

**EDWIN
ABBOTT**

PHILOCHRISTUS

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Philochristus

PHILOCHRISTUS THE ELDER TO
THE SAINTS OF THE CHURCH IN

ONDINIUM, GRACE, MERCY, AND
PEACE FROM THE LORD JESUS

CHRIST

Forasmuch as almost all those disciples who with me saw the Lord Jesus in the flesh, are now fallen asleep, and I myself am well stricken in years and daily expect the summons of the Lord; it hath therefore seemed good to me to bequeath unto you some memorial of Christ in writing; which, instead of my voice, shall testify to you of him for ever.

All the more need seemeth thereof because the Lord delayeth his coming. For now these ten years Jerusalem hath been trodden down of the Gentiles, and the words of the Lord concerning the destruction of the Holy City have been fulfilled; and yet he cometh

not. Yea, and sometimes my mind presageth that his coming may be yet longer delayed, even till all they that knew him in the flesh have fallen asleep.

For this cause I was long ago moved, even from the second or third year after the destruction of the Holy City, to leave some record behind me to testify of the Lord. But when I adventured to write, behold, it was an hard matter and well-nigh impossible, to set forth such an image of the Lord Jesus as should be at once according to the truth, and yet not altogether too bright for mortal eye to look upon and love. Therefore at the last, when I perceived that it was not given unto me to portray any character of the Lord as he was in himself, I determined rather to set forth an history of mine own life; wherein, as in a mirror, might perchance be discerned some lineaments of the countenance of Christ, seen as by reflexion, in the life of one that loved him.

CHAPTER I

My former name was Joseph the son of Simeon, and I was born in Sepphoris, the metropolis of Galilee, in the twentieth year of the reign of the Emperor Augustus, about four years before the death of King Herod. In those days Israel was grievously afflicted, and tribulation befell the righteous. Satan put it into the heart of the rulers of the land to move the people to the worship of false gods, and the Lord God had not yet raised up a Redeemer for Israel.

In my fourth year my father's brother, the Rabbi Matthias, was burned alive by Herod for causing his scholars to cast down the golden image of an eagle which the king had set up over the gate of the temple of the Lord. Not many months afterwards, the Romans marched through Sepphoris in order to bring succour to Sabinus, who was hard beset by the men of Jerusalem in the fortress called Antonia; and we fought against them, and my father was taken captive and crucified by Varus. Now as concerning my father and my father's brother, how they were slain, perchance I remember their deaths rather from my mother's often mention of them in after times than from what I heard then: but this thing can I never forget, for I saw it with mine own eyes: namely, how, when my mother brought me forth from the caves of Arbela whither we had been sent for refuge, behold, where Sepphoris had stood, there was not now one house

standing; and I saw also the bodies of many of my kinsfolk, which lay unburied and crying unto the Lord for vengeance. Yet the Lord sent no avenger.

After this came tidings that the Parthians, which went with Varus, had laid waste the country in the south far and wide, and had slain our brethren with the sword; and that Varus had taken two thousand of my countrymen in Jerusalem and had crucified them, and among them Eleazar, the youngest and dearest of my mother's brethren. Then my mother led me to a rocky place not far from Sampho. There was a cave there, and only one path led to it, and that so narrow that no multitude of men could force an entrance, if one brave man withstood them. When we were come thither, my mother lifted up her voice and wept, and pointing to the cave she said, "In former times this cave was held by my mother's brother, Hezekiah by name. Six children he had; and he fled from Herod the King with them and with his wife, and here they took refuge. Now when the king could by no means drive Hezekiah hence by force, he offered much gold unto him if he would come forth from the cave quietly. But when Hezekiah refused, the king began to let down armed men by ropes from the top of the hill, with firebrands in their hands, to kindle fires at the mouth of the cave. Then when no hope of safety remained, behold, my mother's brother brought out his children, and slew the youngest with his sword in the sight of the king. Afterwards he laid his hands on his second child. But Herod, perceiving his intent, stretched out his right hand and besought Hezekiah to

spare his children and to come forth in peace. But he slew the second also, heaping reproaches on Herod as an usurper and a son of Edom, sitting on David's seat; and he slew the third and the rest likewise, even to the sixth, and last of all his wife; and then he cast himself down the steep place and perished." Then spake my mother unto me and said, "The Lord do so unto thee, my son, and more likewise, if thou avenge not the blood of thy kinsfolk and of thy father." So it came to pass that, even from a child, I hated the very name of a Gentile with an exceeding hatred; insomuch that I should have accounted him blessed who should have taken the children of Rome (according as it is written) and dashed them against the stones.

There stood up at this time divers to lead Israel; but they were no true leaders of the people, and the Lord had not sent them. Athronges the shepherd, a man of great stature, and Simon, one of the servants of Herod the King, rose up in the south of Judah; but they both perished, and their followers were scattered. Again, about the time of the numbering of the people, when the decree went forth from the Emperor Augustus that all Israel should be taxed, there rose up Judas of Gamala. This was about the thirty-third year of the Emperor Augustus. The people came to him from all sides; and Judas taught them that it was not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, nor to call any man Master, save God alone. At that time I was some thirteen years old; and I saw him when, with a thousand men, he marched into Capernaum and burned down the house of customs there; and as I looked upon his face, and the

numbers of his followers, I thought within my heart, "Surely the hand of the Lord is with this man, surely this is the Redeemer of Israel, even the Messiah to whom all the prophets bear witness, that he must arise and judge the land." But five Sabbaths had not passed away before he also had been cut off; and all the men that were with him were either scattered to their homes or slain.

Meanwhile, as I grew up, I was being trained by my mother with all care in the paths of the law of Israel; and according to the custom of my people, at five years old I had begun to learn the Scripture, and, at ten years, Mishnah; and I profited more than my companions in the study of the Traditions. But when I read how great things God had done in times past for His chosen ones, and how He had redeemed Israel by the hand of His servants Gideon and David, then did my heart burn within me; and I besought the Lord that He would repeat His mercies upon His chosen people, and that He would speedily send that Messiah of whom all the prophets spake, for the Redemption of Israel. Afterwards I questioned one of my teachers, by name Abuyah the son of Elishah, and I said unto him, "It is revealed and known before the All-seeing (blessed is He) that our will is to do His will: and what hindereth?" Then he answered and said, "The dough in the leaven" (meaning Gentile customs, which corrupt the customs of Israel even as leaven changeth bread) "and servitude to the Kingdom." Then I said, "Why therefore do we not rise up against the Gentile Kingdom?" But he answered, "Joseph, son of Simeon, busy thyself with the Law. Whosoever is

busied in the Law for the Law's sake deserveth many things; and not only so, but he is worth the whole world. He is called friend, beloved; loveth God, loveth mankind; pleaseth God, pleaseth mankind. And it clotheth him with meekness and fear, and fitteth him to become righteous, pious, upright, and faithful; and removeth him from sin, and bringeth him towards the side of merit." Then said I, "But wherefore doth not the God of our Salvation bring freedom to Israel?" But he answered, "It is said, The tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. Read not *charuth*, graven, but *cheruth*, freedom; for thou wilt find none free, save only them which be occupied in the learning of the Law. For whoso is occupied in learning the Law, behold, it magnifieth him and exalteth him over all things."

Then I applied myself more diligently to the study of the Law, and I observed Sabbaths and festivals, and practised ablutions with all scruple; and I became known among my companions as a sin-fearer, instructed in the wisdom of the Law, avoiding those lesser faults which are called the "Descendants," as well as those which are called the "Fathers"; insomuch that I would not even curdle milk on the Sabbath, because that had been declared by the decisions of the Wise to be a lesser kind of building; neither would I walk upon grass during the Sabbath, because that also had been pronounced by the Rabbis to be a lesser kind of threshing. Also in the matter of fringes and phylacteries, and in smaller matters, even to the burning of nail-parings, I walked

diligently according to the decisions of the Ancients. Thus in all things I strove to bear in mind the saying that “While in the written Law there are light as well as weighty precepts, the precepts of the Scribes are all weighty.” I took little sleep, little merriment; I associated myself ever with the wise, and abstained from the company of the people of the land (for by this name the Pharisees were wont to call them that gave not themselves to the study of the Law); I settled my heart to study; I asked, and answered, and whatsoever I received I strove to add thereto. And it came to pass that, because I had a strength of memory more than was usual among my fellow-students, my teacher said to me, “Joseph, son of Simeon, thou art a plastered cistern, which loseth no drop of water”; and by this name of “plastered cistern” I became known among my fellows. And when I perceived that the Traditions said little concerning a Messiah; and that my teachers also said little, and had no hope, nor so much as a desire (for the most part) that a Messiah should ever come, but were wholly given up to the study of the Law; then I endeavoured myself also to do the same, and to put away the thought of a Redeemer.

Nevertheless at times the question would arise within me, “Wherefore do I serve God for naught?” For all around I saw the wicked and the scornful seated, as kings, in high places, and the poor and the humble trampled under foot. There was the name of peace among us, but it was no peace; for Satan was making war upon us under the semblance of peace. Everywhere defilement was taking the land by force or by stealth. Many

Greek cities, called by the names of the great ones among the Gentiles, were built in the midst of us, such as Tiberias, and Julias, and Cæsarea Stratonis, and Cæsarea Philippi; and even in our city of Sepphoris, now rebuilt, we were constrained to admit Greeks to be our fellow-citizens. Theatres and amphitheatres, and games, and alien rites in honour of false gods, had been brought in among us. Images of living things began to be seen on every side, and even our coinage was defiled with the uncleanness of the Gentiles; so that, in place of the vine-clusters and wheat-sheaf and star of Israel, we were forced to handle the semblances of Thracian shields and helmets, and the winged rod of enchantments, called by the Gentiles the caduceus. Moreover, as each year passed, our fears waxed greater and greater, lest at last the eagles of the Gentiles should be brought from Cæsarea into the streets of the Holy City itself, and lest the image of the Emperor should be set up therein. For the former Emperor, even Cæsar Augustus, was now dead, and a new Emperor reigned in his stead, whose name was Tiberius. But he attained not unto the former Emperor in wisdom; wherefore the minds of many were unsettled, the common people fearing lest the Romans should take away their religion, and the Scribes fearing lest the common people should incense the Romans by fresh revolt, and so bring destruction on the nation.

So it came to pass that by reason of my continual sorrow for the burdens of Sion, my heart was pressed down with care, and my trouble became too heavy for me to bear; and I found no

peace, no, not even in the study of the Law. In vain I repeated to myself the saying of the Wise, “Whoso studieth the Law, he becometh modest and long-suffering and forgiving of insult”; and again, “The Law is acquired by long-suffering, by a good heart, by faith in the Wise, by acceptance of chastisements.” I looked upon my countrymen in their servitude, and I could not feel long-suffering; neither could I attain to the wisdom of the acceptance of chastisements.

When I mentioned my trouble to my teacher, Abuyah the son of Elishah, he rebuked me for presumption; for he said that such doubts came of evil, neither would he hearken unto me. Therefore I turned to another of the Scribes, whose name was Jonathan the son of Ezra. Now Jonathan was older than Abuyah the son of Elishah, but not so learned. Howbeit he was of a more gentle and loving disposition. He said to me, “Beware lest thou follow the path of Elishah the son of Solomon.” “What path?” I asked. Then Jonathan answered as follows: “It is reported that Elishah the son of Solomon was once studying the Scriptures, and he saw two men taking birds’ nests. The one obeyed not the Law, but took the mother with the young; yet he went his way in peace. The other obeyed the Law and took the young only, but let the mother go free; yet as he descended from the tree a serpent stung him and he died. Then said Elishah the son of Solomon, ‘Is it not written, The young thou mayest take to thyself, but the mother thou shalt surely let go, that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live many days? Verily the promises of

God are naught, for the man that obeyed hath not lived many days, but the man that disobeyed is unhurt.’ ” Then said I, “And what answer was made to Elishah the son of Solomon?” And my teacher replied, “Whosoever obeyeth the Law, his days will be long in the world to come.” Then was my heart comforted for a while, and I devoted myself even more diligently than before to the study of the Law.

CHAPTER II

For the space of nine or ten years I was content to give myself wholly to the study of the Law; but when I had now numbered thirty years, my doubts and fears came back to me again. While I sat in the school with the Scribe, and heard his answers and asked him questions, so long I seemed to myself righteous and on the path of righteousness; but when I came forth into the streets, or back to my mother's house, then seemed my righteousness immediately to have vanished away. At such seasons the learning of the Wise seemed to me not bread, but a stone.

Moreover, my heart was turned from some of the Scribes that lived in Sepphoris, even them that were counted as props and pillars of the Law. To Jonathan the son of Ezra I ceased not to pay honour; but Abuyah the son of Elishah I could not reverence, and others also like unto him: for they had regard unto the praise of men rather than to the love of God. As, for example, Abuyah, whensoever he was delayed by the crowd so that he came not to the synagogue in time for prayer, he would stand where he chanced to be, at the hour of prayer, praying in the middle of the market-place. When he walked, he walked with a mincing gait and with his eyes half closed, feigning to be given up to the meditation of the Law, so that he saw no passer by. On fast days he would ever look pale and worn, as if with watching and hunger; and whensoever he met a woman as he went in the way,

he would shiver and turn aside. It came to pass that on a certain day one of his pupils asked him which was the most weighty of precepts. Then Abuyah answered, "The Law of Tassels"; and continued he, "so do I esteem this law that once, because I had chanced to tread upon a portion of the fringe of my garment, going up a ladder, I steadfastly refused to move from the spot where I stood, till such time as the rent had been repaired." Another day, this Abuyah chid my mother because she wore on her dress a ribbon that was not sewn, but only fastened to her vesture. For thus, he said, my mother transgressed the Law by bearing burdens on the Sabbath. But by such teaching Abuyah himself laid upon his pupils burdens grievous to be borne; and among the Rabbis of Israel there were more like unto Abuyah the son of Elishah than unto Jonathan the son of Ezra.

Many things also in the traditions of the Wise seemed to me not worthy of wise men, nor even of honest men. I had joined myself to a certain brotherhood (who all, or almost all, were Pharisees), such as bound themselves to observe the Law with special strictness, and in particular to pay tithes of all things. The brotherhood was called Chabura, and each of the brethren was called a Chaber. Now it was the custom of us Chaberim to meet on the Sabbath day at one another's houses that we might sup together. But the space between our houses often exceeded two thousand paces, which distance was not to be exceeded by a man journeying on the Sabbath day. Therefore to a plain man it would have seemed that we could not sup with one another

on the Sabbath day and at the same time obey the Law. But the Scribes were otherwise minded; and many of them, yea even of the strictest sect, escaped from the Law after this fashion. On the evening before the Sabbath, they would place small pieces of meat, distant two thousand paces one from another, on the road whereon they desired to journey. Where a man's meat is, said they, there is his home. So when they were come in their journeying to the first piece of meat, they would say, "Now I am at my home and may walk yet another two thousand paces." And so, walking from this home to other homes if need were, they walked as far as they listed. This mixing of distances they called *erûbh*, or "mixture;" and the device remaineth unto this day.

Again, if a man's ox were dying on some holy day, and the owner thereof desired to kill it; he was forbidden. But if he slew the beast and then took of the meat and ate thereof, yea, even though it were a piece of flesh no bigger than an olive, and if he said, "I slay the beast to provide a necessary meal," then he was held excused. Likewise, though a man might not buy from a butcher on the Sabbath, yet if he abstained from mentioning the number or weight of the things bought, and the sum of money to be paid, then he might buy as much as his heart desired and be held blameless. Thus he would say, "Give me a portion, or half a portion of meat," and the butcher would give it; and the buyer would go away, paying naught. But next day the money would be paid. And this was called not a sale, but a gift. After the same manner they did away with the Law which remitteth debts in the

Sabbatical year. On the day of payment the creditor would come (such was the ordinance of the Scribes) and say, "In accordance with the Sabbatical year I remit thee the debt." Then the debtor was bound to reply, "I nevertheless wish to pay it," and the debt was paid, and the Law was made of none effect.

About the thirteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius, it came to pass that I (being now thirty-three years old or a little more) discoursed with a Greek proselyte concerning the Law. He said to me that it seemed to him better to disannul such ordinances as were not convenient (just as a man might prune a too luxuriant vine); and not to say, "I will obey the ordinance, but I will make my obedience the same as disobedience." His words pleased me; but when I reported this saying to some of the Scribes my friends, they with one consent rejected it. Abuyah the son of Elishah said, scoffing at my doubts, "The Law drowneth them that cannot swim." Then said I (repeating a certain saying of the Greek), "But water groweth bad if it be kept long in one vessel." But he straightway put me to silence saying, "Is this likewise the case with the Law? Nay, it is like unto wine which groweth better as it groweth older." Jonathan the son of Ezra also added in a gentle voice, "My son, thou knowest the saying of the Elders, the first of the sayings of the Wise: Be deliberate in judgment, and raise up many disciples, and make a fence to the Law. But thou, O my son, wouldst fain pull down fences. But if we begin to destroy a part of the Law, who shall stay the hand of the destroyer? And in the end we shall be even as the Gentiles, which have no law.

Is it not better to be too careful rather than to be too careless? Is it not better to have too many fences rather than to have too few? For to what is the matter like? Even to a man watching a garden. If he watch it from without, it is all watched. But if he watch it from within, the part in front of him is watched; but the part behind him is not watched. Be thou therefore careful to go in thine obedience even beyond the things which the Law requireth at thy hands; and watch the Law not from within, but from without.”

There seemed much wisdom in the sayings of Jonathan, and I knew not what answer to make. For if to transgress the Law, even in the smallest matter, was to fall into destruction, then it seemed wise to fence round the Law, even as a man would fence round a pit; and not to suffer the unwary to go near, and peradventure to stumble, and so to be swallowed up. Yet I could not but perceive that it was not well for men thus to resort to the Law and to the Traditions as to a sacred oracle, even on those occasions and in those matters wherein the voice of the Lord speaking unto the heart saith clearly, “This is right, do this. This is wrong, do not this.” For thus it must needs come to pass that men would pervert even the Law to the contradicting of the voice of the Lord. And so indeed it was with us. As, for example, the Law forbade fornication, neither did it permit us to marry a woman with intent to divorce her; but one of the Traditions, making the Law of none effect, told us that “If a man first tell her that he is going to marry her for a season, then it is lawful.”

Other Traditions sinned yet more grievously in the cloaking of sins and impurities. Hence also the duties of children to parents (albeit upheld indeed by the better part of the Wise) were by many diminished, or even made of none effect.

Now I have heard certain Romans say that in their Law they also use the same devices to observe the letter and to break the spirit. But the mischief was, that our Law was not as the laws of the Gentiles, which concern naught save lands, and houses, and slaves, and the like, and which have not to do with the souls and spirits of men. The Gentiles could break the letter of their laws and sin not: for what sin was it to make a slave free by feigning to sell him, or, in disputing about a farm, to treat of a clod as though it were the farm? But our Law had to do with the supreme God, the Maker of all things, the All-seeing (blessed is He). Therefore to observe the letter and to break the spirit of His Law seemed to be a profaning of His Holy Name. Now I had been trained up from my earliest years to dread the pulling down of the fences, having this precept, as it were, engraved and charactered in my memory, “Whoso pulleth down a hedge a serpent shall sting him:” and I had been taught to prefer Sinai, that is, the teacher of the Law, even to an “uprooter of mountains,” that is, to a teacher which hath understanding to remove all manner of offences and stumbling-blocks from the path of the weak ones. Howbeit, at times, after discourse with the Greek proselyte whom I mentioned above, there would arise in my heart this thought, that when the words of the Law seemed

to contradict that which was right, then we ought to go into the presence of God and to say, “Thou, O God of righteousness, art righteous altogether, neither can it be Thy pleasure that we should be unrighteous”; and again, “Thou art a God of truth, neither can it be Thy will that we should lie with our hands in Thy presence. Therefore permit us in this case to break Thy Law. For Thy righteousness is greater than Thy Law.” But the Scribes would not so much as listen to such words as these; for they said that scarce even a prophet durst speak so exceeding boldly. But when I asked them whether it might be that a prophet should arise in Israel, then the most said that it was not possible; for the Shekinah and the Holy Spirit had departed from Israel when the first Temple had been destroyed. Thus my words were an abomination unto my teachers, so that I hid my thoughts in my heart: but it was pain and grief to me.

Yet another trouble was added to me. For as I grew older and understood more of the ways of men and perceived the thoughts of men’s hearts, it seemed to me a strange and horrible thing that the Law of the Lord should be cut off from the greater part of the Lord’s people: so that it was a current saying with the Rabbis that the common people were an accursed rabble which knew not the Law: insomuch that one of the most pious of our teachers, even Hillel the Great, said that no boor could be a sin-fearer, and that the people of the land (for by that name they called the common people) could not be pious. This, I say, seemed an horrible thing: yet indeed I could not deny that the Scribes must needs be right,

and that the people of the land could not be pious, so long as to be pious meant to be obedient to the light precepts of the Law, such as the laws concerning the exact observance of the Sabbath, and concerning purifications, and concerning the consumption of nail-parings, and the like. For the knowledge of all these things was not to be obtained save by men of leisure, that could give their time, and settle their minds to the study of such matters: and how was this possible for them that must needs earn their bread with the sweat of their brow, to wit, the sailors and fishermen, the vine-dressers and ploughmen, the dyers and glassmakers; who all were called of the Scribes “the people of the land”? So it was borne in upon me that our Law was a Law for the schools, but not for the lives of men; and for Scribes, but not for the whole nation. Then my heart sank within me, and I remembered the words of the Prophet, how that a time shall come when men shall no longer teach each one his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord; but all shall know Him from the least even to the greatest; and I wondered if it would please the Lord to bring such a time as that to Israel, and to make His Law clear to all our nation, yea, even to the poor and simple, even to the people of the land.

Others that did not observe the Law so exactly as I did, nor felt the burdens thereof so sorely, were nevertheless ill pleased that the Scribes did naught to free them from the yoke of the Gentiles. Of these some dwelt in Judæa, and a few in Peræa; but the more part dwelt in Galilee, insomuch that the sect of Patriots was known by the name of Galileans. There were also

living among us James and John, the two eldest sons of Judas of Galilee, and their youngest brother Manahem. To these, for the sake of their great father, we all had respect. Many also (like myself) were ever in a readiness to avenge upon the Romans the blood of kinsfolk shed in the Galilean wars. Hence it came to pass that in Galilee more than in any region of Syria, the minds of men were ready for revolt against the Romans, and waited but for the ripening of occasion.

Now it came to pass that in the fourteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, there arose a quarrel between the Tetrarch of Galilee and his father-in-law, the King of Arabia; because the Tetrarch had behaved ill to the King's daughter his wife, and sought to divorce her. Then it seemed good to some of my friends to join the army of Antipas the Tetrarch, to the intent that they might thereby gain experience in war; but others spake against it, saying that it was not lawful to take up arms for the unjust against the just.

At this time also a rumour went forth that a new prophet had of late appeared, John by name, the son of Zachariah a priest, who was calling the whole of Israel to repent and to be purified with baptisms, prophesying that the Lord would soon send the Deliverer of Israel, or Messiah: for by this name of Messiah, the Deliverer that was to come (of whom the prophets had prophesied) was commonly known among us. Some said that John himself was the Messiah; others denied it, but said that the Lord had sent down Elias from heaven, and that John was Elias. Many other rumours also were noised abroad, and this rumour

prevailed most, that “One from the East would come forth to rule the world,” which saying had spread even to Italy and Spain: and we in Galilee thought that this conqueror from the East would be our Messiah. Thus, the hearts of all men everywhere being in expectation, it came to pass that many of my friends (who were the leaders of the sect called the Patriots or Galileans), having purposed these many weeks to hold a council, determined at this time to confer together in a little valley between Sepphoris and Nazareth, there to resolve what should be done.

Most of those present were from the inland parts of Galilee: of these Barabbas, and one other, were from Jotapata. Only Hezekiah, the son of Zachariah (a Scribe, who was thought to be well affected towards the Galileans), came from Jerusalem. And from Capernaum came my cousin Baruch, the son of Manasseh, with three others. There were present also from the region of Gaulonitis James and John and Manahem, sons of the famous Judas of Galilee. James the son of Judas spake first, giving his judgment for war, and saying that Israel had slept too long: “For while we sleep,” said he, “the leaven spreadeth; Greek cities cover our land; our own cities are being defiled with Gentile abominations. They are stealing from us even our language. No man may earn a living in Galilee now, unless he speak Greek. With Greek theatres and amphitheatres, and baths, and market-places; with Greek pictures and images, and feasts and games; with Greek songs, and poems, and histories, they purpose, by easy degrees, to beguile the hearts of our young men from the

religion of their forefathers. Our princes are Edomites in the pay of Rome. Our rich men long for the fleshpots of Rome, and call themselves by the name of Herod. Our Scribes, our wise men, cry peace when there is no peace, and wink at the payment of tribute. Publicans and harlots bring down the wrath of God upon the nation, and go unpunished. All these things are as the meshes of the net wherein Rome is encompassing our city. And lo, the fowler layeth the net and the silly bird stayeth still.” Then Baruch said: “But is it so indeed that the Romans would blot out our religion? Do they not suffer all religions? The Gauls, the Spaniards, the Numidians, Egyptians and Scythians, all worship divers gods: so have I heard from a Greek merchant at Capernaum; and this, without let or hindrance from the Romans.”

“Nay,” cried Barabbas, “but thou seest not that the Roman suffereth all false religions and hindereth them not; but he hateth the worship of the true God of Israel. For this alone putteth other gods to shame. The Syrians and the Egyptians scruple not to worship the Roman gods, besides Astarte and Osiris, and to offer incense to the emperor of Rome, to boot. But the children of Israel will bow down to no false god, neither offer they incense before the image of the emperor. Hence cometh it to pass that the Romans hate our religion and would fain destroy it. James therefore speaketh the words of truth; and whoso speaketh otherwise allegeth naught but pretexts of delay and cowardice.”

“Peace, Barabbas,” said John, the son of Judas; “we meet

to hold conference, not to cast reproaches. Nevertheless, my judgment goeth with my brother, that our choice lieth between lingering perdition and speedy deliverance. Hereof this is proof. But lately I was at the Holy City, not many days before the Passover; and there went abroad a rumour that the Procurator Pilate was minded to bring the eagles of the legions from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, yea, even into the streets of the Holy City. Then the Priests, even the Chief Priests, yea, even the whole Council, fell down at Pilate's feet, if perchance he would change his purpose. Multitudes ran together round the Prætorium. In vain did they pray and were disquieted. Under the cloak of night the procurator brought in the Abomination. Then all the men of Jerusalem, and all the pilgrims which had come together from the uttermost parts of the earth, clothed themselves in sackcloth, and sat down in the streets about the palace, with ashes on their heads after the manner of suppliants; crying aloud that they would sit there for ever rather than endure the presence of the Abomination. But when Pilate saw all the streets of Jerusalem thronged, so that no one might pass night and day, and all business was at a stand, did he yield from his purpose? Nay, he gave orders that the armed cohorts should beset the streets around us, threatening to smite us with the sword if we should not straightway void the streets. And when we would not, then went the word forth from the captains to draw the swords; and the swords were drawn, and the soldiers were in act to fall upon us. But we uncovered our necks and held them out to the soldiers,

crying ‘Give us death rather than defilement.’ So at the last, but not till blood had been shed, the procurator gave consent that the images should be sent back. Suppose ye that this was a little matter, naught but an error in judgment of the procurator? Would a procurator have dared to risk the peace of the whole province for a little matter? It was no little matter. Pilate did what he did, not of himself, but at the express instance of the emperor; to prove the limits of our slavishness, and to force us into defilement and into the worship of the Abomination.”

Hereat there was a general applause; but he, not heeding it, continued, “If ye be of one mind with me that the hour is come to smite with the sword; then how and where? I say, let certain of us join ourselves to the army of the Tetrarch, which even now maketh ready to march against Aretas. Thereby we shall gain experience of war, and, as I hope, win over some of the army to our side. As for the tyrant’s guards, the Gauls, Germans, and Thracians, they are bought with his money, so that we have no hope of them; but by far the larger part of the army consisteth of our own countrymen; and many of them may revolt on our side; as they did with Simon against Archelaus, and some also helped Athronges, whom men call a rebel. Meantime, let the rest of us make ready our friends in our several cities to take up arms next Passover. They in Jerusalem will attack the garrison there, others break open the armoury at Sepphoris and in Masada. On the same day our countrymen in Joppa, Cæsarea, and Ptolemais will attack and drive out the Greeks. Then will rise a flame of

war from one end of Syria to the other. Our rich men, even the Herodians, seeing all the people to be of one mind, will stand with us; and having Israel with us as one man, doing battle for the name of the true God against the gods of the Gentiles, doubt not but we shall have also the sword of the Lord on our side, as in the days of Gideon.”

The applause was now yet louder than before; and at first it seemed as though the whole assembly were minded with one consent to obey the words of John the son of Judas of Galilee. But one of the companions of Hezekiah, Levi by name, an old man and grey-bearded, rose up presently and said that the hour had not yet arrived, because, said he, the Sabbath was not yet duly observed, and the wrath of the Lord still weighed upon Israel. Then Barabbas answered with indignation, saying that it was only the rich and delicate, or else they that were enfeebled with old age, who were thus content to be the slaves of idolaters.

Upon this Hezekiah the Scribe stood up to speak: “These young men of Galilee gladly make mention of the old times of Gideon and David, yet do they not themselves imitate the old times in having respect unto old age. For even though Levi were old and enfeebled, yet what saith the Tradition? ‘Old age, though it be broken, is yet to be held in reverence, even as the broken tables of the Law were kept in the ark of the Lord.’ But what meaneth this youth of Jotapata, when he calleth my friend and companion Levi, the son of Ezra, delicate or enfeebled; and all because the advice of Levi is not the advice of Barabbas? Hear,

O ye young men of Galilee, the words of Levi are true: the hour hath not yet arrived. 'What hindereth?' ye ask. I answer in the words of the Wise, 'The dough in the leaven.'

"I also, like John the son of Judas, will give proof of my words; but do ye, being Galileans, incline your ears to the saying of a Galilean, according to the proverb, 'A Galilean said When the shepherd is angry with his flock, he appointeth for their leader a blind bell-wether.' Note therefore the leaders of Israel, which have risen up against the Romans of late. Hath God sent them in anger or in mercy? Have they been blind bell-wethers, or endowed with sight? I say naught of Judas of Gamala, in the presence of his sons: but Judas the son of the robber Hezekiah, how went it with him? He thought in his heart that he was a second Joshua, and that the waters of Jordan would part at his word. But who knoweth not his miserable end? As also the end of Athronges: who aimed at the kingdom because, forsooth, he was in stature a second Saul. Simon also, the slave of Herod the king, when he had shewn forth his valour by destroying the king's palace at Jericho, became a portion for foxes at Amathus, and his head was cast before the feet of the conqueror. Answer then unto me, ye young men. Hath the Lord sent Simon the slave, and Athronges the shepherd, and Judas the son of the robber, in mercy or in wrath?

"Nay, but since shame hindereth your answering, I, even I, a man of Judæa, will answer for you, according as it is said, 'From Judæa grain, from Galilee straw, from Peræa chaff.' The

Lord sent these men in wrath. All these were blind bell-wethers, blinded by the lust of fame or gain. But do ye therefore wait for the true leaders whom the Lord your God will send? Leave it to this young man of Jotapata to follow any knave that may chance to call himself the Redeemer of Israel because, forsooth, he may be a head taller than his neighbours, or may have dreamed a dream, or may perchance have gained some knowledge of herbs or unclean spirits.

“Even now they say there hath appeared in the southern parts (so I heard, coming but now from Jericho) one John the son of Zachariah, concerning whom I judge (if he be indeed a true prophet and no deceiver) that he is either the prophet spoken of by Moses, or else Elias. For that Elias is to come again we all know, because it is so written; and that the prophet like unto Moses must needs appear, this also the Scriptures tell us: but that other prophets should appear is not written, neither is it likely; for the age of prophets is past. But whether this John be Elias or whatever else, meet it is that we go to him; for he may perchance reveal to us what it is our wisdom to do. If ye ask ‘What shall be the sign of the true prophet?’: I answer, it is written in our traditions, ‘A false prophet may shew signs on earth and in the deep; but a sign from heaven he cannot shew.’ Wait therefore till the sign from heaven shall be vouchsafed, revealing the true Prophet, whom it will be our wisdom to obey, and for whom (during this present) it is our wisdom to wait.”

When Hezekiah had made an end of speaking, James the son

of Judas was sore displeas'd at his words, and made as if he would have spoken in answer; but John (who was of a gentler disposition) prevented his brother, and said that Hezekiah gave good counsel. For he, like the rest of us, had been moved by the mention of John the Prophet. So in the end it was determin'd according to the words of Hezekiah the Scribe; and we brake up without resolving anything further, except that we would go straightway, so many of us as conveniently could, to Bethany beyond Jordan, where the prophet was baptizing. But on the morrow and on the day after, when I spake to my friends and acquaintance concerning John the son of Zachariah, it was a marvel to see how greatly the hearts of all men were stirr'd at the thought of a new prophet in Israel. For that after so many hundreds of years a prophet should arise in Israel (none having prophesied since the time of Malachi, the last of the prophets, more than four hundred years ago) this seem'd a marvellous thing and well nigh impossible, and almost as if a man should rise again from the dead. For the prophets were counted as it were dead and out of mind in Israel, meet to be reverenc'd for their past words, but not to be hop'd for in the time to come. For this cause were we much mov'd by the mention of the name of John the son of Zachariah. And as the Prophet Elias from the top of Carmel looking out into the Great Sea and discerning a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, foretold the imminent storm, so did all we in Galilee, on the first breath of the rumour of the coming of a prophet, begin to forebode in our hearts of the coming of

one that should be no common prophet; but, in all likelihood, Elias from the dead; or else one greater than Moses, to give us perchance a new Law and a new Kingdom.

CHAPTER III

On the fourth day, I set out in company with Baruch my cousin, the son of Manasseh, my father's brother, intending to go to Capernaum, and thence to take ship for Gamala, where we were to meet James and John the sons of Judas of Galilee; and so to journey all together to Bethany, where the prophet was. When we were come to Capernaum, we tarried two days in the house of Manasseh: and the second day was the Sabbath. Now the house of Manasseh was nigh unto the wharf, so that nothing stood between it and the lake.

It happened that I was sitting on the house-roof and the sun wanted yet an hour or two of setting; and a tumult arose on the beach below, between a Greek merchant and certain of the townsmen. Word had come to the Greek that his son was sick in Bethsaida and nigh unto death: so he had besought certain of the sailors that they would launch their ship and put out to sea, although the sun had not yet set; to the intent that he might pass over with all speed, if perchance he might see his child before he died. The sailors were persuaded by the man's prayers and gifts, and were preparing their vessel to launch it. But the inhabitants, those of the more devout sort, coming together with stones and staves, threatened the sailors, and forced them to cease, declaring that not a boat should leave the strand till the Sabbath should be ended.

The air was calm and still so that the merchant's words came up even to my ears, as he pointed again and again to the coast over against us: "Surely your God will permit you to do this service of kindness. Yonder is my son, mine only son, dying as if within sight of his father. Strangers will receive his last breath, and close his eyes. I beseech you, as ye are fathers, have compassion on a father who must soon be childless." So saying the Greek beat his breast and tore his hair; but in vain. The ruler of the synagogue, who had gathered the multitude together, would not listen to his entreaties; and he departed, weeping and wailing and calling upon his gods in vain.

Then the ruler of the synagogue, seeing the crowd running together, exhorted them to a more strict observing of the Sabbath, declaring that the breaking of the Sabbath was the principal cause of the wrath of God with His people, and of the delay of the Redemption of Sion. He went on to speak of the blessing of the Redemption, and he besought the people to do what lay in them to hasten it forward, by raising up the fences of the Law, and by constant and scrupulous obedience. "Let all repent," he said, "of former slackness and misdoings; for the Lord your God is merciful, long suffering, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. To Him belong mercies and forgiveness, though ye have rebelled against Him."

By this time a great multitude was come together, and in the uttermost parts of the throng stood certain tax-gatherers (among whom was the principal receiver of customs in Capernaum, by

name Matthew the son of Alpheus), with certain of the looser sort, men and women, outcasts from the synagogue: which had been cast forth, some for weighty offences, but some for light, according to the custom of our Scribes. These had approached, as it seemed to me, because they had heard mention of “mercy,” and “forgiveness”; and their faces were somewhat sad, as if they also would fain have drawn near unto the God of Israel, that they might receive forgiveness of sins. But the ruler of the synagogue, catching sight of them, drove them away with reproaches, reviling them as children of Satan. “Even your alms,” he cried, “we trample under our feet; away, extortioners and harlots, fit food for fire and worms!”

They departed in haste amid the scoffs and curses of the crowd. But their countenances changed as they went, and there seemed no more thought of repentance in them; for they hardened their faces as flint stones because of the reproaches of the chief ruler. Then it came into my heart that the ruler of the synagogue erred, in that he drove away the sinners that would fain have drawn nigh unto the Lord. And not only he, but all our Rabbis and Scribes seemed to be in the same error, because they drove away instead of bringing nigh. For even the words of the Wise tell us that peace is to be proclaimed to the far-off as well as to the near; and to the far-off first. Moreover the words of the Prophet Ezekiel came to my mind, that if the wicked turned from his wickedness and did that which was lawful and right, he should live. Now the ruler of the synagogue had himself also used words

like unto these; yet his acts had not been like unto his words. For after that he had spoken of God as merciful and forgiving, he had driven away the sinners as though God were unmerciful and unforgiving. Therefore he had on his lips the wisdom of the Law; but in the thoughts of his heart and the works of his hand there was no wisdom. Then I repeated to myself the tradition of the Wise, "Whoso hath much wisdom and little works, to what is he like? Even to a tree whereof the branches be abundant but the roots poor and thin: and the wind cometh and uprooteth it and overturneth it." Truly, said I, the wisdom of the Scribes is like unto a tree whereof the roots suffice not for the branches.

Then began I to consider with myself what would be the doctrine of John the son of Zachariah as touching forgiveness and repentance; and it was borne in upon my mind that we lacked, not the true doctrine of forgiveness (for this we had already in the Law and the Traditions), but somewhat beyond the reach of doctrine; albeit, what it was, I did not yet understand. Also methought we had need of some new kind of wisdom that should avail, not only for Scribes and lawyers but also for the people of the land, for ploughmen and fishermen, yea, perchance even for tax-gatherers and sinners. Then behold, as I mused, methought all the precepts of the Law and of the Traditions lay scattered about on the beach, like so many dry bones (according to the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel), and there they lay, awaiting, till the breath of the Spirit of God should blow upon them and give them life. And, in my musing, I saw One coming, and his face

was as bright as the morning star, and the breath of the Lord breathed from his mouth, and he came forward to the bones for to breathe life into them; and I spake aloud and said, “Perchance John the son of Zachariah is the Messiah, and will breathe life into these bones.”

But while I thus mused, came Baruch behind me and touched my shoulder, and pointed to the crowd and said, “See, the sun has now just set; and the people are following the exorcist yonder. Shall we not go with them? He is no common exorcist, but by means of certain herbs known only to himself he can draw an evil spirit out of the nostrils of the possessed; and this hath he done many times this week in the presence of certain of the most notable people in Capernaum, insomuch that all men here do hold him in great esteem. And even now he goeth to cast out an evil spirit from Raphael, the son of one of our neighbours: who hath been possessed now these two years.”

So lost was I in thought that, while Baruch was speaking, I scarce understood the purport of his words. But shouts and shrieks from below caused me to awake out of my trance. So I looked; and behold, a great multitude below, and in the midst thereof a youth possessed with an evil spirit. The youth was led by three strong men; and as he went, he shrieked aloud and struggled against them that led him. Close after them came one whose sorrowful countenance betokened him to be the father of the youth. Before them all went the exorcist.

Here in Britain it is a rare thing to see a man possessed with

a demon. Therefore it is needful to say first, that in the land of Israel (and especially in the lowlands of Galilee along the coast of the Sea of Gennesareth, and also in the valley of Jordan), the unclean spirits prevailed mightily in my days, insomuch that I have noted as many as twelve or even more in a small town, such as Bethsaida. They wandered about the country half clothed or naked, assailing their dearest friends or strangers, or even themselves, with stones or other weapons, such as they could procure. They saw strange sights, demons and flames; their ears were filled with thunderings and roarings of beasts and voices of devils. A stench, as of sulphur and brimstone, was in their nostrils. Their bellies also were beset with worms, toads, snakes, or scorpions; which nevertheless destroyed them not. Two voices, the voice of the demon and the voice of the man, issued from the mouth of the possessed. Verily of all the diseases with which Satan hath been permitted by the Unsearchable (blessed is He) to afflict the children of men, this disease is the worst and cruellest; inasmuch as it poisoneth the very springs of love, causing the son to hate even the father that begot him and the mother that gave him suck.

What were the causes of this evil, wise men have asked, and have given no certain answer. They at Jerusalem said that it was a chastisement because of men's neglect of worship in the Holy Temple; and certain it is, that Gentiles and outcasts from the synagogue were more often possessed than the devout. Nay, I have known some (more especially women) that, having been

possessed, were cured by the offering of sacrifice, or by a more constant attending on the worship in the Temple. Others said that it was a punishment for eating swine's flesh; others for dwelling in houses built amid tombs or on ancient burial-places. But others said that they which lived in the lowlands about the Lake of Gennesareth and in the valley of Jordan were more under the unclean demons; for that the demons possessed and ruled over waterish and low-lying regions. And so much is undoubted, that in the inland highlands of Galilee there were few possessed, and in Jerusalem none, or at least no number worthy of mention; but down in Jericho and Capernaum the possessed could be seen at the corner of every street.

Cure there was none, or at least no certain cure. Sometimes sudden terror or sudden joy availed to drive out the unclean spirit. I have heard of one Joachim the son of Levi, that was vexed with a dumb spirit for many years; but seeing some robbers about to kill his father, the string of his tongue was unloosed, and he cried out to them not to kill him. But no physic, nor no diet, was of any certain avail. This uncertainty brought great gain to many vagrant exorcists which wandered here and there throughout Galilee, their srips full of amulets, charms, drugs, magic roots, and books of incantations. These men, with shouts and shrieks and uncouth gestures and dances, were wont to amaze the demoniacs for a time and to drive them into a kind of torpor; which torpor they called health and peace, and boasted that they had wrought a cure. At other times, by magic arts, they would

persuade Satan to go out of the man for a short time, that they might obtain a reward. But in either case, the cure lasted no long time. For in a brief space the demon would awake again out of torpor; or if he had been driven out, he would return, and sometimes bring with him other demons yet more powerful than himself; insomuch that it was a proverb among us that it was better for a possessed person that the unclean spirit should not be driven out at all, than that, having been driven out, he should be allowed to return.

But about the causes and cures of this evil let others consider and dispute: I speak now of the exorcist in Capernaum. Going down straightway with Baruch, I followed him into a house not two hundred paces from the quay. When we entered, there seemed scarce space for the exorcist and the demoniac in the middle of the chamber, so thick stood the people together; but by favour of the master of the house, who was known to Baruch, we obtained place in the inner part of the circle. The father of the boy now came up to my cousin. "I have taken Raphael," he said, "to many exorcists before, but never a man of them was to be compared with this learned man. I have described to him the nature of the unclean spirit that possesseth my son, and he protesteth to me that he hath frequently driven out the like kind of demons, and that he is assured of success." Meanwhile Raphael, the boy possessed with the unclean spirit, was seated on the ground in the middle. He no longer struggled nor shrieked, but sat quiet, though sullen withal.

Two slaves now came forth, the first carrying in one hand a bucket of water and in the other a covered basket; but the second bore a chafing-dish. Now all voices were hushed, for the exorcist stepped into the middle of the chamber. "Many," he said, "of my profession pretend to drive out evil spirits, but they do not perform what they promise. But that ye may perceive how far Theudas the son of Eleazar differeth from such common vagrants and impostors, I shall not only cast out this unclean spirit, but I shall also give you proof thereof which ye shall see with your own eyes." He then bade the slaves place the bucket upon a shelf in the room where all could see it; but the basket and chafing-dish were set in the midst of the circle.

Perchance the boy began to understand in part that the exorcist was speaking of him; or it may be that from his father's anxious mien and troubled countenance he conjectured that some new thing was at hand. For he leapt from the ground, and shrieked, and blasphemed God, uttering obscene words, tearing his hair, and marring his cheeks with his nails; and but for the two keepers on either side of him he would assuredly have rent off his garments; and even with all their efforts they had much ado to hinder him.

But the exorcist threw a few leaves and fragments of root on the chafing-dish, muttered a charm, waved his wand, and then waited as though for an answer. Then frowning, he waved his wand a second time, and repeated a louder charm, stamping his foot on the ground, and then waited again. A deep silence fell on

all in the chamber, insomuch that no one ventured so much as to draw breath; and even the boy ceased from his struggles and stared amazedly at the exorcist. But he, now standing upright and manifesting in his face that he had received an answer from the unclean spirit, turned from us to the possessed, and fixing his eye full upon his face, he cried in a loud voice, "Thou unclean spirit, thine hour is come. Thy name is revealed unto me, and thy shape likewise. In vain thou wouldst evade my sight, assuming the semblance of a long black worm. Lo! by the mysterious power of King Solomon's ring and these strong roots I will draw thee out of the poor boy's nostrils in the presence of this assembly: and when I say the word, thou, obedient to my commands, shalt leave the body which thou defilest, and, in thy passage, thou shalt overturn yonder vessel of water. Dost hear me? Thy name is Ialdabaoth."

Hereat the demoniac shrieked and raved louder than before, and a deep voice, deeper than the voice of a youth, cried out from within him, "I am Ialdabaoth, the worm of darkness; depart from me." The crowd shouted, and the sorcerer, turning to us, "Sirs," said he, "ye see how the evil spirit is already half conquered; for he hath confessed his name and nature to be even as I foretold." Then turning to the boy and applying a ring to his nostrils, he cried aloud, "Come forth, Ialdabaoth;" and with very great quickness, so that the motion could scarce be perceived, (all the time shouting charms and incantations with a loud voice,) he drew forth from the nostrils of the demoniac a shape like unto a long black worm. Now verily the crowd shrieked as if they

themselves were possessed; but the boy sat, not struggling, but still and pale, as though no life were in him. But the exorcist, turning himself quickly round to the vessel of water behind him, "Away," he cried, "away, worm of darkness! Back, Ialdabaoth, to the abyss! Back through the air: and dash down yonder bucket as thou fliest!" At the word, the worm vanished, the bucket was dashed down, and the boy fell, as it seemed, lifeless.

We all pressed in upon the youth, wishing to discern whether life were still in him, or no; but the exorcist waved us back, as one having authority; and taking the boy by the hand, he raised him up, speaking kind words to him and to his father. Soon his life returned to the boy, and the exorcist restored him to his father, whole and sound (albeit weak and pale), and, as it appeared, delivered from the unclean spirit. The father, weeping for joy, placed a heavy purse in the hand of the exorcist; who, at first, put it from him, as though he would have none of it. But afterwards, while he was receiving the salutations and greetings of them that were departing, one of his slaves, being urged by the father, took the purse and placed it in the covered basket.

As for us, it being now late, we stayed not to congratulate with the father of Raphael; but with all speed, made our way through the press; all the people around us praising God and marvelling at the power which the Lord had given to Theudas the son of Eleazar. But we hastened to the house of Manasseh to make ready for our journey; for we were to set forth early on the morrow. But when the morrow came, behold, Baruch was sick of a fever,

and could not travel; and I tarried for him for the space of four days. But on the fifth day after the Sabbath, Baruch being now in case to travel, we purposed to take ship for Gamala, which lieth on the southern coast of the lake. For our intent was there to join ourselves to James and John, the sons of Judas, and so to continue our journey with them till we came to Bethany in Peræa where John was baptizing.

Now it came to pass that very early in the morning when we were to set out, the sun being not yet risen, I went to the house of Joazar, the father of Raphael, to inquire concerning the boy's welfare. And when I came to the threshold, behold, another stood at the door; but his back was towards me, so that I knew not who he was. And before I could accost him, the door was opened unto us; and behold, a sound as of shrieking and lamentation. Then we both listened, and lo, a deep voice from an upper chamber, and it cried, "We are Ialdabaoth! We are Ialdabaoth, the worms of darkness!" Then came forth other words of blasphemy and filthiness, so that I loathed to listen to them; and I turned to go back. But at that instant I heard the voice of the father bewailing: and the stranger delayed not, but entered into the house; wherefore I also, albeit against my will, was moved to go in likewise.

So I went in, following the stranger till we both came to the door of the upper room: and there I stood, and durst not enter into the chamber; for my heart was empty of comfort, neither knew I how to console the old man in his affliction. But the stranger

that was with me, going forward, spake first of all to Joazar the father, and said some words of kindness to him. Now so it was, that when the stranger first entered into the chamber, the evil spirits ceased not, but raged yet more fiercely than before, crying aloud and saying, "Depart from us; let us alone; let us alone", and the youth also rent his cheeks so that the blood gushed out; and he would fain have leaped up from his bed. But the stranger (whose face I had not yet seen), hearing the voices of the spirits, turned himself round from the old man to the son: and going up to the bedside he stood there, steadfastly looking at the youth. Now when he thus turned himself, then for the first time I beheld his countenance; and, as I remember, I marvelled thereat, and also at the manner of his dealing with the youth. For, first of all, when he looked upon the youth, his face seemed swallowed up with pity; and then of a sudden it changed again, and he stretched out his arm as one having authority, and as if on the point to bid the evil spirits depart, and this he did twice; but twice again he drew back his arm, as if changing his purpose. Then, at the last, the pity came back upon his face all in an instant, so that his features seemed even melted therewith; and he stooped down and embraced the boy, and kissed him; and, as I thought, he whispered words in his ear. But this I know not for certain; howbeit the boy, in any case, ceased from his raging and no longer struggled, but lay still and quiet, only muttering and moaning a little. Hereat the stranger turned himself to Joazar to take his leave; but I (perchance because my mind misgave

me that I had played the eavesdropper, albeit, unwittingly, or for whatever other reason) feared to wait and meet the stranger; so I turned my back, and went forth in haste from the house.

When I was come to Baruch again, I held my peace concerning Raphael, lest I should stir up melancholy in my cousin, since he was freshly recovered from his disease. But, when we went on board the vessel, the sailors were not yet ready to sail. So I lay down on the sleeping-cushion: but no sleep fell upon my eyes. For there appeared ever before me the image of the demoniac Raphael and his sorrowful father; and my heart was weighed down with the thought of their affliction. But I grieved not for them alone, but also for the daughter of Sion; who seemed to be, in a manner, possessed with an evil spirit, and to cry aloud for some one that should cast it out. All the deliverers of old seemed to be even as Theudas the son of Eleazar; and even as the demon had returned into Raphael, so that his last state was worse than the first, even so it seemed with Israel; therefore I besought the Lord to hasten the time of the coming of the true Redeemer of Sion.

As I mused, I began to consider with myself what would be the manner of the true redemption. Beside the demoniac, there appeared unto me the face of Matthew the publican and the faces of the sinners. It was borne in upon my mind that, even though every legionary in Syria were slain or driven out, and though the borders of Israel should be enlarged from the Nile to the Euphrates, yet if we still had amidst us sinners unforgiven, and

Priests and Rulers with no power to forgive nor to convert, then of a surety the evil spirit would not depart from us save only for a season.

By this time, as I remember, we were but just putting out into the deep, and the sun was risen. And there came down certain fishermen to the beach to prepare their tackling for fishing: and with them there came one that, as I noted, was no fisherman (for he was not girt as a fisherman): and he walked down to the brink of the waters and looked out steadfastly to the deep. And so it was that, as he looked, the sun even that instant rising above the eastern mountains, shone suddenly upon his face so that I could see it clearly (though we were by this time a full furlong from the shore); and behold, it was the countenance of the stranger that I had seen that same morning in the house of Joazar. So I called to Tobias straightway and asked him who the stranger might be: and Tobias raised himself upon his elbow where he lay on the sleeping-cushion, and he looked, and knew him, and told me his name. And then first I heard the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Again I lay down to sleep, but still no sleep would come to me: wherefore I took forth from my bosom the book of the prophet Isaiah, which I had with me, and began to read therein. And so it was that as I unrolled it, my eyes fell upon the place where the prophet saith, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. . . . Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths,

the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.”

Now at that word, “the new moons and sabbaths I cannot away with,” I ceased from reading. For I seemed to hear the Greek merchant weeping and crying to the sailors, “Surely your God will permit you to do this service of kindness.” Then I called to mind the words of the Lord, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;” and behold, it came in upon me all at once, as in a flood, that our exactness in the observing of the Sabbath might haply be an abomination in the eyes of the All-seeing (blessed is He) whensoever it hindereth kindness and mercy. After this my eyes again fell upon the roll, and I read aloud these words wherein the prophet prescribeth the cure for the wounds of Israel. “Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” Then I cried aloud, “Is not this a plain and simple path even for the people of the land, that all Israel should walk therein.”

Now so it was that Baruch had come up while I was thus reading and speaking aloud; and I knew it not. So he answered and said, “Thou speakest well; notwithstanding I have heard a certain Greek of mine acquaintance in Capernaum say that virtue cannot be taught; for that some men have their hearts inclined by nature to do well, but others to do ill; so that it availeth nothing to say ‘Learn to do well.’ ” Then was I silent for a while, for methought the Greek said well, and indeed we needed, not so much that a new path should be made plain, as that a clean heart

and a right spirit should be created anew within us, according as it is written, “Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” So in the end I concluded to wait till we should understand what new message the prophet John the son of Zachariah might bring to us from the Lord, if perchance he might teach us aught concerning the creating of a right spirit. But by this time our ship was come to Gamala; where we were courteously entertained by James and John the sons of Judas; and we abode with them three days. But on the fourth day we set out for Bethany of Peræa.

CHAPTER IV

As we drew near to Bethany, we noted many hundreds of travellers on the road, the most part on foot, but many on asses and camels; for rich as well as poor were journeying to the new prophet. A full score of Scribes went past us in the space of an hour; there were also some soldiers going to Machærus; here and there was a tax-gatherer; and Baruch took note of certain that were sinners, outcasts from the synagogue of Capernaum. We had now been journeying for a day and a half; and toward the end of the second day, we began to see the valley of Jordan right over against us. Going down a little further, we perceived that there was a great multitude gathered together near the bank of the river; and presently we could clearly discern the prophet himself.

Around him stood men in white garments awaiting purification; at a somewhat greater distance, the mixed multitude hearkening to his words. John himself, wearing no tunic, but clad only in a rough mantle of camel's hair with a girdle of untanned leather, was sitting upon a rock, and thence he was speaking to the people in a clear voice, whereof the sound (though not as yet the meaning) was borne up even to our ears. For a while we stood still, with one consent, marvelling at the sight; for there had not been a prophet in Israel for four hundred years and more; but presently, riding down with all speed, we came into the valley, and joined ourselves to the multitude: and, albeit, we could not

come very nigh to John, for the press, yet was there such a stillness among all the assembly, that we very soon understood whatsoever he said.

He had been speaking (this I learned afterwards from one of the bystanders) concerning the old wars and troubles which the Lord had sent on Israel; how, according to the saying of the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord had brought the Assyrian against the land as an axe, whereby He had cut down our chosen nobles and princes, even as a woodman felleth the choicest trees. Also how, in the days of the Prophet Jeremiah, the Lord had sent the blast of His wrath upon the people, and had winnowed away the unstable and faithless into captivity, even as a winnower fanneth the chaff from the wheat. The same things were at hand even now, he said: "Now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

Hereat the multitude cried aloud, saying that it was even so; for indeed we all felt in our hearts that the prophet spake the truth. As the Assyrian axe in the days of old, so now the Roman axe was laid at the root of Israel; and unless the Lord turned away His wrath from us, the nation would be destroyed. But then a stillness fell upon the multitude, as we waited till the prophet should tell us what we should do to turn away the Lord's wrath.

Then the prophet set his face toward the men in white garments, and said to them that they should cleanse their hearts and not their bodies merely, and put away the iniquity of their

souls, and he called upon them to confess their sins. He bade them also not to trust in their being children of Abraham, nor in the purifications of the Law, nor in the observances of Sabbaths and feast-days. If, said he, the tree was to escape the axe, it must no longer be barren: “bring forth fruits therefore worthy of repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

Saying these words, he beckoned to the men in white robes that they should follow him. The multitude made way for them; and he led them down to a place by the side of the river where the reeds and thickets of willow-beds had been rooted up, so that there might be free passage into the water. Then he cried in a clear voice, “Receive the baptism of Repentance,” and bade them plunge themselves beneath the surface. At the same time he offered up prayers to God; and we upon the higher bank said, Amen. When he had made an end of baptizing the men, he went up again to the rock, and thence he again spoke to the people; and as many as desired purification went up to him there.

Now while the people were going up by courses, I also began to resolve in my heart that I too would go up in the order of my course. Yet had I sore misgivings in my soul; for it seemed as if I were on the verge of a great sea, launching out into the deep I knew not whither. For the teaching of this new prophet in no wise agreed with the teaching of the Scribes and Lawyers, whom I had revered; and if I went with him, I perceived that I must

needs go away from them. Now it came to pass that a certain Scribe (who was with our company) perceived the reasonings of my heart, and that I was desirous to receive purification at the hands of John. Therefore he took me by the cloak, and held me back, saying, "Behold, if John the son of Zachariah speaketh well, the Scribes have spoken ill, and have taught ill. Yea, and all thy study of the Law, and thy painful meditations therein, and thy nightly watchings and weariness of the flesh have all been in vain. But wilt thou lightly forsake the teaching of the Law and the Traditions of the Fathers, and all for the sake of one new prophet, concerning whom thou knowest not as yet even that he is a prophet? And wherefore shouldst thou thus seek after prophets? Knowest thou not that the Inscrutable (blessed be He) decreed that, after the destruction of the first Temple, there should be no longer with us the Shekinah, nor the Holy Spirit, nor the Urim and Thummim; wherefore it is said, 'From the fourth year of King Darius, the Holy Spirit no longer rested upon the prophets.' But in the place of the prophets (who were not always with Israel) thou hast now the Scribes always with thee, according as it is said, 'Moses received the Law from Sinai, and the elders delivered it to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the Great Congregation;' and it is also said, 'from the time that the Temple was destroyed, the gift of prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the Wise.' "

His words moved me, and I restrained myself for the time. Yet on the other side there rose in my heart a certain Voice, which

seemed to come from the Lord, saying, "The words of John are right, and they are simple, converting the soul. Moreover, they are fit for the people of the land, and not only for Scribes and scholars and pedants. But that he is a prophet, thine own heart convinceth thee; for even when thou hearest him, thou knowest that he speaketh not from himself, but that he is taught from above. And did not also the prophets of old speak like things, saying, 'Rend your hearts, and not your garments,' and bidding Israel not to offer sacrifice, but to shew mercy, and not to observe Sabbaths, but to do judgment and relieve the oppressed?" So between the words of the Scribe and the words of the Voice within me I was in a great strait. Howbeit for the time I restrained myself and did nothing, but remained where I was, giving heed to the words of the Prophet.

Now it came to pass that certain of the soldiers from Machærus went up: and all we in the crowd waited silently expecting that the Prophet would deny purification to these men, except they should first promise to depart from the army of Herod. But he commanded them only to abstain from robbery and outrage. Upon this certain tax-gatherers (whom the Romans call publicans) took confidence, and they too went up. And now indeed all we that looked on, expected that there should have been a great outburst of wrath and of cursing upon them, as upon traitors and apostates from Israel. But the Prophet received these also, and bade them exact no more than that which was appointed to them. To others he said that they were to observe that saying

in the Traditions which enjoyneth the doing of kindnesses; that is to say, they were to clothe the naked and to feed the hungry, and the like.

Hereupon arose a murmuring among certain of the Scribes from Jerusalem, who were standing nigh to the place where I was: and I heard the voice of Hezekiah son of Zachariah saying in an austere manner, "It is said, 'On three things the world is stayed; on the Law, and on the Worship, and on the bestowal of Kindnesses:' what meaneth this teacher of strange things therefore, to subvert the Law and the Worship, in that he maketh no mention thereof, but he exalteth Kindnesses to the skies?" Then another said, "He allegeth the authority of no teacher; why therefore hearken we to him?" But a third said, "Peradventure he is a prophet, and is taught of God." But Hezekiah made answer, "The time of prophets hath passed. Besides, he hath wrought no sign from Heaven; how know we therefore that he is a true prophet?"

These things spake the Scribes together, as we went back from the river to the place where our tents were pitched; for by this time the sun was setting. But all that night long my thoughts still beat on the doctrine of John; and I marvelled much whence it came that the people so flocked to John as to a prophet; yea, and that my own heart also was so drawn towards him, although he had wrought no sign in heaven, nor so much as driven out any unclean spirit. But the reason seemed to me partly in himself. For his very countenance, yea, even his gesture and carriage,

proclaimed him to be, not a student of books, but one that was taught of God; and yet further the hardships that he endured, and the manner of his clothing and food (for he fed on nothing but locusts and wild honey) shewed to all men that he did not prophesy for gain. But another reason lay in his doctrine. For the doctrine of John was simple and just, commending itself to the consciences of men; not flattering any nor busying itself with abstruse matters; but fit for the work of life and the paths of busy men, able, as it seemed, to carry purity and righteousness even to the side of the plough, and into the ranks of armed men, and into the shops and offices of tradesmen and tax-gatherers. For this cause the teaching of John won a way into the hearts of men of every degree, save only certain of the Pharisees. So when I thought on all these things, I began to be convinced that he was sent of God.

But when I went forth on the morrow to behold the purification of the disciples and to hear the teaching of the Prophet, my heart was even more drawn unto him. For I compared him with Abuyah the son of Elishah, and with the ruler of the synagogue, that had driven away the tax-gatherers and sinners from the teaching of repentance; and it seemed to me that John was as much better than they, as light is better than darkness. For though he were of a stern countenance and austere in aspect, yet was the austerity of John in no wise as the austerity of Abuyah the son of Elishah. For Abuyah was sour and peevish, for that he ever loved to find fault, and because he desired to

obtain occasion for rebuking, to the intent that he might persuade himself that he was better than others: but John seemed to be austere only because he hated sin. So I no more delayed, but went up with the rest, about the second hour of the day; and I confessed my sins and received purification.

After we had been purified, I stood with the rest, clothed in white garments, wholly given up to meditating upon the new life whereto we seemed to have risen out of the waters. But I was aroused by hearing these words spoken with a great vehemency of anger: “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” Great indeed was my astonishment when, raising myself to see what they were to whom the Prophet was thus speaking, I discerned the faces of some of the most famous Scribes in Jerusalem. It seemed that they had been questioning him who he was and by what authority he taught these things. But the Prophet rebuked them with exceeding indignation. For he said that they were even as barren trees, full of leaf, but bearing no fruit, fit for naught but to be cut down and cast into the fire. Then they went backward, being put to utter confusion; but John turned to us that had been purified, and spake to us a second time as follows:

“I am not the Christ. Call not yourselves my disciples: for I myself am naught but a herald in the wilderness preparing the way for the Great King. But verily the King cometh. Therefore weep no more for the evils of sin. The rough ways of oppression shall be made smooth; the crooked paths of deceit and violence

shall be made straight. Let the daughter of Jerusalem rejoice greatly, for her salvation is nigh. For the glory of the Lord draweth near, and all flesh shall see it together. Notwithstanding think not of me as your deliverer. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, and the Bridegroom of Sion is the Redeemer, who shall espouse her in the day of salvation. I am but the friend of the Bridegroom. Nay, I am but his servant, not worthy to follow him as slave, nor to loose the latchet of his sandal. Ye ask in your hearts who I am. But think not of me, for I am as one that is no man. I am naught but a voice, even the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.' ”

Then he warned us that had been purified not to suppose that we needed no further purification. Speaking of the old days of Joshua the Conqueror, he brought to our minds how our fathers had two kinds of purification; one inferior, with water, wherewith they purified things perishable, such as garments and the like; but a more searching purification, wherewith they purified silver and gold and other imperishable things, and this was with fire. Even so, he said, it was given to him to purify only with the washing of water; but one would come after him, the Messiah and Redeemer; and he would purify us with fire and with the Holy Spirit.

In the evening, when we, that had received the purification, conversed together in the inn at Jericho, there was much questioning whence the Messiah should come, and by what signs

he should be known. But most of the Scribes did not believe that John was a true prophet; and Hezekiah protested that he ought not to be called a prophet, for he had wrought no sign, not even on earth, much less in heaven. But this he said not openly, for fear of the multitude; for almost all believed John to be a prophet.

But on the morrow, when we turned ourselves to go northward, heaviness fell upon my heart, and all things seemed flat and unprofitable. All our counsels of action, whether to join ourselves to the army of Herod, or straightway to rise up against the Romans, behold, they now seemed no longer the wisdom of men, but rather the vain talk of children. For what could Barabbas and the sons of Judas do, in comparison with the true Redemption which had been prophesied by the Prophet; or how could they avail to bring about the day of that Redemption? It seemed to be our wisdom to wait for the Lord, who alone could send the true Redeemer. And yet, on the other hand, how was it possible for one that loved Israel and longed after righteousness, to look patiently upon the servitude of his country? Hence I loathed the thought of living in peace at home.

When I returned to Sepphoris, I applied myself to labour and to study, if perchance I might settle my thoughts; but I could not, for I was divided between two minds. At one time I was minded to obey John and his teaching, and to set no store on the teaching of the Scribes, nor to give heed to what were called the "light precepts" of the Fathers, such as those concerning tassels and fringes, and the purification of vessels, and the observance of the

Sabbath for things without life, and the like; and it seemed nobler to cast these things away, and to say that mercy, and judgment, and truth, and kindness, were the great commandments, and whoso observeth these, observeth all. But then at other times, when I considered with myself how frail and fitful a thing is man, how impotent for all good ends, and how easily led aside from the right path by passion and by ignorance, then I trembled at the thought of casting down the fences which had been raised by the generations of the wise; for I feared lest I should be guilty of presumption, and should fall, and be swallowed up with an utter destruction.

But in the minds of other men (and not in me alone) there was at this time much unsettlement and many searchings of heart. For many others in Sepphoris became ill-content with the teaching of the Scribes, and with the performance of the precepts of the Law. Some men even said that, when the Messiah came, there should be no more Law. So, if, even before, men had been expecting the Messiah and looking forward to the Redemption of Sion, much more did they do so now, after the preaching of John the Prophet; insomuch that the whole of Galilee became as dry fuel ready for the flame: and nothing was wanting save a spark of fire from heaven to kindle the whole into a great blaze.

By this time I had numbered thirty-four years, or something more; and it was the fourteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius.

CHAPTER V

Now it came to pass that about this time, at the beginning of the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, very early in the spring, the only son of my mother's eldest brother died in Alexandria; and my mother's brother (whose name was Onias) sent to my mother desiring her that she would suffer me to come to Alexandria to visit him during his affliction. He was a shipwright and a man of great wealth, possessing many corn-ships; and he was desirous to have adopted me for his son. But to this I would not consent, nor did my mother urge me thereto. Howbeit out of love for her brother, and because she thought it would be for my advantage, she desired me to visit my uncle for a time. I had no mind to remain in Alexandria, nor to leave my mother for long. But at my mother's bidding I was willing to go to my uncle for a season, if perchance I might comfort him a little.

Two days I spent at Cæsarea Stratonis waiting for the sailing of our vessel; and during that time my heart was moved within me, for that I saw on all sides the signs of the power and prosperity of the Gentiles; for a Gentile city this was, insomuch that, though the wall be on holy ground, yet was the city itself esteemed of our Scribes to be defiled and in a Gentile land. For the region round about was called the land of life; but the city was called the daughter of Edom. A great breakwater here protecteth the ships from the rage of the sea. Each stone therein is thirty cubits

long, six cubits deep, and seven cubits broad, let down into water twenty fathom deep. Above the waters the breakwater is of the breadth of one hundred and forty cubits. Over against the mouth of the haven standeth a temple dedicated to Cæsar, and thereon two images of marble, very large, the one of Cæsar, the other of Rome. There is also in this city a theatre, and an amphitheatre, and a market-place, after the manner of the Greeks; and in all parts of the city there were to be seen baths, and gardens, and palaces, and porticoes, and other public buildings, all adorned, after the Greek fashion, with images of living creatures. When I looked on these things, Satan tempted me and said, "God loveth the Romans more than He loveth the children of Israel; and the wisdom of the Greeks is greater than the wisdom of Sion."

More, yea much more grievously did Satan tempt me when I was come to that great city, even to Alexandria. For here the streets were broader and the public buildings also larger and goodlier than those of Cæsarea; and in the streets and public gardens, yea even in the households of the Gentiles to whom my uncle commended me, I perceived the abominations of idolatry. For on every side were to be seen images and pictures of false gods and of demons which they called demigods and heroes; insomuch that the walls of the houses and the chambers, yea even the seats, and couches, and ornaments of dress, and utensils of furniture, and instruments of music were all painted or carven with abominable devices, setting forth the doings of these demons. But when I heard the interpretation of these pictures and

graven images, then sometimes indeed my heart loathed them for their lewd and profane spirit; but at other times I was constrained to confess that there was a certain wondrous beauty and delight in the songs of certain of the poets of the Gentiles.

Here also men of all nations and religions, Jews and Greeks, Romans and Egyptians, and strangers from the East, lived all together in peace, making gain, and worshipping after the traditions of their fathers; and no one vexed nor oppressed other. All this troubled me, for I said in my heart, "There is but one God: how then doth the All-powerful (blessed is He) endure that the Gentiles should live thus prosperously in the worship of gods that are no true gods?"

My uncle's house also was a snare unto me and a temptation; for although he himself revered the Law, yet did he consort with many of our nation which scoffed at the Scriptures and warred against all sacred things, making it their delight to have the commandments of the Lord in derision, and saying to the faithful among their countrymen, "Do ye still make account of your laws as if they contained the rules of the truth? Yet see, the Holy Scriptures, as ye call them, contain also fables, such as ye are accustomed to laugh at, when ye hear others say the like."

When I rebuked these backsliders and revolters in the presence of my uncle, he spake kindly to me; yet did his words shake my faith. As for the Scribes whose teaching I had once so prized, he described them as meaning well, but not teaching well; and he called them "puzzle-browed sophists," and "those

that busy themselves with the letter.” The letter of the Law, he said, was full of falsehoods, such as the Greeks call myths, which were intended to warn the wise from cleaving unto the letter of the Law.

Again, he exhorted me not to despise the learning of the Greeks, nor the teaching of the Gentile Scribes, whom they called “Philosophers.” “For,” said he, “they enlarge and open the mind and help to the right understanding of the Law of Israel.” But when I repeated the proverb of my countrymen, “The very air of Palestine maketh wise,” and said that the Scribes in Galilee eschewed the Greek learning, warning their pupils against it, as against a net that entangleth the feet, and when I appealed to the Scribes of my uncle’s acquaintance, hoping that they should have been on my side, behold, they were with one consent against me and with my uncle. For they all said that the Galilean Scribes spake as unlearned men, and that there was much to be learned from a certain Gentile philosopher called Plato; and one added a line from a Greek play-writer which saith “even from enemies one may win learning.” Then was I staggered in my judgment, and bent to their opinion, so that I began to frequent the schools of the philosophers.

But great indeed was my perplexity and bewilderment when I found that these philosophers treated not of such subjects as I had supposed, namely of the nature of the soul, and whether it be mortal or immortal, or whether there be many gods or one God; but they questioned whether the world came together by chance

or by design, and whether there be any God or no. Yet howsoever they differed among themselves, they agreed all in believing that our God was not the true God, and that the stories of the mighty works wrought by Him for our forefathers were mere myths and fables; or, if any thought otherwise, they held that our stories were no truer than their stories, and that Æsculapius and Hercules were far more worthy of honour than Elijah and Samson. Now a certain voice within me constantly testified that they were in error; for the righteous teaching of our prophets and our lawyers far exceeded anything that the Gentiles could shew from their philosophers or lawgivers. But I had been taught by the Scribes of Galilee not to trust to this voice within me, namely to my conscience, but only to tradition and authority; and behold, my traditions and the authority whereon I set store were rejected by these Gentiles: wherefore I knew not how to answer them.

It came to pass that, on a certain day, going from lecture-room to lecture-room, I perceived a great multitude passing into a hall in the Great Library, where there was to be a dispute between two philosophers; so I followed with them. One of the two belonged to the sect called the Stoics, and the other to the sect called the Epicureans; and the dispute was concerning the government of the universe by the gods, which is affirmed by the former sect, but denied by the latter. Now the contention had endured for the space of a whole day already, and yesterday the Stoic had delivered his arguments: but to-day the dispute was to be continued by the other, and so it was that, when I entered the

chamber, the Epicurean was at the point to speak.

He began with reckoning up how many unjust acts, how many oppressions and sins, how many diseases and miseries, had been let loose by the gods (if gods there were) to prey upon the children of men. He set forth the diverse gods and goddesses worshipped by diverse nations; the gods of the Grecians and Romans, wrought of marble or ivory; the sword worshipped by the Scythians; the cat and ibis by the Egyptians. What, he asked, had they all done for their servants? Then he said that in a certain region of Syria there lived a nation which professed to reject the gods of other nations and to believe in one only god: but to what end? Their god had allowed their enemies to destroy his own temple with fire, and had given up his chosen people to be the servants of the Romans. He added a story of one of our learned men, whose life had been blameless and whose teaching had been of the One True God. "Yet," said the Epicurean, "what befell this teacher of truth in his old age? His god delivered him into the hands of persecutors, who placed his tongue between the teeth of a dog which had been made exceeding fierce with hunger; and so the dog bit off the tongue of the pious teacher, even that tongue which had ever spoken words of truth. What say we then? If there be a god, then he suffered this wickedness (for without him is naught); and therefore he is wicked. But if there be no god, then at least we are delivered from the constraint to believe that the Supreme Governor of the world is worse than the worst of men."

The people, who had been on the side of the Epicurean

from the first, in despite of the interruptions of the Stoic, now loudly applauded; and when it fell to the Stoic to speak, he had little to say. If he discoursed of oracles as proofs of the divine foreknowledge, then the Epicurean asked who had ever been profited by oracles, bringing forward many dark sayings of the gods, which had led men to destruction; and other sayings that savoured of manifest folly; adding thereto jests and flouts of oracles drawn from the plays of the comedians. When the Stoic spake of a life after death, and alleged apparitions of the dead, then his adversary answered that the said apparitions were mere unsubstantial phantasms, such as appear to madmen and drunkards when they see all things twofold. Lastly, when the Stoic spake of judgment after death, and a final consumption of the world by fire, then the Epicurean demanded proof hereof; and he laughed at the stories of Minos and Rhadamanthus as nursery fables and bugbears to frighten babes withal. He also compared the Supreme Being of the Stoics burning up the world, to an unskilful cook that burneth the cake that he is baking.

Again the people laughed loudly, and shouted applause; but the Stoic, touched with choler, left reasoning with his adversary and began to revile him, calling him atheist and sacrilegious wretch, and other names; which only made the people laugh the more. But I came forth from the theatre sick at heart and saddened, not more by the arguments of the Epicurean than by the faithlessness of the multitude. Then said I, "How know I that there is a life after death? or who hath returned from the grave

to bring back word thereof? For it is written, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' But wherefore? 'Even because,' saith the Scripture, 'there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.' " Then again I lamented that I had wasted my years in labour, and much study had been to me a weariness in the flesh, and I said, "It would have been wiser to have preferred mirth, for it is written, 'A man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat and drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.' "

From henceforth my days and nights were busied with such questions as these, which crept into my soul against my will, and would not be driven out: After death shall I live no more, and will no one even once think of me, since infinite time burieth all things in forgetfulness? Will it be even as though I had never been born? When was the world created, and what was in the beginning before the world? If the world was from all eternity, then it will always be; but if it had a beginning, then must it likewise have an end. And, after the end of the world, what will be then? What perhaps but the silence of death?

Being constantly given up to such thoughts, I resorted yet more diligently to the schools of the philosophers, hoping to obtain some deliverance from my doubts: but I saw nothing but the contentions of orators, and the foyning and thrusting of rhetoricians, fighting not for the truth, but each desiring to prove himself more skilful than his adversaries. So it came to pass that I

inclined, now to one, now to another. As, for example, at one time they that taught the immortality of the soul seemed to prevail; then again they that would have the soul to be mortal. When the former doctrine had the upper hand, I rejoiced: when the latter, I was downcast. Thus was I driven to and fro by differing opinions, and was forced to conclude that things appear not as they are in themselves, but as they happen to be presented on this side, or on that. My brain was in a greater whirl than ever, and I sighed from the bottom of my heart.

At the last I went to my uncle in my distress, and poured forth my troubles in his ear. But when he had hearkened to my complaints, he said, "It will be well that thou shouldst have speech with Philo; for he is our principal teacher here, and he will answer thy doubts." But I said in my haste and impatience, "Behold, I have resorted unto the wisest teachers in Galilee, and now, at thy word, I have frequented the lectures of these Gentile philosophers; but they have added nothing to me, for they are as dried-up springs." At this my uncle laughed, and said, "Suppose not, O son of my sister, that our Philo is like unto the Scribes of Galilee: for as well might a dog hope to lap up the Nile as that thou shouldst drain dry the wisdom of Philo the Alexandrine." So without more ado I accompanied him to the house of Philo.

When we entered the house of Philo, I admired first of all the homely plainness of his household. For though he were one of the foremost Jews in Alexandria (and there were nigh unto a hundred myriads of our countrymen in the city and the country

round about) and kinsman also to Alexander the Alabarch, whose wealth was known to all, yet were there no signs of luxury, nor of pride in his house, nor in his furniture nor in his clothing: and his wife also wore a plain and simple garment without plaiting of the hair, or painting, or adornment with gold and precious stones; and in all the house there was naught whereat the strictest Pharisee could have been offended.

Philo received us courteously; and when I had opened to him at large all my doubts, he replied fully to them. I cannot at this time set down exactly all that we spake together; but this was the substance. First, I said that I was loth to be as one of the backsliders among my countrymen, who in effect gave up the Law, deriding it as a heap of fables; yet on the other hand, I confessed that after much study of the Law I had not been able to attain to righteousness nor peace. Thereto Philo made answer that he was not one of them that rejected the Law of Israel; for he diligently observed it, believing that it contained all knowledge and all wisdom; “and,” said he, “I consider that Moses was the greatest and most perfect of men, and that he attained unto the very pinnacle of wisdom.¹ But as for the wisdom of the Greeks, it is but as a handmaid in respect of our wisdom; even as the slave Hagar was, in respect of her mistress and queen, Sarah. Notwithstanding,” added he, “when I speak of our Scriptures, I mean that there are two interpretations of every Scripture. There is first the outer meaning, which is as it were the body; but there

¹ See [Note II](#).

is, next, the inner spiritual meaning, which is, as it were, the soul. Thus, for example, when thou readest that Eve was made out of the rib of Adam, or that the world was made in six days, or that God talked with Moses in a thorn-bush, the letter of these Scriptures is indeed fable, but the spiritual meaning is truth and life.” Then said I, “If the letter be fable, why retain the letter?” But he said, “And if the body be unspiritual, why retain the body? As well cast away the body because it is not soul, as cast away the letter because it is not spirit.”

Then I asked, “But how shall I attain righteousness?” Philo replied, “All men have in them a certain spiritual nature, in virtue whereof they are allied with the Word of God. Whosoever recogniseth the sins wherewith he is defiled, hath the power (if he will use it) of rising above his passions, and conquering his lusts, so that in the end, by repentance and by constant struggling after righteousness, he can follow after the virtues of the Father in heaven who begat him.” Then said I, “All this have I done; for I have now these many years observed not only the words of the Law, but also the Traditions of the Elders; yet have I not attained peace.” But he said, “Thou puttest first that which should come second; first aim after the virtues that have to do with men; afterward shalt thou attain the virtue that hath to do with God.” “It would seem therefore,” said I, “that thou dost not advise thy disciples to withdraw themselves from the world, after the manner of hermits.” “Yea, but I do advise them,” said Philo; “only first men should attain to the lower step before aiming at

the higher. For first, they should study truthfulness, striving to love their neighbours, and to be helpful and gentle to all; for man should be gentle, and not savage, being fitted by nature for fellowship and concord. But after that thou hast attained to this lower stage, my counsel is that thou forsake thy home and thy friends, and thy wealth, and all that thou hast, and that thou abstain from business of state, and from all traffic, and that thou give thyself entirely to the contemplation of the divine essence.”

Then said I, “Methinks, many of our Scribes in Galilee would not please thee; for they seek after righteousness by other ways, observing the smallest matters of the Law, and afflicting the flesh.” “Tell such an one from me,” said Philo, “when thou shalt see him perchance abstaining from food or drink at the times of eating, or disdaining the bath and the use of oil, or tormenting himself with a hard couch or with night-watchings, deceiving himself with this show of abstinence, that he is not in the true way to continence, and that all his labour is in vain.”

“But what,” asked I, “is this highest revelation of the essence of the Supreme (blessed is He) to which the soul shall at last attain?” Philo paused a moment and then answered, “Thou shalt attain to the knowledge of God, as mere being or existence.” But I, not understanding him aright, said, “Thou sayest ‘existence:’ dost thou mean ‘holy existence?’” But Philo answered with a smile, “How can we call Him holy who is holier than all holiness? But by ‘mere existence,’ I mean that which is known as existence and in no other way.” Then I said, “May we not therefore call

Him good? or loving?” “Call Him so,” replied Philo, “if thou dost not believe that He is better than all goodness, more loving than all love.”

Hereat my heart sank within me; for such a God as this “mere existence” seemed to me not a being able to love me nor to be loved by me, no more than if it had been a triangle or a circle. But presently I called to mind that Moses had named God the Father of the spirits of all flesh: and the prophets also had named God Father. Therefore said I to Philo, “And the name Father also? May we not give this name to God?” “No,” said Philo, “except in order to teach the common folk; as when the Scripture saith that God chasteneth those whom He loveth, like as a father chasteneth his son. For God cannot change; neither can He feel anger, nor love, nor joy. But when the Scripture sayeth such words as these, it speaketh for the common multitude, even as when it saith that God spake or heard; or that He smelled a sweet savour; or that He awaked from sleep; or that He repented of that which He had done.”

When I heard this, it seemed to me that I had come to Philo for naught; but I said to him, “Thou speakest of that revelation of God, which thou callest mere existence, as being the highest revelation. Is there then a lower revelation?” “Certainly,” he replied, “for just as there is, in human life, the thing and the word that revealeth the thing, even so is there also on the one hand God, the true God, **THAT WHICH IS**, and on the other hand the Word of God, which revealeth God to the minds of men.” Then

I questioned him concerning this Word of God, or Logos (as he called it, using a Greek name): and he answered me fully, yet not so that I could altogether understand him. But this I gathered, that the Word or Logos was a second divine being, inseparable from the Father; and that by the Word was the world made. But sometimes he said that the world, as conceived by the intellect, *was* the Word, (“for,” said he, “as a city, not yet being, is in the mind or reason of the architect thereof, so the world, albeit not being, was in the mind or reason of God”;) and with these exact words he made an end of this part of his discourse, for I set them down at the time: “If any one should desire to use still plainer terms, he would not call the world (regarded as perceptible only to the intellect) as anything else but the Reason of God busied with the creation of the world; for neither is a city, while only perceptible to the intellect, anything else except the reason of the architect.”

Then said I, “But how do men attain to the revelation of the Word?” “By the exercise of the divine Word or Reason within them,” said Philo; “for all men have in themselves a ray of light from the archetypal Light, the Word of the Supreme Being. For no mortal thing is framed, nor could have been framed, in the similitude of the Supreme Father; but only after the pattern of the second deity, the Word. Now this Word can be received of all them that will live according to it. For the race of mankind is twofold, the one being the race of them that live by the Divine Spirit and reason; the other, of such as live

according to the pleasures of the flesh. The universe therefore, apprehended by the reason of man, conveyeth the revelation of the Word. And this revelation, this heavenly food of the soul (which Moses calleth manna), the Word of God meteth out in equal portions among all them which are to use it. For the blessed soul proffereth her own reason as the holy goblet of true joy. But who can pour forth the wine of life, save only the Cup-bearer of God, the Master of the Feast, the Word? And indeed the Cup-bearer differeth in no wise from the draught. For the Word is the draught itself, pure and unpolluted.”

Then it was borne in upon my mind, that in all his discourse (which inforced attention by reason of the beauty of his sayings, and because of his exceeding earnestness) he had left no place for the Messiah or Redeemer of Israel, whose coming had been prophesied by John, the son of Zachariah. Therefore I questioned him of this matter. But he smiled and said, “Trouble not thyself on this matter; for it is likely that no Messiah is to come. But it will come to pass, in the day of Redemption, that the children of Israel, which be now scattered over the earth, will be led from all parts back to the Sacred Land, by the light of a great light invisible to all others, but visible only to such as are to be saved.” Then, seeing that I was of a sad countenance, he added, “Dost thou not perceive that the revelation of a Messiah would be as much inferior to the revelation of the Word, or Logos, as the revelation of the Logos is itself inferior to the revelation of mere existence, τὸ ὄν, or THAT WHICH IS? For the revelation of the

Logos (that is of God known by creation) is through hope and fear; but the revelation of τὸ ὄν (that is God in itself) is through love. And the revelation of a Messiah must needs be a poor and low thing as compared with either of these. But thou shouldst aspire towards the highest revelation of all, even the Father of all, with a divinely inspired passion not inferior to the *enthousiasmos* wherewith the worshippers of the gods of the Gentiles celebrate their inferior rites.”

The day was now far spent: so my uncle arose to bid Philo farewell. I thanked him with my whole heart: for righteousness and goodness breathed in his presence; and my spirit was refreshed while I heard him speak. For the very voice of the Lord seemed to sound from him when he said that to afflict the flesh was of no avail without afflicting the spirit, and that the practice of virtue with men should go before the practice of virtue with God. But when I was departed from him, musing as I returned home, then I saw that the philosophy of Philo could in no wise give me peace. For it was not possible that I should feel that *enthousiasmos*, or divine passion, whereof he made mention, for such a being as Mere Existence: and methought I could feel this *enthousiasmos* for none save a man, or some similitude of a man.

Therefore my heart went back to that lower revelation whereof he spake, to wit, to God revealed through the world; that is, the Word: and this seemed to me more likely to give peace. But as for Mere Existence, albeit Philo called it the Father of all, yet had he plainly told me he meant this only for the unlearned multitude.

And whereas he used one word, God, to signify two things, one thing for the learned, and another for the unlearned; herein, to say truth, his doctrine brought to my mind a certain tale of the poet Homer, which my uncle had but yesternight related unto me; how a certain mighty man of valour, and a wise counsellor among the Greeks, Ulysses by name, deceived the giant Polyphemus, saying that his name was NOMAN. Wherefore, when Polyphemus said that NOMAN had blinded him, his brethren, the giants, thought that he meant to say that not a man, but a god, had blinded him. And even so Philo seemed to me, when he spake to the wise and learned, to call God *no man*; but when he spake to the foolish and unlearned, he called Him NOMAN, making them think He was a person.

But what troubled me in this revelation was, that it seemed not to leave any room or place for the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel. And “Why,” thought I, “should the Word reveal himself only through the world, and not through mankind? But if he revealed himself through mankind (which Philo also would allow), why might he not reveal himself through a Messiah?” All that night I lay awake musing on the same thing, and asking whether it might not be that Philo spake truth in proclaiming the revelation of the Word, and yet John the son of Zachariah might also speak truth in proclaiming the revelation of the Messiah. But after long tossing of the matter in my mind I concluded that there was no cause why the one should destroy the other: so I prayed that both might be true.

But as for my former studies, and my old strict observances of the Sabbath and of the precepts concerning the use of purifications and concerning the consumption of nail-parings, and concerning the wearing of tassels, behold, all these matters began to seem unto me things far off, forgotten, and childish. And though I knew not clearly whither to turn, yet I felt at least that to them I could return no more; for I perceived that, even if I became as perfect in these matters as Abuyah the son of Elishah himself, yet should I none the more attain to peace, nor could I find in them that food for want whereof my soul was an-hungered. Wherefore I was now resolved in my mind of this one thing, in any case, namely, that the observance of the smaller precepts of the Law could not gain for me that Banquet, or Manna, or heavenly Draught of the Word of God whereof Philo had made mention. But what the true Manna might be, or how I might attain to it, this I did not as yet perceive. For I was, at that time, even as a little child in a boat without oars or sail, which hath drifted out unawares far into the open sea.

CHAPTER VI

Not many days after my discourse with Philo the Alexandrine, when I returned from the Great Library to my uncle's house, a messenger was waiting for me, bearing a letter from Rabbi Jonathan. Opening it I read that my mother was suffering under a grievous disease, and being, as she thought, nigh unto death, she would fain see me before she died. So I straightway made all things ready for my journey, and having bidden farewell to my uncle, I set sail on the morrow from Alexandria, and on the fifth day arrived in Jerusalem; where, according to my mother's desire, I purposed to offer sacrifice unto the Lord, and to make vows for my mother's health.

The sun was well nigh set when I came to Jerusalem. But on the morrow, as I went up to the Temple through the narrow ways, amid the throng of them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, new thoughts and doubts rose in my heart, such as I had never felt before when I had gone up to sacrifice during the three great feasts. Methought the Lord must needs turn His face from so much traffic and disorder and defilement of His Holy House. On both sides of the gate Horæa, as far as Solomon's porch, were shops of merchants and stalls of money-changers. Even in the Court of the Gentiles, which is a part of the Temple itself, there were penned flocks of sheep and oxen, with drovers and salesmen. Pilgrims and proselytes from all parts pressed and

thronged; buyer reviled seller, and seller buyer; from the stalls of the money-changers one might hear the clink of money mixed with the sounds of contention. The stench also of so many cattle, being increased by reason of the great heat, made the ill-savour of the place almost past bearing. Also I could not but marvel at the greediness of the sellers. For the Chief Priests had let out the right of selling offerings at a great price, to make profit thereof for themselves, insomuch that a single dove was sold for a gold piece.

Then, again, when it came to the offering of the sacrifice, I must needs wait for the space of an hour whilst others were offering up their sacrifices; and the Levites and priests seemed all in haste, and did their work rather as an handicraft than as worship; and many others were sacrificing at the same time, and the cries and struggles of the victims, and the smoke and reek of the fat, and the blood flowing on all sides, caused the place to seem rather like a butcher's shambles than like the House of the Lord. Now all this I had known and seen aforetime, yet had I never taken it to heart. But now there came to my mind certain words of Philo touching the sect called the Essenes, how they worship the Lord with an exceeding carefulness of purity: wherefore they think it not meet to sacrifice the blood of beasts unto the Lord, but they offer up their own hearts, purified so as to be a fit offering for Him. Also at this time (perchance because I was but freshly come from the lecture-rooms of the philosophers of Alexandria, or belike because the Lord would have it so to be,

willing by easy degrees to open mine eyes, and to reveal unto me His Messiah) so it was that I could think of naught but the words of Isaiah the Prophet wherein the Lord saith, "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats." These words, I say, so possessed my soul that, even when the victim was being slain, I could not refrain from repeating them to myself again and again; albeit against my will, being fearful to pollute the sacrifice of the Lord. But though I made shift to dissemble my trouble until the sacrifice was ended, for fear of offending the priests, yet when I had returned to my lodging in the city, I could not forbear weeping; for behold, all worship seemed as vanity, and the children of men were in mine eyes as beasts of the field, void of understanding and given over to all folly; and God was He that had made them thus. Therefore I cried aloud in the fervency of my passion and said, "It is written, 'On three things the world is stayed: on the Law, and on the Worship, and on the Bestowal of Kindnesses;' and lo, I know not the interpretation of the Law; and worship is naught but vanity; and as for kindness, my heart is dry and empty of love, so that there is no kindness in me."

On the third day after the sacrifice, I came to Sepphoris. My mother was so far recovered of her sickness that she was no longer despaired of by the physicians. For the time, my joy thereat, and our rejoicing together (because the Lord had suffered us to look on one another again) drove away my former searchings of heart: which notwithstanding presently came back

upon me. My mother took a delight in my continual presence, and that I should sit by her bed, expounding unto her passages of the Law; and many a time, while I was doing this, she would make mention of the title wherewith I had been honoured by Rabbi Jonathan, who had called me “the plastered cistern.” But oftentimes it was not in my heart to find any words of comfort or hope, and when my mother longed for the draughts of the Law I felt that I was a dried-up cistern, and no longer full.

At the last, on a certain morning, my mother, having (as I suppose) noted my silence before, spake aloud reproving me, albeit gently, and saying, “Why flow not the drops of refreshment from the plastered cistern as in former days?” But I replied in haste, “Call me no longer, O my mother, a cistern. For lo, I am become even as a strainer, which letteth out the wine and keepeth in itself nothing but the dregs.” Then my mother wept bitterly, thinking that she had angered me, and that I had spoken falsely; and I also wept, partly for that I had made her weep, but still more because my words were true.

Then went I forth hastily into the street; and meeting Jonathan the son of Ezra, and Abuyah the son of Elishah, I accompanied them. And we came to the well that is on the road to Nazareth, about a thousand paces from the town, and there we sat down to rest. For a time we were silent. Then I turned to Rabbi Jonathan and said, “Simeon the Just was of the remnant of the Great Synagogue. He used to say, ‘On three things the world is stayed: on the Law, and on the Worship, and on the Bestowal of

Kindnesses.’ Now there was a certain young man which observed the Law, and worshipped duly in the temple. Also he clothed the naked, and buried them that lay unburied, and fed the hungry: but there was no kindness in his heart. Is such an one, therefore, in the path of righteousness?” Then Abuyah replied at once, “He is righteous. For it is written concerning the statutes and judgments of the Law of the Lord that whosoever doeth them shall live in them; but whether he shall do them easily or with difficulty, or gladly or sorrowfully, concerning this, behold, nothing is written.” But Jonathan the son of Ezra was silent for a while, and said at last, “Antigonus of Soko used to say, ‘Be not as slaves that minister to their lord with intent to receive recompense; but be ye as slaves that minister to their lord without thought of recompense; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.’ ”

Then I replied, “True, oh my Master; but ought not the love of Heaven as well as the fear of Heaven to be upon us? For is it not said, ‘Learn for love, and honour will come in the end’?” “Thou speakest well,” said Jonathan, “and it is written also as the chief of all the commandments, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ ” Then I said, “But what if a man feel no love of God in his heart? For I have met lately certain of the Gentiles, yea, and some also of our own nation, which have no love of God; whereof some even constantly say that there is no God. Yea, and even in mine own heart arise strange questionings as to whence I came into this world, and whither I am going, and before whom I am to give account and reckoning.”

Then Abuyah brake forth again: “Joseph son of Simeon, busy not thyself with questions that are too high for thee: for it is said ‘Whosoever shall consider four things, what is above, below, before, behind, it were better for him that he had not come into the world.’ ” “Yea, but,” said I, smiling, “it is said by the Wise, ‘Consider three things, and thou wilt not come into transgression, Know whence thou earnest; and whither thou art going; and before whom thou art to give account and reckoning.’ ” Hereat Abuyah arose hastily from his seat in sore displeasure, and he said, “Child, thou hast defiled thyself by going to a city of the Gentiles which is not a place of the Law; for it is said, ‘Two that sit together without words of the Law are a session of scorners;’ and again, ‘Betake thyself to a place of the Law, and say not that it shall come after thee, for thine associates will confirm it unto thee: and lean not unto thine own understanding.’ Howbeit, I thank thee, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, that Thou hast cast my lot among them that do frequent the schools and synagogues, and not among such as frequent the theatre and the circus. For both I and they work and watch: I to inherit eternal life, but they for eternal destruction.” So saying he departed, and left me alone with Jonathan the son of Ezra.

Jonathan sat still by my side saying naught, but gazing up into the heaven, or else upon the trees round about us. For all around us were orange-trees and pomegranate-trees; the leaves thereof scarce to be seen for the multitude of white and scarlet blossoms; for the spring was now something worn. The fields also and the

gardens and the hedges of cactus, by reason of the rains, were of a marvellous verdure, even above their wont. Behind us, at a little distance, stood a grove of olive-trees, wherein the doves made a pleasant murmuring: and birds of divers colours fluttered to and fro around the well. Nigh over our heads there were passing larger birds, flying in a long train towards the country of the Lake; and far off I could discern an eagle, like a spot, high up in the sky. Then Jonathan spake unto me and said, “My son, dost thou not remember the words of the Psalmist, how he praiseth the name of God because ‘He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengthened man’s heart.’ Doth not the sight of all this glory and beauty cause thee also to say with the Singer of Israel, ‘O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all’?”

But I made answer, in the bitterness of my heart, according to the words of the same Psalm, saying, “Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.” Then Jonathan bowed his head and answered nothing, but I continued, “Did not the same hand which made the dove make also yonder eagle to destroy the dove? Did

not the God which chose out Israel from among the Gentiles to serve Him, choose out Rome also to rend Israel in pieces? Thou speakest after the manner of Philo the Alexandrine, who saith that God revealeth Himself to us through His Word in the universe. But verily He revealeth Himself not so unto me. Nay rather, unsearchable are the paths of the Creator in the universe, and His ways in the World are past finding out.”

Then the old man covered his face with his hands and wept; but soon raising his head he said, “Is it seemly that a son of Abraham should have so little trust in the Lord? Bethink thee of the times when the Holy Temple was burned with fire, and Judah led into captivity: did not all the Gentiles say in those days, ‘God hath forsaken them’? Yet did the Lord save Israel out of the hand of the daughter of Babylon, and out of the hand of the Assyrian and the Philistine, as also out of the hand of the Egyptian, in the days of old. Commit thy way therefore unto the Lord, and trust in Him, and He shall bring the word of His prophets to pass.

“Is not the Lord our God perchance even now on the point to stop the mouths of them that complained? Is there not even now, after four hundred years, a prophet again in Israel? But if the Lord sendeth unto us a prophet after so long a time, as it were from the dead, surely it is like that He hath some great redemption in store for Sion. Even during this week have I heard that John the prophet, who hath these six months prophesied of a Deliverer shortly to come, hath of late prophesied that the Redeemer is even now amongst us; and some say that it is a

certain Jesus, the son of Joseph, of the town of Nazareth, one famous in word and deed. This Jesus, as they report the matter, being baptized of John, beheld a vision of the Lord; and in that instant the Spirit of the Lord fell upon him; insomuch that, since that time, he both speaketh as a prophet and worketh signs as a man of God. Moreover, I had speech but yesterday with some that say he is come into Galilee, and is even now in these parts. Who knoweth whether this may not be true? But whether it be true or false, trust thou in the Lord God of Abraham and of Isaac and Jacob, whose arm is not shortened, and who is not a man that He should lie.”

For an instant, my heart leaped up at the mention of the name of that Jesus whom I had seen in the house of the father of Raphael; but then it seemed not possible that one of so gentle an aspect should be the Redeemer of Israel. Howbeit, I asked Jonathan concerning the vision that had been reported to have been seen of Jesus; and he told me that it had not been a vision of flames of fire, nor of angels, nor of thrones, nor of seraphim, nor any such vision as had been seen of the prophets in times past, but a vision of a dove descending from heaven. Hereat I marvelled and I said, as I remember, in the bitterness and folly of my heart, that the times needed an eagle, and, lo, the new prophet brought a dove.

But Jonathan rose up from his seat to depart, and paying no heed to my last words, he spake kindly unto me and said, “If thy heart inclineth thee, my child, to prove whether there be

any avail for thee in a life of contemplation, and whether thou mayest thereby attain peace; wherefore goest thou not unto the village of Jotapata where the Essenes dwell? Menahem the son of Barachiah is their chief ruler, a man that followeth after holiness and seeth things to come; who, being my friend, will for my sake receive thee kindly. Finally my child, offer up prayers unto God and pour forth thy troubles before Him; neither think too evil of thyself nor give place unto dark thoughts; and let not thy prayers be uttered at set times and in set words, but let them express thy heart's desire, according as it is said, 'Make not thy prayer an ordinance, but an entreaty before Him who filleth all space (blessed is He).' Think not also too evil of thine own heart; but remember the saying, 'Be not wicked unto thyself.' And now farewell, for I must needs go back to the city."

Saying these words, the old man departed and left me still sitting by the well. But, as it was not yet the third hour of the day (and the Essene village was distant not much more than a two hours' journey, or three hours' at the most), it came into my mind that I would hearken unto the voice of Jonathan, and visit the village of the Essenes that very day. So I arose straightway and set out on my journey. I rested often during the heat of the day, for I was weary with long watching and fasting; but a little before noontide, I was come to the top of the mountain which looketh down upon the village.

Then I looked, and lo, in the valley the Essenes busy at their labours, even as the ants that move to and fro in an ant-hill; and

as near as I could conjecture, they were to the number of three or four hundred thus labouring together. But as I looked, behold, a sound as of one proclaiming the hour of prayer; and lo, the fields were empty, neither was any one anywhere to be seen. Presently they appeared again in white robes thronging to the house of prayer. Then a sound, as of psalms sung by many voices, rose up to my ears, and filled my heart with a deep peace. I waited for the space of nearly an hour, till the assembly had broken up, returning in their white robes to their several cottages. When I had beheld all this, my heart rejoiced, and I said, "If only all Israel could thus return to the Lord, then would the dough be no longer corrupt with leaven, according to the saying; and the wrath of the Lord would be turned from His people." But then came into my mind the saying of Philo, that the virtue towards man must come before the virtue towards God. I remembered also that which I had often before heard of the Essenes, how they neither marry nor give in marriage, but replenish their community by adopting the children of others and by admitting of strangers into their number. Then I bethought myself that if all the children of Israel should become Essenes, Israel would speedily perish; neither could there be any Redemption. For even now, though there had been Essenes these thirty or forty years, or even more, yet did they number no more than three thousand or four thousand men in all Israel; and of these almost all lived in the country, avoiding towns for fear of defilement, and exceeding even the Pharisees in the strictness wherewith they observe Sabbaths and obey the

precepts of the Law (save only in the matter of sacrifice). So, as I looked down upon the village, and round upon the hills which shut it in and hid it from the sight of men, the proverb came to my mind which sayeth that “a city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid:” but said I, “the city of the Essenes lieth in a valley.” Then I turned my back upon the place and would not go down to see Menahem, but set out to return to Sepphoris.

But as I went, my burden grew heavier than I could bear, and I cried unto the Lord in the sore grief of my heart. For all Israel seemed unto me even as sheep without a shepherd, a nation given over to servitude. For behold, the Scribes, and Lawyers, and all the Pharisees, had set their thought on vanity, and fed the people with chaff and not with wheat. Yea, they despised the poor and simple, and said that the “people of the land” could not attain to the knowledge of the Law. But as for the Priests and Sadducees, they were given over to the pursuit of wealth and to the pleasures of this world. And last of all, these Essenes were as naught save for themselves alone. For they took for their watchword the saying, “Withdraw thyself from an evil neighbour and consort not with the wicked:” therefore were they of no avail to the sinners of my people. For albeit that saying of Hillel was often in their mouths, which saith, “Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace;” yet did they forget the last words of that saying, which bid us also to “love mankind and bring men nigh unto the Law.” For the Essenes bring no man nigh unto the Law save themselves only.

But when I came in my journey back to the well where Rabbi Jonathan and I had discoursed together, then did my despair so weigh upon me that I could not so much as cry unto the Lord; for the Lord seemed as one that heard not; and even as I had made a circle in my journey that day, and was now come back to the same place whence I had set forth at the first, and all in vain, even so did I seem to have journeyed these many years in a circle of vain thoughts, searching and groping after God; and all for naught. “For,” said I, “I have gone from the Scribes of Galilee to the teaching of John the Prophet, and from John the Prophet to the wisdom of the Greeks, and from the wisdom of the Greeks to the teaching of Philo the Wise; and yet seem I no nearer to God than before, but even where I was at the first. And they which did profess to guide, have been unto me as no guides. Therefore the foundations of my life are broken up, and the rock of my trust is become as unstable as water. Whithersoever I look, I see no one to avenge, no one to deliver; for the ways of the world are crooked, and sin is stronger than righteousness.”

Then a Voice of the Lord spake unto me, and rebuked me in that, albeit I compassed sea and land in search of guides, and had made much of them which explain the Law and the Prophets, yet I had not given myself so zealously to the true guides of Israel, even the Prophets themselves, of whom John the son of Zachariah was one. Now they all with one consent prophesied of a day of Redemption, and of a Redeemer; and without a Redeemer their prophecies seemed maimed and

void of fulfilment. Moreover John the son of Zachariah had prophesied that the Redeemer should come speedily, and that the rough places should be made smooth, and the crooked places straight; and Jonathan the son of Ezra had spoken as if the Redeemer were even now among us, yea in our own country of Galilee. So falling on my face before the Lord, I besought the Almighty (blessed is He) to make no long tarrying, but to have mercy upon me and either to take away my life, or else to send the Redeemer unto me, even me, and to grant me His salvation.

But as I arose, there came one behind me unperceived and touched my shoulder; and he said unto me, "Wherefore weepest thou?" I started at his voice, for there was a power in it; but I looked not up for weeping, but made answer and said, "Because of the yoke of the Law; for it is written 'Whoso receiveth upon him the yoke of the Law, THEY remove from him the yoke of oppression and the yoke of the path of the world.' But it is not so with me. For from a child I have settled my heart to study the Law, and to take upon me the yoke thereof, yet have I not attained to the knowledge thereof. But the yoke of the world and the yoke of the oppression of Israel weigheth heavily upon me." Then he that spake said unto me, "Cast away the heavy yoke and take upon thee the light yoke."² So I looked up, marvelling at such words, and behold, it was not the face of a stranger, for I knew it; and yet again I knew it not, neither could I bring to mind the name of him that spake to me. But I saw strength in his

² See [Note I](#).

countenance, and his face was as the morning-star in brightness; and I rejoiced with a great joy, for I knew that the Lord had sent unto me a teacher to guide my feet into the path of life. So I replied, "What yoke, O Master?" And he answered and said, "Take my yoke upon thee, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart." When I heard that, I was speechless and as one astonished to hear such a saying, which seemed in part the words of a king, and in part the words of a child. But when speech came back to me, I said, "My heart is afflicted because of the wonder of the ways of the Lord, and because His paths are past finding out." But he answered, "They that wonder shall reign, and they that reign shall rest."³ Now I perceived not all the meaning of his words at the time; but thus much I did most clearly perceive, that here was one that could guide me through all wonderment and perplexity, even unto the haven of rest. But a sudden fear fell upon me that peace would depart from my soul, if my Master should depart; therefore with many entreaties I besought him to tarry that night at my mother's house. So when he had consented we straightway went to the city. But, as we went, my mind still beat upon the thought that I had seen my Master's countenance before; yet could I not call to mind the when and where.

But even as we entered into the house, behold, my mother was crying aloud, being tormented beyond measure by her disease: and when my Master heard it, he asked who cried thus, and I answered and told him concerning my mother's condition. Then

³ See [Note I](#).

straightway he desired to go into the upper chamber where she lay; and having gone in, he looked steadfastly at her, and took her by the hand, and said, as one having authority, "Arise:" and immediately my mother arose and went about as one whole. Now it came to pass, that when he looked steadfastly at my mother, even in that instant I knew his face, that it was the face of the stranger that had looked after the like manner upon Raphael the son of Joazar, even the face of Jesus of Nazareth; and then also in that same instant it was borne to my mind that this was he of whom Jonathan had spoken, concerning whom John the son of Zachariah had prophesied, saying that he was the Messiah of Israel: and I marvelled that I had not known him before; but I perceived that, albeit the same, yet was he not the same; so great a glory and a brightness, as of power from heaven, now reigned in his countenance. All this, I say, I perceived even when he was gazing on my mother; but I durst not for my life speak to him then. But when my mother was made whole and arose from her bed, then straightway I fell down on my knees and bowed before him; and I spake also to my mother all the words of Jonathan the son of Ezra, how that John had affirmed my Master to be the Redeemer of Israel: and I believed, and my mother also, and all our household.

On the morrow, when I would fain have accompanied Jesus to Capernaum (for he was journeying thither), he suffered me not, but said that he must needs go to Capernaum alone; but I was to remain for nine days at Sepphoris with my mother, and on the

tenth day I might go down to Capernaum. But he suffered me to go with him about twelve or thirteen furlongs out of the town, and there I was to bid him farewell.

He did not speak many words to me by the way; but what I noted especially in him (as being that wherein he differed from all my former teachers) was that he spake not according to rule, nor out of any books, nor traditions, but as it were out of himself. For he taught as one having authority. There was also yet another difference. For most of the Pharisees were wont to walk with their faces turned up to the sky, or else with their eyes half shut, repeating, as they went, certain passages of the Law, or prayers, or precepts of the Elders; and if they met women they would avoid them; and of children also they took no note, except it were to instruct them or question them in the Law and the Traditions; moreover they walked with a sour and austere countenance. But Jesus was in all respects different from these. For he looked on all things, and in all things seemed to see joy and gladness, taking note even of the smallest matters, such as the flowers of the field, and the birds of the air, and also of the trees, and the cornfields. Moreover, as often as we met women on the way, he saluted them courteously and shunned them not.

But most marvellous of all, in my judgment, was the manner of his dealing with children. For so it was, as I remember, that when we were passing by a hamlet, about six furlongs from Sepphoris, a little child ran out from the door of a house, even under the feet of our asses, insomuch that we had much ado

to prevent the asses from trampling down the child. But when I rebuked the child somewhat vehemently, Jesus chid me; and presently, after we had ridden on awhile in silence, he turned to me and bade me always have respect unto little children; “For,” said he, “their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” Then he added words still stranger and harder for me to understand, that “Except a man were born again and become as a little child, he could in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

But I returned, marvelling greatly at his words and pondering them in my mind. For I could in no wise perceive how we could redeem Israel and drive out the Tetrarch from Tiberias, and the Romans from Jerusalem, and set up the Kingdom of God, and all this by becoming as little children.

CHAPTER VII

When I drew nigh to Capernaum, it was about the eleventh hour; so I hasted that I might inquire where Jesus of Nazareth abode, before the sun went down: for it was the day before the Sabbath. But as I journeyed down the valley, called the Valley of the Doves, and came to the place where the road turneth round to the right, I could not forbear to draw rein for a while, so beautiful was the sight; and though I had seen it often-times before, yet never before, methought, had it seemed so beautiful as now.

On the tops of the hills were walnut-trees; lower down fig-trees; and below them grew luxuriant palms. For the place hath, as it were, several climates suiting several trees and plants; corn also aboundeth in those parts, and flax is not wanting; but the olive-trees (as elsewhere in Galilee) stand so thick together, and so thriving, that it was a common saying, “Thou mayest sooner rear a forest of olive-trees in Galilee than one child in Judæa;” fruit-trees also of all sorts grew there without number, laden with the goodliest fruits, exceeding the fruit-trees of any other part of Galilee; insomuch that the place was justly wont to be called the Garden of Abundance. But the city itself was as a half-circle of pearls, encompassed with gardens as with a circlet of emerald. A multitude of ships and fishing-boats bestrewed the surface of the lake, which was of a deep blue colour, as blue as sapphire; and the waves thereof were very still, because no wind at all was blowing.

But as I looked towards Chorazin, the sight in the surface of the waters surpassed the sight of the land. For there, as in a mirror, one might see by reflexion in the water below, all that was on the land above; the walnut-trees and fig-trees and palm-trees, and the oleanders on the border of the waters, and the white pelicans watching for their prey upon the brink thereof, and the hedges of cactus, and the cottages of the husbandmen; all these things were to be clearly seen as if painted on the waters of the lake.

Then came into my mind certain words which my Master had said to me when we went forth from Sepphoris together; how that our Father in heaven provideth for the adornment even of the grass of the fields, and how He hath made the simple flowers of the fields more beautiful than Solomon in his glory. And so it was that, as I thought on these words, I praised the Lord of Hosts, who hath made the world so beautiful; and though I had seen this sight many times before when I had come down from Sepphoris, yet now mine eyes seemed, as it were, to be opened to discern a new beauty therein. But I thought also on Israel and of the blessedness that was in store for this goodly land, if only the Roman could be driven forth. As I thought on these things, an east wind sprang up; and lo, where there had been but a moment ago so fair a sight, naught was now to be seen save troubled waters of many divers colours. Then I hastened onward, purposing to inquire concerning Jesus of Nazareth first, and afterwards to go to the house of my uncle.

But when I was now at the going down to the city, my cousin

Baruch was come forth to meet me, saying I was stayed for at a feast in the house of Manasseh. So I went straightway with him, and the sun set and the Sabbath was begun; and I had not yet seen Jesus of Nazareth. During supper time I would have inquired of Manasseh concerning Jesus; but Baruch had forewarned me that I should be silent. For my uncle, (he was a dyer by trade, and had many slaves and more than one house of merchandise, there and at Magdala, and elsewhere round about the Lake,) being fond of peace and wholly given to traffic, feared Jesus, lest he should beguile the people of Capernaum to take up arms against the Romans. Also he feared for Baruch, lest he too should be led away by Jesus. This I learned from my cousin after supper; howbeit he said not much about Jesus, for my uncle watched us. Only he said that Jesus had been now a full week in Capernaum, and that he was said to be able to work signs, and that certain of the fishermen had joined themselves unto him; but the most part still held with John the Prophet, saying that John was greater than Jesus; neither believed they that Jesus was the Messiah.

On the morrow, about the sixth hour, we went to the synagogue. There was a great throng, so that we were fain to sit in the farthest seats from the Ark of the Law; neither could we discern who sat in the chief seats, nor who read, because a pillar stood between us and the pulpit. Now first the Law was read and prayers were offered up according to custom; but by reason of my sadness, because I desired to have seen Jesus again, I was even as the parched ground, and no moisture fell upon my soul. But

when the Prophets were read, then it was as a shower of heaven on the congregation, and the dew of the Lord upon our souls; for the voice of him that read was the voice of Jesus of Nazareth.

When he had made an end of reading, Jesus began to exhort the people, saying that he was sent to proclaim good news, to release the captive, give health to the sick, and light to the blind, and to bring Redemption to Israel. God, he said, loved all; not the good alone, but even the bad: yea, God was in very truth our Father in heaven. Therefore how much soever the kindest father on earth may love his children, albeit they transgress against him, much more is the love of God toward us though we be sinners. He did not tell us that we were not sinful; nay rather, he made it clear to us that our sins were as red as blood in the sight of the All-seeing; but none the less, he called us the children of God. As many as would repent should be forgiven; and he spake as if he himself had a certain divine power of forgiveness whereby he might purify the soul and bring us close to God, one family in the presence of our Father. One thing was needful, that we should trust in him and in his message. This day, he said, this very day, are the prophecies of Redemption fulfilled in your ears. Then he cried aloud unto all that were hungering or thirsting for righteousness, all that were weary of the burden of their sins, all that felt themselves utterly hopeless, friendless, and vile, bidding them resort to him as their refuge: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

While he was speaking, methought I was not hearing words,

but seeing somewhat that might be seen and touched; so solid seemed the mercies of God, even as a rock whereon one standeth. For Jesus ever testified of the Father as one testifieth that knoweth by experience, and spake of heaven as of that which he had known and felt. Yea, and more than that; a certain strange power was in him to make things invisible to seem visible by his discourse. Wherefore, albeit Moses had called God the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and the Prophets also had taught Israel to say unto God, "Thou art our Father," and all this doctrine was well known and trite among us; yet now, for the first time, the doctrine seemed to be no more a mere dead letter, but a living word. Such a life did Jesus of Nazareth breathe into it, insomuch that his Good News (for so he called it) came upon our hearts as news indeed, never heard before among the children of men.

This long while (since Jesus had first begun to speak), a certain youth whom I had before noted, sitting not far from me, had been muttering and moaning gently to himself; but I was rapt in the words of Jesus, wherefore I had given the less heed to the boy. But now, he stood up, and cried aloud in a deep hollow voice, as of a full-grown man, "What hast thou to do with us? Let us alone, let us alone." Then in his own voice he cried again, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Immediately I perceived that it was the demoniac, even Raphael the son of Joazar, whom Theudas the Exorcist had adventured to heal; but a great fear fell on all the congregation, and the women rose up from their places, shrieking for terror. But Jesus, without use

of charm or gesture, rebuked the unclean spirits and bade them come forth. Then they tare the youth, so that he shrieked with a piercing shriek; and so they came forth. And Jesus delivered the boy to his father; who would scarce suffer Jesus out of his sight, between joy that the devils were gone forth, and fear lest they might return. Howbeit, now the spirits were driven out so that they returned no more. For the boy lived to be a man; nor did he die (as it hath been reported to me) till he numbered fifty years, dying about twelve years ago, two years before destruction came upon the Holy City.

When Jesus departed from the synagogue, the people thronged him, bringing to him divers requests, some concerning their friends that were diseased or lunatic, or afflicted with devils; others begging him to come and bless their children; others asking him that he would lodge in their houses, or at the least sup with them. For at this time all men, rich and poor, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Galileans, inclined to follow Jesus. But he would go to none of the rich men's houses, but only to the house of Simon the son of Jonah (whom he afterwards called Peter); he was one of the fishermen of the place and had joined himself to Jesus. But Jesus suffered me to accompany him.

But when we were now entering into the house, behold all things were full of disorder and lamentation. For Simon's wife's mother (who abode in the house) had been suddenly afflicted with a grievous sickness, so that, instead of serving the guests, she was laid speechless upon a bed in an upper room. Then they

spake to Jesus concerning her. Now I was not myself present when the thing took place; but (as it was reported to me) Jesus healed her after the same manner as he had healed my mother; for he took her by the hand and lifted her up, and she arose whole and free from her disease, and ministered unto the guests.

Jesus straitly charged us that we should tell no man; whereat we marvelled not a little. But howsoever we obeyed him, it could not be hid. And besides this, the fame of the healing of Raphael the son of Joazar had been noised abroad through the whole of the city, insomuch that at sunset, when we went forth, the Sabbath being now ended, we saw great multitudes of demoniacs, lunatics, and some also sick of the palsy and of fever, laid in their beds along the road through which we would have passed. Some also, that were afflicted with incurable diseases, had been brought notwithstanding, because of their entreaties; if perchance Jesus might heal them; and I saw one man that had been blind from his birth.

Now it came to pass that when Jesus came forth from Simon Peter's house, and saw the faces of all these sick people, and the faces of their friends, all waiting if perchance he would help them, his countenance was altered, and the shadow of sorrow fell upon him, and he sighed and said, "Verily for the sorrowful I am sorrowful, and for the sick I am sick."⁴ Then he passed along the ranks of the sick people; and wheresoever he perceived that any could be healed, he laid his hands on them, and lo, they were

⁴ See [Note I](#).

at once freed from their infirmities; and many unclean spirits were driven out from those whom they had possessed. Now most of them that were healed had been possessed with evil spirits; but others were lunatic, or sick of the palsy, or of fever, or had impediment in their speech. But Jesus had a marvellous power to discern, methought, not only them that had faith from them that had not, but also such diseases as were to be cured, from such as were not to be cured, because it was not prepared for him that he should cure them. But when Jesus had made an end of healing, the multitude still followed us; and the friends of such as had not been cured, vexed us with importunities; and others, whose friends had been cured, called down blessings on Jesus, and refused to leave him. Thus, go whither we would, we could not be alone. So Jesus returned to the house, and I went back to the house of Manasseh.

I opened my mind to my uncle that night, and said to him that I purposed to go with Jesus of Nazareth whithersoever he went; and Baruch said the same. But my uncle no longer opposed himself against our wills; only he forewarned us that evil was in store for us; “For,” said he, “I have sojourned in Italy among the Romans three years, and I know well that nothing can withstand their power. But whoso gainsayeth them gainsayeth the strength of a king: according as it is written, ‘Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say unto him, What doest thou?’ ”

All the night long no sleep came to my eyes for musing on all the things that I had seen and heard that day: “For this

day,” said I, “is, as it were, the birthday of the Redemption of Israel.” But when I thought thereon, and considered with myself that I had now joined myself unto Jesus as the Redeemer, and when I compared Jesus with the image of the Redeemer of Sion (such as I had framed it in my mind from the reading of the Prophets, and such as my countrymen expected), then was I as one astonished and amazed to find myself believing in Jesus, and standing on his side. For I had imagined unto myself one that should perchance appear, riding on the clouds of heaven, encompassed by thousands of angels, taking vengeance upon the enemies of Sion, according to the word of the prophet Daniel; or else I had thought to see a royal deliverer, even such another as David himself, mighty with the sword, riding at the head of his ten thousands, ruling the Gentiles with a rod of iron, or breaking them in pieces like a potter’s vessel; or else I had fashioned in my mind a Deliverer after the manner of Elias, rebuking kings in their pride, and calling down fire from heaven for a sign, or for the destruction of the Gentiles.

Now before this time, I had had no leisure to consider the matter; for, in the presence of Jesus, I had been drawn towards him as by an enchantment: but in the stillness of the night, Jesus being no more before my face, I thought on all the signs and wonders wrought by Moses and Elias aforetime, and doubt fell upon me; and it seemed to me not possible that Jesus of Nazareth could be greater than they, so as to be the Messiah. But when I asked myself, “Could it then be that Jesus is a deceiver?” my

heart made answer, "Nay, that could not be. And if thou trust not in Jesus, there is not any one in the world in whom thou canst trust." So I comforted myself in my perplexity, saying to myself, "Perchance the time hath not yet come for Jesus to manifest himself as the son of David, nor as the Son of man spoken of by the prophet Daniel: but doubtless that time will come; and then shalt thou see Jesus, as the Messiah indeed, in power."

But on the morrow, very early, when we went forth to the house of Simon Peter, behold, a mixed multitude had gathered round the doors waiting for the coming of Jesus. And I also waited, standing with them, and heard how they conversed with each other. But it seemed that one had but now come forth from the house of Peter, saying that Jesus could not be found in the house. Then arose a murmur in the crowd; and a certain man from Antioch said that Simon had set a snare for Jesus of Nazareth, and had betrayed him to Herod the Tetrarch. But there was in the press one Gorgias the son of Philip, a man well known to Simon; and he laughed the man of Antioch to scorn. He had been in the army of Herod the King in former times, and his father was a Greek; but he conformed himself to the Law and joined himself to the sect of the Galileans; and his word prevailed greatly with them, because he was versed in warlike matters. This man declared that Jesus had withdrawn himself, that he might not be shut up in prison by the Tetrarch: "And no marvel," said he, "for, seeing that the tyrant hath but now taken John the son of Zachariah, why should he not also adventure to take the new

prophet?”

Others, beside myself, had not heard before that John had been cast into prison. So we questioned Gorgias, and heard that the prophet had been cast into prison in the Black Castle at Machærus three days ago. Many of them that were in the crowd had been disciples of John; and they cried aloud that the men of Galilee ought to rise up and deliver the prophet. But Gorgias beckoned with his hand that they should be silent, and when silence was made, he said, “Let us rise up, indeed, but not without a leader. Now the Lord hath sent to us this Jesus of Nazareth: and that he is a prophet sent from God none can deny.” The multitude shouted that it was even so, and one or other uttered praises of Jesus; and a certain man said, “Yea, never man spake as this spake.” But Gorgias answered and said, “It is known to all that I am a soldier, neither do words prevail with me without deeds. Wherefore I also, until yesterday, did but lightly esteem Jesus of Nazareth. But now he hath shown forth his power in deeds. And he that can do such deeds as Jesus hath wrought in our streets, shall he not do even greater deeds than these when the time shall come for them? Yea, doubtless, all things are possible to him. And what will avail squadrons of horse, or legions of foot, against one that can call down fire from heaven, or cause the walls of a city to fall to the ground? Choose we therefore Jesus to be our leader, and no one shall be able to stand against us.”

At this instant Simon Peter came forth, and he confirmed what had been said, to wit, that Jesus of Nazareth was not in the house:

but he thought that he was gone forth to be alone. And so it was. For when we had made diligent search for him we found him alone on a mountain, about three miles from the town. We besought him to return; but he answered that he must proclaim the Good News in other villages also, for to that end he had been sent. So Simon Peter and the rest of the disciples accompanied him, and Baruch and I went with them; and for the space of four or five weeks we continued with him, going from town to town in Galilee; and Jesus preached the Good News, and healed the sick; and a great multitude of all sorts was added to our number.

Now the greater part of our band were honest people, hungering and thirsting for the Redemption of Sion: but some were vain men, children of iniquity, seeking the wages of unrighteousness. Especially they that had been formerly soldiers resorted to Jesus, as to a prince or general, like vultures hasting to the prey, supposing that they should gain much spoil if he prevailed against the Romans. And so it was that once when Jesus spake to his disciples, saying that they must be “fishers of men,” then Baruch, being offended by the presence of these children of mammon among us, answered and said, “But must the fishers catch vile fish as well as good?”

Hereat Jesus turned and looked sorrowfully on Baruch, and said, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the age. The

messengers of God shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Another parable spake he to the same effect, that the tares must needs grow with the wheat till the day of harvest, for not till then can the division be made between good and evil. When we heard this, we grieved thereat; for we had supposed that none save the faithful should have been admitted into the Kingdom, and we marvelled why Jesus should first suffer the bad to enter, and then drive them forth. Howbeit, we besought him that he would give us ordinances which we might observe, to the intent that we might not be cast out of the Kingdom. For some of our number had begun to say that Jesus had come to destroy the Law, so that every one might do what he listed; as though Jesus had said that God loveth the wicked as much as the righteous, even though the wicked abide in wickedness. Thus they brought shame upon us, and they set stumblingblocks in the path of many that had otherwise believed. Moreover the disciples of John the Baptist compared us with themselves, and asked us concerning our laws and customs and prayers; and, when they found that we had none of these things, then they despised us, saying that our Master was not equal to John. For at this time the fame of John the son of Zachariah overshadowed the fame of Jesus; yea, and for some time after this, even after John had been cast into prison. For this cause we intreated Jesus that he would both teach us how to pray, as John also had taught his disciples, and also that he would lay

down laws for the new Kingdom, even as Moses had laid down laws for the kingdom in old times.

Jesus hearkened to our petition in silence. Then he said that he must depart from us for a season and go to the top of a certain mountain; but he appointed the third hour of the following day that we should come to him. Certain of the Scribes that followed with us murmured at Jesus, because he had appointed that we should come to him on the mountain: and one, finding fault for that Jesus was often wont to spend the whole night praying alone on some mountain, said, "It is written, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord;' therefore it is good to pray from a low place, and not from a high place." But Nathanael answered and said that Jesus loved to be alone on the mountain by night, to meditate on the greatness of the Lord and how He hath exalted the Son of man, according as it is written, "I will consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained:" and "these very words," said Nathanael, "I heard the Prophet but yesterday repeat, when we were upon the top of yonder mountain." Hereat the Scribes murmured the more, saying that it was not written that any prophet in old times thus took counsel with the heavens after the manner of a Chaldean. But Gorgias the son of Philip murmured for another cause, saying that the Prophet ought not thus to mistrust his followers, nor to be so fearful for his own safety, and that it behoved the friends of Jesus to take him by force, if need be, and to make him a king. And to this Judas of Kerioth consented

and some others.

But to the most of us the words of Gorgias seemed an abomination; for we knew that Jesus did not depart for fear: for indeed fear was not in him. But he desired to be alone because he wished to pray, and because of the burden of his heart. For it grieved him, more than can be told, to see the misery and wretchedness, yea, and the ignorance and the sinfulness of the mixed multitude which pressed round him. All their pains pained him and all their sufferings he suffered, insomuch that more than once I have heard him saying in a low voice to himself, “For them that are hungry I hunger, and for them that are athirst I thirst, and for them that are sick I am sick.”⁵

Notwithstanding he was not so much distressed with the pains and diseases of the body as with the pains and diseases of the soul. For the sins of souls seemed to him as real and loathsome as the diseases of the flesh to us; and oftentimes a transgression that would appear slight to us, he counted as a work of Satan; so that whithersoever he moved, he saw sins more than could be seen of common men, yea, a very sea of sinfulness; albeit, underlying the sea of sin and sorrow, he still discerned the Everlasting Arms.

Moreover, because he loved all men with an exceeding great love, for this cause every hour in his life brought unto him a burden passing the power of words to describe. For the sins of men were not unto him as the sins of aliens and strangers, but as the sins of his own brethren: yea, they were even as his own

⁵ See [Note I](#).

sins; for, although he himself sinned not, neither knew sin, yet what pain cometh from the bearing of a brother's sin, that he knew full well. Wherefore in him was fulfilled the saying of the prophet Isaiah; who prophesied that the Messiah should be a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, and that he should carry our sins and bear our iniquities.

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