and healing the sick . By this time his fame had spread not only all over Galilee but also in Judea and in Jerusalem . The more he was looked up to and admired by the people not only for his miracles but also for his teaching ^{to the} anxious became the Scribes and Pharisees - ^{They were} anxious and perturbed because, as a result they were losing their hold on the people who had hitherto looked up to them as the source of all their religious teaching . His teaching was strangely new and in their view very revolutionary and dangerous - and no one knew what it might lead to . They the Scribes and Pharisees - and also the Sadducees in Jerusalem were well contented with the way things were - they had no wish to change the status quo . They were the acknowledged leaders of the Jewish religion - which meant for the Jewish people - for to the Jew his religion was the most important thing in his life .

Added to all this there were uncomfortable rumours going round that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah (see next Chapter) and this rumour was strengthened by the fact that he was always talking about the Kingdom of God which was " at hand "

at hand ". Moreover ~~ix~~ though it was not common knowledge amongst the people the scribes and Pharisees - all over the country were aware that in one of his visits to Jersuslaem he had definitely spoke of God as his Father - not in the usual sense that we wre all children of God - but in a special way --for ^{He} always spoke of My Father with a special individual emphis ^{on the MY} as in contrast to "your Father " when speaking to others . This was getting very near to blasphemy in the eyes of the dcotors of the Law .

As a consequence of these developments tthe scribes and pharisees all over the country - and every village however small had it synagoge - were more and more on the alert ^{every} following his movemenys and hoping to trip him up and reduce his influence amongst the poeple. Without doubt they would like to have done away with him at once by putting him to death but by this time he had thousands of followers all over the country , and such action would be dangerous and might lead to an open rebellion against them by the poeple and perhaps lead to a clash with the Romans . It was better therefore to watch and wait for this new teacher to make a false move - when they would pounce down upon him like wolves upon their prey .

Jesus had been away from Capharneum for over two weeks when suddenly the news went round that he was back again ...more than ~~han~~ that he was already at his preaching again , not in the synagoge this time but in the house of a well to do citizen who had placed a large room at his disposal . The pharisees who had had their spies and scouts on the watch had learned about it and were there is consider able numbers and had secured the important seats - as usual .

~~xxxxxx like that xxxxxx spreads xxxxxx quickly~~

Now there lived in Capurneum a middle aged man , called Aser , who was a paralytic . Somehow or other he had missed the great healing that evening some weeks ago when the crowds from all over the town had come to Jesus with their sick maim and halt and he had cured them . He was completely bed ridden and though his name signified "happy " he was not happy and that morning felt particularly depressed .

Suddenly without any ceremony his friend Michael ran entered the house and stood beofre him .

"Great news .great news ! Jesus is back again and he is actually at this moment addressing a meeting at the house of Esdras the wine merchant in the next street .

"Well you know very well that I can't move even a yard much less into the nex t street ."

Michael made a few steps to wards the door and waved with his hand and immediately three ohter young men entered .

"These are friends of mine - and therefore of you - and we are going to take you here and now to the xxxroom where Jesus is preaching and beg him to cure you " -- come on you chaps he went on turning to the others - each of you get hold of one of the corners of the the mattæss - ther's not amoment to lose . for no none knows how long Jesus will be staying in town .

And so before the sick man kn could realise what was happening they had hoisted him up and were making their way down the ftreet ." After about two hndred yards they turned to the right into the next street and pressed on in the same direction .

But as they drew near the house of Esdras about a hundred y ards away an unexpected sight met them .Already there was a crowd of some thirty of forty people standing

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in the street outside the door trying to get in .

"Look xx said Asar " at that crowd in the street .we shall never make it .It's no good your fellows wasting your time and energies :you'd better take me home "

"Never say die ." said Michael as he urged on his three friends to quicken their pace . When they arrived opposite the entrance it was only too evident that they would not be able to get it ." if we can't get in "said one of the crowd who had turned round to watch them approach "- and I've been here for half an hour - you have n't an earthly chance to get in with a bed "

"But there might be a heavenly one "replied Michael half to himself as he put his whole soul into a swift act of prayer . Immediately after , as if in a direct answer , he suddenly exclaimed to his friends ."I 've got an idea .'Quick you fellows - down this way and he led them still carrying the paralytic down a small alley way by the side of the building where Jesus was preaching . Like most houses in the East it had a flat roof which could be reached by a flight of stone steps outside one of the walls .

As soon as they reached the steps Michael said to his helpers "You three carry him up the steps - careful - and I 'll be back in a minute ". At which he disappeared at a run . Not far down the street was one of the many stores in Capernaum which sold fishermen's tackle ."I want some rope please "said Michael hurriedly to the man in the shop - that kind will do he added pointing to a coil -I want four strips fifteen feet long " As soon as he had got what he wanted Michael was off at the run again not even waiting for his change

By the time he got back his three friends had managed to get Asaer safely up on to the top of the roof ,where he lay waiting with a bewildered expression on his dawn face .

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but none the worse for his rather hazardous journey up the steps which had no balustrade .

"Here ! take these he said as he handed them the ropes and fasten one to each corner of the mattress ". While the strong deft fishermen's hands fastened the ropes firmly to the corners ~~fixing~~ Michael was crawling on his hands and knees over the roof every now and then putting his ears to the ~~ground~~ roof and listening Michael went to the middle of the roof and going down on his hands and knees peeped through .

It was customary in many houses at that time for the builders to leave a portion of the roof towards the centre incompletely covered ; or to be more precise - covered but incompletely mortared . This area was covered with stone tiles which rested on thin wooden poles - all of which could be removed . This was done sometimes in very hot weather to let in fresh air to the room below .

Michael beckoned to his friends and as he lifted the tiles handed them one by one telling them to put them down by the edge of the roof near the balustrade . ~~Quickly~~ All this time Jesus was preaching to the fortunate ones who had managed to get in . His words had the usual effect - the audience hung on his every word. His theme was that prayer and the response of God to those who in faith laid their petitions before Him

Which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him in the middle of the night and say to him " friend lend me three loaves for a friend of mine has just come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him ; and he from ~~now closed~~ ~~will~~ answer and say " Disturb me not the door is within should

now shut and my children and I are in bed I cannot get up and give to thee "

I say to you that though he will not get up and give to him because he is his friend , yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him all he needs.

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And I say to you ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find ^{it} knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asks receives: and he who seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

But if one of you asks his father for a loaf will he hand him a stone? or for a fish, will he for a fish hand him a serpent? or if he asks for an egg will he hand him a scorpion? Therefore if you, even as you are know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will our heavenly Father give the good spirit to those who ask him!

The speaker was in the full tide of his discourse when the first signs of that something unusual was happening were some particles of dust that fell from the roof.

This was immediately followed by a shaft of light which came from a hole which had suddenly appeared in the roof. Faces were turned upwards, and as they watched the hole in the roof became larger. Then a head appeared like a big black blob against the light. The aperture grew larger and larger: voices were heard; then another head appeared and vanished again. By this time practically all eyes were turned upwards; and the speaker realised that it was useless to continue under these unusual conditions, and stopped speaking and waited the issue of the event. Before long the hole in the roof was about six feet long and four wide; then for a moment four heads appeared looking down from each corner. Then they disappeared for a moment a few moments and there was a silence.

the light from the
Suddenly almost the whole aperture was blotted out as the space in the roof was taken up by a large black object. Then a voice was heard giving directions. "Lower now - all together - steady there John not so fast -- gently does it All eyes were fastened upon this weird looking object which began to descend slowly from the roof. Suddenly there was a gasp of surprise and wonderment followed by an excited buzz

Jesus did not appear to be in the least put out by this interruption of his address to his eager audience .

Indeed there was an expression of joy on his face .

For if there was one thing which pleased him more than another it was any marked manifestation of faith and trust in Him by those with whom he came in contact. And here certainly was an approach to Him motivated by a deep and confident faith in his goodwill and power - particularly his good will .

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Take courage , Son , thy sins are forgiven thee "

What an anti-climax. 'So there was going to be no miracle after all .-- after all the trouble this man's friends had been to ^{his taking to get the full} A distinct chill of disappointment - ~~which could almost be felt~~ - passed over the audience ~~or at least the majority of those present~~ . One wonders what the centre and focus of ~~all~~ this ^{excitement} ~~unexpected~~ event thought of ~~it himself~~ ; and whether he ^{too} himself felt a pang of disappointment . Probably not - or less so than the people - for he had ^{just} looked into the eyes of Jesus and had seen there an illimitable love and interest directed personally to himself . and beside Jesus had told him to Take courage .

But there were others in the audience who manifested a very different reaction from disappointment that no miracle had taken place ^{They had seen} . As soon as the words Thy sins are forgiven thee the pharisees present reacted almost as swiftly and violently as if they had received a physical blow . Immediately there was an angry buzzing of conversation amongst themselves . ^{not unill} It looked almost like what happens when some one drops a stone in a hornets nest . Immediately there was an angry buzzing of conversation amongst themselves . "Did you hear what he said said " "Yes , I couldn't believe my ears ! Incredible . ' No one can forgive sins but God ! Sheer blasphemy that's what ^{it is} " . ~~call it~~ "Such were the thoughts - uttered or unexpressed which were stirred up in their minds of the pharisees by the short sentence "thy sins are forgiven thee "

Now the forgiving of sins in the sense that Jesus had just used it was a definite , technical theological phrase and meant something quite different from what is meant

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Now the "forgiving of sins" in the sense that Jesus had just used it was a definite, technical theological phrase and meant something quite different from what happens when two persons have had a quarrel and one has sinned against the other and the party injured forgives the other.

How often said the apostle Peter to Jesus once said must I forgive my NEIGHBOUR) seven times? "Seventy times seven" replied the master. What Jesus meant by saying to the paralytic "Thy sins are forgiven" meant that they had been wiped out - annihilated. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. That kind of forgiveness which restores the soul to its pristine innocence only God can confer. Jesus knew it and what is more he knew that the Pharisees knew it - although the ordinary folk in the crowd - fishermen, wine merchants, tax collectors and the like it had no such profound significance.

So in a sense when the shocked Pharisees muttered to themselves "only God can forgive sins" they were absolutely right and the only excuse that Jesus could have for using the words himself would be if he were God himself; which in fact he was though they didn't believe it. On the other hand he wanted them - and everybody to believe it - but, as it must be readily granted, it is not easy to believe that the man sitting next to you is God. But at any rate he wanted them and the rest - particularly his disciples who were with him - to appreciate the astounding fact.

Though they did not address their remarks directly to him Jesus was well aware what was going on their closed minds. During the last hundred years before the coming of Christ there had been not a few individuals who had set themselves up as the long awaited Messias. And they or anyone for that matter could say to another "Son thy sins are forgiven thee" - any one could

Handwritten scribble

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claim to possess such a power - and no one would be any the wiser one way or the other. ^{Matthew} The master problem in the life of Jesus was to reveal to his contemporaries who he really was: In every human personality there are depths that are not easy to sound - how much more so in his ~~which~~ whose personality there were depths beyond depths reaching to His infinity - just because he was (or claimed to be) God as well as man .

He knew that the Pharisees present who had "come from every village in Galilee and also from Judea "had come with the intent to trip Him up , but He bore them no grudge . Indeed He was sorry for to see them sunk in such an impenetrable self- complacency and self satisfaction that it made it difficult for truth to make an incision into them - but nevertheless He would give them a chance - and that is why he acted as He did in the presence of Aeser the paralytic before him .

He showed them us

"Jesus knew of these secret thoughts of theirs and said to them openly .Why do you reason thus in your hearts ? Why do you cherish these wicked thoughts ? Tell me which command is more lightly given --- to say to the man sick of the palsy Thy sins are forgiven thee " or Rise up and walk . And now to convince you that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins - while He is on earth -here he said to the man with the palsy Rise up , take thy bed with thee and go home "

"And he rose up at once - in full sight of them all , took his bedding , and went home , giving praise to God"

A gasp of astonishment ^{shock} went through the crowd - delighted that Jesus had not let them down - and the man had been cured after all .But it was more than astonishment : st Matthew tells us they were filled with awe - and praised god for giving such powers to men ."

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No one - besides Aser himself - had followed these proceedings with more tense interest than Michael and his three friends who were watching from the hole in the roof .

Thye hurried down the outside stone steps as fast as they could to meet their friend for whom the crowd - by pressing backwards made a lane for him to pass with his rolled up mattress . Many of them congratulated him on his way out .

Jubilantly his four friends greeted him " I can't possibly thank you enough for what you have done for me he said I can only pray that God will reward you " ^{to the order} "My wife won't believe it I am sure ---It was not long before they reached Aser's house and great was the family rejoicing .

" I am going at once to the Synagogue to give thanks for my cure "but afterwards we must have a celebration . I invite you all to supper with me tomorrow evening.

On leaving Asaers house Michael made his way back to the house where the miracle had taken place and asked to see ~~the owner~~ . Esdras rgw owner ." I have come to apologise he said on being brought in by a servant to his master for taking such liberties with your roof ; and have come to put everything in order again "

^{Don't apologise}
"Not at all " replied Esdras "there 's no harm done and I admire your ingenious persistency .It was a wonderful occasion -quite historic in fact . As for the roof don't give it another thought . I have already given orders to two of my men to fix it .and they are already on the job . I am delighted on account of Aser's good fortune -- he is a good man and a good father . ^{as it is} I have invited Jesus and three of his disciples to come to dinner next Thursday : I am going to ask Aser to come and I should be honoured if you would join us.

I should be more than delighted replied Michael .rising to
deptar and making his salaam ."Oh and one thing more ?
said Esdras I have a little favour to ask you - rather a
foolish one perhaps ; but I would be glad if I could have one
of the ropes that were fastend to the bed ."- just as a
memento of this occasion " *Of course*

As the three disciples - Peter James and John - made
their way back to Peter's house where they were to dine and
rest the young John was strangely silent .~~Onxxxxxxx~~he was

Miracles he had seen Jesus work many miracles before -- but two *words* *phrases* stuck in his mind . One was the phrase *that I had heard* While he is on ea
earth --- The son of Man has power - while He is on earth ---

what exactly did He mean by that . And then there was the
extraordinary claim to have the power to forgive sins . ~~His~~

As he meditated upon this new glimpse inot the mysterious
depths of His ^{masters} personality - there came to his mind
what had happened on the first day he had ~~met~~ ^{seen} Jesus . It
was down by the Jordan ~~and~~ ^{where} he had been baptised by John

the dau beofre . While he was stanidng talking to the Bapotist
Jesus had passed by and John pointing to him had ~~witly~~ ^{quely}
remarked . ^{behave} ~~There goes~~ the Lamb of God who takes away the sish of

the world "A ^{in his mind} artange thing ^{her} to say of any one - yet somehow or
other it seemd to link up ~~with this~~ new claim ~~which~~ was
inplied by the words Take courage son -thy sish are forgive thee

THE PARALYTIC AT CAPHARNEUM

LUKE V 18 ...

~~Ann~~ It chanced one day that he was teaching , and some Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting by , who had come from every village in Galilee , and jJudea and Jersuaem , and the power of the Lord was there to grant healing . Just then some men brought there on a bed one who was palsied (pallet) who, m they tried to carry in and set dwon in Jesys presence .

But finding no way of carrying him in because of the multitude , they went up on the housetop and let him down between the tiles , bed and all , into the clear space in front of Jesus. And seeing their faith he said ^{Man} Thy sins are forgiven thee "

Whereupon the scribes and Pharisees fell to reasoning thus Who can this be that he talks so blesphemously ? Who can forgive sins but God , and God only?

Jesus knew of these secret thoughts of theirs and said to them openly. "Why do you reason thus in your hearts ? Which command is more lightly given - to say Thy sins are forgiven thee or to say Rise up and walk ? And now to convince you that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins while he is on earth --here he spoke to the palsied man --I tell thee rise up , take thy bed with thee and go home "

And he rose up at once in full sight of them, took his bedding, and went home , giving praise to God .

Astonishment came over them all , and they praised God , full of awe "We have seen strange things to-day " they said

MATTHEW 9 I..... Son , take courage , thy sins are forgiven

At rthis many of the scribes said to themselves . He is talking blas phemously ."

Jesus read their minds abd said "Why do you cherish wicked thoughts in your hearts . Tell me , which ^{Command} caolmand is etc more lightyl given- to say to amanThy sins are forgiven or to sya Rise up and walk .And now to convice youthat the son of man has au authority (power)to forgive sins while he is on earth--- here he spoke to the man with the pasly -Rise up , take theybed with thee a and go home .

anf the multitudes were fille with awe at seeing it , and praised god for giving such powers to men..

.....

is more lightly given "-in the sense that one who falsely claims to cure disease will---unlike the pretender to spitual powers -- be exposed by failure .

.....

MARK II I...Then after some dasy he came to Caphurneum again .

And soon the word got round that he was in a house there , and such a crowd there gathered that there was no room left even in front og the door and he presched the word to them .

And now they came to bring a palsied man to him, four of t them carry ng him ot once , and found that they cojld not bring him close t/because of the mutitude .So they stripped the tiles from the roof over the place where Jesus was , and made an opening , and they let the bed down on which the man lay .

And Jesus seeing their faith said to the sick man Son they sins are forgiven .

But there were some of thescribes sitting there who reas ned thus in their minds . Why does he speak so ?He is talking b;asphemously

Who can forgive sins but God and God only ?

And now , to convince you that the Son of Man has authority to
forgive sins while he is on earth-- here he spoke to the palsied man -
" I feel thee, rise up , take thy bed with thee , and ~~walk~~ go
home . And he arose up at once , and took his bed and went out in
full sight of them ; so that all were astonished and gave praise to G
od : they said We never saw the like .

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A Marist nun of my acquaintance — to whom I am indebted for some notes of a lecture by Dr Montessori on "THE Gangsters " — told me an interesting and significant incident .She had been teaching her class of Juniors for nearly a year on the lines indicated above .It happened on a day when there was a visit from the Diocesan Inspector. He went first to the Seniors ; and, during the course of his questioning ,asked if anyone could repeat the "Woes "which Our Lord directed against the Scribes and pharisees (Woe unto you , Scribes and Pharisees " etc . Matt. chapter 23)But not one of them could do so ;but when , later on in the morning,he put the same question to the Juniors — a forest of hands went up .The Inspector selected one of the children at random — it happened to be a girl —and to ~~his~~ his surprise she poured out the "Woes " one after another, with such emphasis and genuine feeling that it was quite clear that she strongly approved of Our Lord's tirade against "those horrid old Pharisees "

THE FINAL STRUGGLE

As the the Divine Drama proceeds , step by step , towards its destined climax the enemy gangs close in like wolves around their prey — the Sadducees , for once , making common cause with the Pharisees .Led by the ex-High Priest Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas, with cold , deliberate , remorseless determination they plot to kill Our Lord — on the principle that "it is expedient that one man should die for the people ". (Incidentally there something mysterious about the Gospel's brief comment on this statement by Annas — "he being the High Priest for the later year " — something which distantly reminds one of the Doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope)

The recent raising of Lazarus from the grave has had such an effect in favour of Our Lord that the SCRIBES AND Pharisees ^{l.c.} have determined to put ~~the~~ Lazarus to death also. We ~~see~~ ^{note also} the jealousy of the Pharisees on the Palm Sunday Procession, as they try to stifle the spontaneous praise of the Hebrew children ^{elicited} and Our Lord's comment that if they were silenced " even the very stones would cry out "

There are many aspects of the final ^{part of the} ~~story of the be-~~ ^{with its be-} ~~traval~~ ^{trial} Trials, Passion and Death of ~~Our Lord~~ which have a special interest to our gangsters. To begin with there is the fact that one of the gang has turned traitor, and has promised to betray his Leader into the enemies' hands. Furthermore he has agreed upon a secret sign - the kiss - by which he will ~~will~~ single Him out from the crowd of his followers. Secret signs and emblems mean a lot to these youngsters at this stage (witness all the Boy Scout badges). Most of their gangs invent various signs and symbols which are to be known ^{only} to the members of the gang. Other symnolical actions which come later on in the story are the rending of his garment by the High Priest ² as a sign that he is in the presence of blasphemy, and the ritual washing of his hands by Pontious Pilate. ~~and~~ ^{intriguing} There is another incident, when Our Lord - in answer to the disciples' query as to where they should make ready the Passover, - ~~he~~ says, "Just as you are entering the city you will be met by a man carrying a jar of water: follow him to the house where he is going and so on." ^{It gives one the sense of a mysterious preparation gone on somehow behind the scenes.} Then, too, from time to time, we get glimpses of the arch- ^{but unseen} enemy - Satan, the Fallen Angel who is the real ^{also} leader of the bad gangs, planning everything from behind the scenes. ^{Our} ~~And the Lord says~~ ^{to Peter,} "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has claimed power

over you all , so that he can sift you like wheat ... Or again
"But now Satan found His way into the heart of Judas " (Luke 22 :3)
or "The morsel given , Satan entered into him " (John 15:27)
He , as soon as he had recieved the morsel went out : and it was
night " - dark night without but darker still within .

The Question of the Use of Force

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As we have pointed out once or twice these young gangsters love
a fight , a straightfowrd visible fight, with thewhacking of heads,
or tje clash of swords ;but the deeper aspect of the struggle be-
tween right and wrong which goes on on the unseen spiritual plane
-this is not so evident to them . They have more sympathy with
Peter who drew his sword in defence of Our Lord and attacked the
High Priest's servant(it must be admitted not very effectively
, which was perhaps due to Peter's lack of expereince with
such a weapon , and his excitement and the uncertain light from
torches the roches) In the same way they would have much preferred it
if Our Lord had summoned His Twelve legions of Angels and had
led a big show-down in which his enemies had been completely
put to flight . Then when one comes to that part of the story
where the almost unbelievable malice of the Pharisees makes them
actually revile Our Lord in the exptremity of his agony on the
Cross, saying "Vah , Thou that destroyest the temple and on three
days does re-bbuild it save Thy own self . If Thou be the Don of
God , come down from the Cross 2 2and we eill belive it .
I would wagetr that nine out of ten of our gangsters , if asked ,
would say that that they wished Our Lord had ^{done so :} done " it would have
been one in the eye for those rotten old Pharisees "

And when you tell them that without any doubt He could have co
come down at any moment in those three ours He hung on the Cross

(X) see me at back of page.

over you all , so that he can sift you like wheat ... Or again "But now Satan found His way into the heart of Judas "(Luke 22 :3) , -or- "The morsel given , Satan entered into him "(John 15:27) . He , as soon as he had recieved the morsel went out : and it was night "- dark night without but darker still within .

The Question of the Use of Force

As we have ^{already} pointed out, once or twice, these young gangsters love a fight , a straightfowrd visible fight, with the whacking of heads, or the clash of swords. ^{But} the deeper aspect of the struggle between Believers good + evil - right and wrong which goes on, on the unseen spiritual plane, this is not so evident to them . They have more sympathy with Peter who drew his sword in defence of Our Lord and attacked the High Priest's servant(it must be admitted not very effectively, which was perhaps due to Peter's lack of expereince with such a weapon , ^{to be} ~~and~~ his excitement, and ^{by} the uncertain light from the torches) In the same way they would have much preferred it if Our Lord had ^{been there} summoned His Twelve legions of Angels , and had led a big show-down in which his enemies had been completely crushed put to flight. ^{agitate} Then when one comes to that part of the story where the almost unbelievable malice of the Pharisees makes them actually revile Our Lord in the exptremity of his agony on the Cross, saying "Vah , Thou that destroyest the temple and on three days does re-bbuild it, save Thy own self . If Thou be the Son of God , come down from the Cross ~~and~~ and we eill belive it ." I would waget that nine out of ten of our gangsters , if asked , would say that that they wished Our Lord had ^{come down!} ~~done~~ "it would have been one in the eye for those rotten old Pharisees "

N.P +

And when you tell them that, without any doubt, He could have ~~co~~ come down at any moment in those three hours He hung on the Cross

⊗ and then goes on (foreshadowing who is to be the head of the church when he is gone) -- "but I have prayed for thee (singular) that thy faith may not fail, when after a while, thou hast come back to me, it is for thee to be the support of thy brethren" (Luke 22, 31-33)
Or again ---- (back to text)

not the cruel nails but
 and that it was in reality only His own will that kept Him
 there, they are the ^{still} more astonished.

This gives me the opportunity of probing a little
 deeper into the unfathomable mystery of the Redemption of
 the human race. It ~~would~~ come as something of a surprise to
 many of them ^{when} if they are told that at that ~~very~~ moment
 Our Lord Himself was suffering to redeem those very same
 Pharisees, and others, that ^{were} reviling Him; and that their refusal to
 accept the graces offered ~~to them~~ rendered those sufferings
 even greater, (space - of eschra line)

But actually - even from our young Gangster's point of
 view - Our Lord did something even more effective than coming
 down from the Cross to prove His Divinity. He did much more:
~~than that~~: He actually died, ~~and~~ was buried, and ROSE AGAIN.
 And there is a certain poetic justice in the fact that the
 Pharisees themselves - and in spite of themselves - help ^{ed} to
 bear witness to the fact of His resurrection, by setting their
 guard of soldiers (with Pilates' permission) to watch over the
 tomb which they themselves had ^{excavated} ^{begun again} ^{erect}

not the cruel nails but
and that it was in reality only His own will that kept Him
there they are the more astonished .

This gives me the opportunity of probing a little
deeper into the unfathomable mystery of the Redemption of
the human race . It would come as something of a surprise to
many of them if they are told that at that very moment
Our Lord Himself was suffering to redeem those very same
Pharisees and others that reviled Him ,and that their refusal to
accept the graces offered to them rendered those sufferings
even greater,

But actually , even from our young Gangster's point of
view Our Lord did something even more effective than coming
down from the Cross to prove His Divinity . He did much more
than that: He actually died ,and was buried , and ROSE AGAIN .
And there is a certain poetic justice in the fact that the
Pharisees themselves - and in spite of themselves -help to
bear witness to the fact of His resurrection , by setting their
guard of soldiers , with Pilates ' permission ,to watch over the
tomb which they themselves had sealed .

And with the Resurrection they now see that - from the
point of view of the Pharisees the whole trouble now begins all
over again ,and worse than ever . After all what can you do more
to silence a man than to torture him and put him to death .?And
this they had done . And now here were these impudent disciples -
fishermen and the like -saying openly in the Temple that their
leader had risen from the dead . This by itself might not have
mattered so much but it is Peter fellow it seems has worked
a striking miracle -in healing a beggar , who for years used to sit
at the Gate of the Temple begging for alms

Quote here from the Acts

men
name have such people as you done this " In replying Peter does not flinch nor does he mince matters, but hits out straight from the shoulder "Rulers of the people, elders of Israel, listen to me. If it is over kindness done to a cripple, and the means by which he has been restored here is news for you and for the whole people of Israel. You crucified Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, and God raised Him up from the dead: it is through that name that this man stands before you restored. He is the stone rejected by you, the builders, that has become the chief stone at the corner "

This was all very embarrassing to the Jewish leaders - No wonder (as St Luke goes on) "they could find no answer to make, with the man who had been healed standing there beside them It was indeed a puzzling situation for the members of the bad gang - they did not know what to do " so they ordered the disciples out of the ~~xxx~~ council chamber and conferred together. What are we to do with these men ? they asked. It is commonly known amongst all the people of Jerusalem that a notable miracle has been done by these means and we are powerless to deny it. But the news must not spread any further : we must deter them from by threats from preaching to anybody in this man's name again. So they called them in again, and warned them not to utter a word or give any teaching in the name of Jesus " But these obstinate and unlearned upstarts from the people - fishermen and the like - will give no such promise. "It is impossible ", they tell the council, "for us to refrain from speaking of what we have seen and heard ." (Acts IV. 20)

And so the wonderful and thrilling story goes on from stage to stage, "round after round" in the ceaseless between the good and the bad gangs. We see now the disciples - undeterred

by the threats of the Sadducees " used to gather with ~~my~~ one accord in Solomon's Porch (again in the Temple precincts) and how the people used to bring their sick folks into the streets, and lay them down on beds and pallets , in the hope that even the shadow of Peter , as he passed by , might fall upon one of them here and there ,and so they would be healed of their infirmities .

This was bad enough , but the movement was spreading outside Jerusalem -"from the neighbouring cities , too , the common people flocked to Jerusalem , bringing with them the sick and those that were troubled with unclean spirits , and all of them were cured (Acts V 16-17)Small wonder .."this roused the highpriest and those that thought with him , that is the Sadducees.,who full of indignation arrested the apostles and shut them up in the common jail. But in the night , an angel of the Lord came and opened the prison doors and led them out ."So " he said , " and take your stand in the temple ;preach fully to the people the message of life "So at his word they went into the temple at dawn and began preaching . (Acts V 17 - 21)

This leads to another striking and amusing incident . That very morning the High Priest and his followers met and summoned the council with all the elders of the Jewish people . Can you imagine it ! There they are , all assembled , ready and waiting :all that is need now is the presence of the prisoners .
Messengers are despatched to the prison house to fetch them .But "when they came to look in the prison , the officers could not find them there ; so they came back and reported : "We found the prison -house locked up with all care , and the guards at their posts before the door ; but when we opened it there was no one to be found within.

What a situation ! And while everything in the council room is in confusion and everyone talking together and asking questions to find out exactly what has happened suddenly comes a messenger hot-foot and breathless with the staggering news that "the men you put in prison are standing in the temple at this very minute teaching the people there ". What a ridiculous anti-climax for this solemn conclave convened to sit in judgement on the prisoners ! Our gangsters are delighted : it is another blow in the solar plexus for the bad gang and its proud , pompous and self-righteous leaders .

One is tempted to go on further --it is such a wonderful and dramatic story - just as a story -and all the more so because it is true

And that is what they say if you want to know what happened next

Then , quite unexpectedly , one fine day the "rotten old Pharisees " get bad news , which hits them like a blow in the solar plexus . Some of their minions bring the following report to them .Here comes a quote from the Acts of the Apostles Chapt 3 Verses 1)--12)

But this was not all This fisherman - turned - preacher was actually haranguing the excited crowd in the Temple precincts and he was not mincing matters . This man has been cured not by our own power , he told them , but through the power of Jesus of Nazareth - whom you gave up , and disowned "in the presence of Pilate , when Pilate's voice was for setting Him free . You disowned the holy and just one and asked for the pardon of a murderer , while you killed the Author of Life . But God has raised Him up again from the dead ,and we are here to bear witness of it .

This was too much for the Sadducees and Pharisees ; and they waste no time taking action "Before they had finished speaking TO THE CROWD THEY WERE INTERRUPTED BY THE CHIEF PRIESTS ? THE TEMPLE superintendents and the Sadducees .These indignantly at their teaching the multitude and proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus from the dead laid hand on them and put them in prison "

And so the dramatic clash between the gangs begins again - and this is meat and drink to our Juniors who follow the new developments with the same eager interest .And there is plenty to follow .Meanwhile , says the Acts many of those who had listened to their preaching had joined the believers , so that their number had now risen to five thousand men "

They are all agog to know What happened next ? What happened next Well the next day the two apostles were taken out of prison and brought before the chief Sadducees -Annas the tough old leader , and Caiaphas , Johnanand Alexander - all his relations

But what about the guards ? What happened to them ? Taking up
Matthews account where we have just left off ----

(To Typist carry on as before from verse 10 II to 15)

With unconcealed delight our young gangsters follow this
new turn in the story ;and follow this new development of the
struggle with the keen interest as before . It appeals to their
sense of justice to see the old Pharisees getting jolt after jolt
as one unexpected even happens after another . True to our
Lord's characterisation of them in the parable of Dives and Lazarus
they will not let themselves believe "even though one should return
from the grave ". They are determined to suppress this impossible
but nevertheless disquieting rumour of the resurrection of the
man they themselves saw dead and buried . It ought not to be
very hard to squash the whole matter since the disciples without
their leader are like a bunch of sheep without a shepherd .

But then came another " one in the eye " for the Pharisees .
Their spies must have told them of the strange things that took
place on the first Pentecost (when the first Novena had been
finished) of the miracle of the crowd in which each man heard
the disciples speaking in their own particular language --and also
- more important from the Pharisees ' point of view the baptising
into the new group of about three thousand souls on the one day .

But worse things were to follow .
"(To typist -- Another quote - single spacing . Acts 3. verses
1--12)

And following up this miracle addresses the crowd in the
sacred precincts of the Temple : he harasses the Jewish multitude
(many of whom were amongst the crowd that had shouted crucify
him crucify Him less than a month before saying " while you killed
the author of life God has raised Him up again from the dead and

In her opening remarks Montessori pointed out how "in the early days of the Church, the laity took a more active part in the Great Drama of the Mass than they do at present (~~this was in 1936~~), With the passing of Latin into a dead language, however, the detailed knowledge of the text and of the ritual became more and more limited to the clergy. In this way the Book of the Mass became in some respects "a closed book". But now, thanks to the modern liturgical movement inaugurated by Pope Benedict XV and carried on by his successors, the Book of the Mass has once more been "opened" to the people, and translations of the sacred text have been printed in all the vernaculars.

"Amongst those to whom the book had been "opened" are the children; and the education problem, which has now arisen, is how to make it accessible to them in a manner suitable to their limitations".

When one comes to a more detailed study of Montessori's material for teaching the Mass one finds a second reason for calling it "the Opened Book" in addition to the one just mentioned. In any book - and this applies to the Ordinary of the Mass and the Missal generally one can only see two pages at a time, the ones facing each other. The rest of the pages remaining "closed" and out of sight. In this material Montessori has hit upon the happy and original idea of having each of the prayers of the Mass printed on a separate card. In this way one is able to spread out a whole series of pages, next to each other, side by side, ^{can} and thus view them all at once. In this way the Book of the Mass become literally as well as symbolically "an opened book".

RISING TO KNOW

(TO TYPIST ---from here on to type-crypt page three (A) to (B) on page 4)
Then this joining paragraph -)

He was still brooding deeply over the events of the morning .
Miracles he had seen Jesus work before - miracles in plenty - and
it was not the miracle as such which had ^{this new} made such a deep impression
on him - but rather the attending circumstances . There was one
phrase especially which stuck in his mind : Jesus had said --but
to convince you that the son of man , while he is on earth , has
power etc .. "While he is on earth ! " - a strange thing to say .
It suggested a temporary state of things - as one might say
While I was in Jericho I satyer with my uncle . The phrase carried
with it the most signifiant and suggestive overtones -as though
Jesus , their beloved friend and Master , did not really belong to
this earth , but - as one might say - was only a temporary visitor
to it .

Then there was the extraordinary claim to be able to forgive
sins . That was something new too . And as he meditated these new
glimpses into the mysterious depths of his Masters Personlaity
John the young John recalled something that had happened the
very first ~~day~~ time he had seen Jesus . It was down by the river
Jordan in the place where John had himself been baptised the day
before by the famous new Prophet - John the Baptist to whom people
were flocking by the hundreds . Whilst a little group of them
had been stading listening to John the Baptist Jesus had passed
by . And as He did so ~~the~~ John the Baptist - the Forerunner - had
pointed him out with his finger and said Behold the Lamb of God
who taketh away the sins of the world " . It was a strange thing to
say of anyone - ~~xxxxxx John had of xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and he
had often pondered over it . But now it seemed somehow or other
to link itself up in his mind with this ~~new~~ claim to a special
power implied by the words Take courage , my son thy sins are
forgiven thee .

