

gave their hundreds, Lebbaeus gave his all to Christ as a member of the twelve. Look in your own church at the number who do the most talking, holds the most positions. They appear to be the pillars of the church. Now talk with the little old lady that never says anything in the meetings, holds no office. She may be rated as one of the "half-wits." Her I.Q. may be near the border line. Every Sunday she is there to put in her presence.

Many of us pastors remember some such person in our early or present ministry.

I see aunt Becky, sister Mamie, brother Joe, like Lebbaeus of whom little is known, yet they shine in the firmament of the blessed.

When Jesus sent forth the twelve upon their first tour, Lebbaeus went along too and made an excellent impression. He may have been shy and timid, perhaps, looked a little stupid but he was among the twelve. He was not in class with Simon Peter who made himself the "speaker of the house" and leader. Lebbaeus was more retiring and non-aggressive. Matthew Henry thinks Lebbaeus and James were brothers, but even if they were, very little is known of them. John 14:26 says his name is Judas," not Iscariot) and here he is questioning Jesus about His methods of manifestation after the crucifixion. He has been referred to as the disciple with three names, Lebbaeus Thaddaeus Judas.

Clarke in his commentary holds that Lebbaeus Judas is the Jude who wrote the book of Jude. Jude 1:1 speaks of "Jude the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." His letter is brief and may indicate the size of the mental capacity of the man. Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3 name a Judas as the brother of Jesus. In Jude 1:17 there is an indication that

he was not one of the twelve for he does not refer to himself as one. As to who he was is a matter of debate and speculation.

James the less and Lebbaeus have been paired together by the writer because of their apparent little niche they filled. So little is known of them. They are presented as typical of all so called little people who are carrying on in silence and obscurity.

#### For Research and Reports

1. Name the first six of the twelve as given in these studies. Give some one personality trait which your readings brought out.
2. Name some of the insignificant people in your church who are a silent influence for church solidarity and character.
3. Read the book of Jude and make a list of the things he wrote about.
4. Name some of the ministers you think are great preachers. Now compare their work with some of the preachers you do not think are so important.
5. Talk with any of the older people about the early pastors of your church and compare them with some of the later pastors for usefulness and piety.
6. How would James and Lebbaeus rate with renowned preachers today?
7. Define a "jack-leg-preacher, a yard-ax-preacher and a two-by-four preacher."
8. Compare their ministry with that of the so-called great preachers of your day. What made them great?
9. True or false: Preachers are like stars in the sky. Some are bigger than others in sizes of intellect, ability and eloquence.

### Study VIII

May 25, 1952

## Thomas and Philip

John 20:24-29; John 1:43-45

### Thomas the Doubter

Today we have as our character study Thomas who made himself famous for his doubts about the resurrection of Christ. He is more easily remembered as the disciple who demanded as proof of the resurrection the privilege of thrusting (forcing) his hand into the wounded side of Jesus and to see the print of the nails in his hand, plus sticking his finger in the holes in his hands. Without this, he would never believe that Jesus was alive, regardless to who said they had seen him. This was some proof-demand.

After a rereading of the John 20:24-29, what are some of your impressions of Thomas? Were his demands excessive? Do you think he was honest in his opinion that Jesus did not rise?

One of the aims of this Study is to help you to form a new opinion of the one who has been branded, "Doubting Thomas." He must be remembered for his finer qualities and his worth to the other twelve. Since he too wrote no book, we must depend upon whatever references we can find and the words of scholars.

Matt. 10:3 assures us that he was one of the twelve. John 11:16 informs us that he was devoted to Christ, vowing to go with Jesus and dying with him, if need be. John 14:5 says Thomas showed his lack of true understanding when he told Jesus, you are demanding something of us that we do not know. How can we know the way when we do not know where you are going? It was

for his sake or insistence that Jesus utters those famous words, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." We must give Thomas credit for priming Jesus to make the statement.

Thomas called Didymus, means that he was one of a twin. Who his twin brother or sister was and why he was not called to be an apostle are unknown.

Thomas was what we call a man with a warm, good-meaning heart, ready to die as far as the lips were concerned but of a slow perceptive faith. He is the symbol of those whose religion inhabits their mouths, who must be shown before they will believe and who are at times over cautious about the new ventures. He revelled in melancholia and live in solitary sadness after the crucifixion.

Tradition says he worked and labored for the Cause in Parthia and Persia.

It is reasonable to believe that he was a man of warm affection for Jesus but of a weak faith. He meant well but lacked courage to carry out his good meanings. Like many of his time, he had his doubts about a resurrection from the dead. Fires of faith often burn low in the best of saints. The crucifixion has completed his despair. Depressive moods are common, everyday occurrences with us. To these Thomas was a victim. He was convinced when Jesus offered to comply with his request for proof. When Thomas cried "My Lord and my God" he was again going in the right direction.