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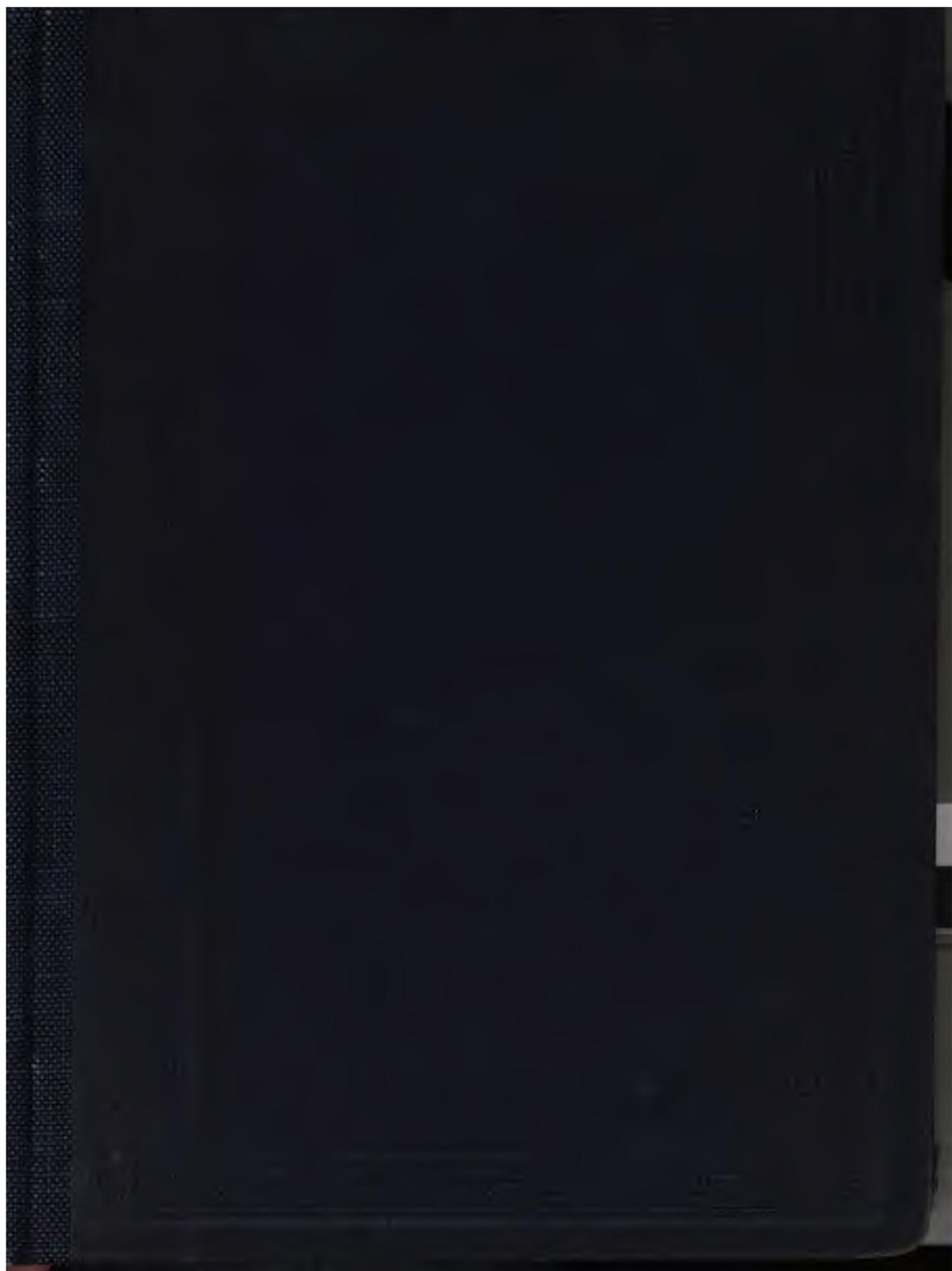
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A. S. Kincaid.
1888.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL WRITINGS
OF THE
SANHEDRIN
AND
TALMUDS OF THE JEWS,

*TAKEN FROM THE ANCIENT PARCHMENTS AND
SCROLLS AT CONSTANTINOPLE AND
THE VATICAN AT ROME,*

BEING THE RECORD

MADE BY THE ENEMIES OF JESUS OF NAZARETH IN HIS DAY.

THE MOST INTERESTING HISTORY EVER READ BY MAN.

BY REV. W. D. MAHAN,
OF BOONVILLE, MO.,

Author of *Acta Pilati*, and *Hebrew History of Baptism*, who is extensively
known to the Ministry in the West.

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1884.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS,
On the 7th day of January, A. D. 1884, by Rev. W. D. Mahan, of
Boonville, Mo.

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1884

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
CHAPTER I.—A short sketch of the several books of the Tal- muds, with Historical References, - - - -	5
CHAPTER II.—Dr. Rubin's Letter, as taken from the "Brun- swick," Dr. McIntosh's Letter to the People of America, and Rev. W. D. Mahan's Letter from Rome to his family, 24	24
CHAPTER III.—Eusebius' History of the Emperors of Rome. Constantine's Letter in Regard to having Fifty Copies of the Scriptures Written and Bound for Preservation, - 32	32
CHAPTER IV.—Jonathan's Report of his Interview with the Shepherds of Bethlehem; also, Letter of Melker, who was Priest of the Bethlehem Synagogue when Jesus was Born, 37	37
CHAPTER V.—Gamaliel's Report of his Interview with Joseph and Mary in Regard to their Child Jesus; also, of his in- terview with Massallian, and Mary and Martha, - - 55	55
CHAPTER VI.—Caiaphas' Report of the Sanhedrin, giving his Reason for the Execution of Jesus of Nazareth, - - 76	76
CHAPTER VII.—Caiaphas' Second Report in Regard to the Res- urrection of Jesus, - - - - - 100	100
CHAPTER VIII.—Eli's Story of the Magi, - - - - 113	113
CHAPTER IX.—Acta Pilati, or, Pilate's Report of the Arrest, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus, - - - - 201	201
CHAPTER X.—Herod Antipater's Defense Before the Roman Senate Concerning his Conduct at Bethlehem, - - 231	231
CHAPTER XI.—Herod Antipas' Defense Before the Roman Sen- ate Concerning his Execution of John Baptist, and Other Charges, - - - - - 240	240
CHAPTER XII.—The Hillel Letters Regarding God's Providences to the Jews, - - - - - 247	247

TO THE READER.

BELIEVING that no event, of as much importance as the death of Jesus of Nazareth was to the world, could have transpired without some record being made of it by his enemies in their courts, legislations and histories, I commenced investigating the subject. After many years of study, and after consulting various histories and corresponding with many scholars, I secured the assistance of two learned men—Drs. McIntosh and Twyman—and went to the Vatican at Rome, and then to the Jewish Talmuds at Constantinople, incurring a risk of my life as well as expending a good deal of money. As a result, I have compiled the following book, which will be found one of the most strange and interesting works ever read. It may appear fragmentary, but the reader will remember that it is the record of men made nearly two thousand years ago.

July 1st, 1884.

W. D. MAHAN, Boonville, Mo.

CHAPTER I.

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE TALMUDS.

THE Hebrew word, *lamod*, signifies "to teach," and, to "teach by example." This word, *example*, is always understood. To teach—this is what is meant by tradition. It means that the child learns from its father. From this word we get the word *talmud*. We also have the word, *shanoh*, which means "to learn," and *gamor*, which means, "having learned, or having ceased to learn." The talmuds are written on parchment or papyrus. The scroll is about 20 inches wide, and rolled around a windlass. From these talmuds there have been many books written by the Jewish Rabbis.

The most important is the *Mishna*. Its name indicates what it is—the Law. It contains the laws of all nations, or a part of the laws of the various nations of the earth, such as the Jewish Sanhedrin thought were compatible with the laws of God. Its principal teachings are what we would call the moral law of God—that is to say, anything

is right if God says it is right, and this is the only reason why it is right. This work has been the great reference book for the Jewish Rabbis in all ages. It was translated and compiled by Hillel, and is a very useful book for good scholars.

The next in point of value is the *Tosephta*. This word in the Hebrew means "treatment," and contains mainly the ritual of the temple service. It is a very extensive work, and is really a regulator of human life, having the dealings of husband and wife, parent and child, master and pupil; in fact, it enters into all the details of life with such thoughtfulness and in such a beautiful style that it would be exceedingly interesting to the young. It certainly contains the finest system of morals in the world.

Then comes the *Mechilta*, which means "government," in the Hebrew language. This book tells of the organization of the Sanhedrin and its powers—both the greater and the lesser; the greater to be composed of seventy and the lesser of twenty-four. These two legislative bodies had control of the whole of the Jewish commonwealth. Although they exercised great power, their power was not absolute. There was another court that held the highest authority of the nation. That was the court of elders and priests. This court consisted

of twelve men, and its chairman was the high priest. It decided all appeals, and could not be appealed from. This is the court that tried Jesus of Nazareth; and although it was a court of appeals, capital crimes were tried by no court but this.

I will give the form of a trial of a criminal in this court, as it is given in *Mechilta*. At the time that Jesus was tried by this court, the Jewish government had lost its executive power. This was one of the conceded points in the capitulation by Augustus Cæsar. So at this time the Roman Emperor's consent had to be obtained, though he had to use the Jewish soldiers; for the Romans had only one hundred soldiers at Jerusalem. They were all the time engaged in war, and needed all their soldiers at home. When a criminal was brought before this court of the high priests, they went through a preliminary trial, in order, if possible, to bring him to an acknowledgment. If they could not, he was sentenced, and then sent to the Roman authority, or governor, for his approval. He was then sent back to the high priest, and from there to the Sanhedrin, with the charges written out and the names of the witnesses by which these things had been proven. If they approved the decision of the high priest, the prisoner was sent

back to the high priest for his final trial. This court of twelve men was required by the Jewish law to fast and pray one whole day before the trial commenced, then they were required to bring the urim and thummim out of the holy place where they were kept, and to place them before the high priest. He was closely veiled, so that no one could see him, thus representing God doing his work. Then there was what was called the *lactees*, consisting of two men, one of whom stood at the door of the court with a red flag in his hand and the other sat on a white horse some distance on the road that led to the place of execution. Each one of these men continually cried the name of the criminal, his crime, who were the witnesses, and called upon any person who knew any thing in his favor to come forward and testify. After the testimony was taken the eleven men cast lots or voted, and their decision was shown to the high priest. As he was too holy to act of himself, but only as the mouth-piece of God, he went up to a basin or a ewer, as it is called by them, and washed his hands in token of the innocency of the court, thus testifying that the criminal's own action had brought condemnation on himself. As soon as the soldiers saw this, they took the man to the place of execution, and there stoned him till he was dead. Not

one of them was allowed to speak, not even to whisper, while the execution was going on. Nothing was heard but the pelting of stones and the shrieks of the criminal. To my mind this would be one of the most awful modes of death, and one that would be more likely to deter others from committing crime.

Now, I ask the reader to see the mode of a Roman execution, and see what a beautiful chain of divine Providence is brought out in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth. There was a law in the criminal code of the Romans enacted by Meeleesen, who was a Greek by birth and a philosopher by nature, that taught that if a man was accused of a crime and was tried and found guilty, he should be publicly chastised. His reasons were that the man had acted improperly—so much so that he had created suspicion. This would seem to give license to an enemy to work mischief. But the same philosopher had a remedy at hand, and that was, that any man who accused another and failed to prove it by two witnesses should suffer the punishment the other would have suffered had he been proven guilty. After the whipping was over, the Roman officer washed his hands, thereby declaring that the actions of the man had produced his own chastisement. Thus, after Pilate had

Jesus scourged he washed his hands, forever clearing the Roman government of the blood of Christ. Now the reader must remember that the soldiers who brought Jesus from the court of the high priest were Jewish soldiers. They were acquainted with the Jewish custom of washing the hands to condemn. Hence, when they saw Pilate wash his hands, they took it for granted Jesus was to die. Now, how can any one fail to see the beautiful chain of divine Providence running through this whole affair? One might say that this would remove the responsibility of the actors in this matter. But if a man undertakes to injure me, and I by my sagacity avert the injury he intended and convert it into a blessing, would that change the guilt of intention by the first party?

We also learn from the *Mechilta* that the Jewish commonwealth was divided into districts, such as Palestine, Galilee, Judea, and so on. Each of these states had its courts and legislatures, presided over by a high priest. This is the reason we have so many high priests spoken of in the New Testament history. These states were subdivided into smaller divisions, each of which was presided over by a magistrate who was an officiating priest. If any one will read the *Mechilta* he will see clearly the government of the United

States of North America ; and as the laws of the Jewish nation were all dictated by the God of heaven, we should appreciate them the more.

The *Saphra* means, in the Hebrew language, "corner stone or foundation rock," which goes to show that all these laws were founded upon God's word or authority. This is quite an extended work, and is full of quotations from the various works of the ancient world. I would love to read this carefully for a year and give the extracts to the people. I am sure that this little volume will stir American scholars so that these things will be brought before the reading world. But I would advise whoever does it, not to trust to the printed copies of the Jewish Rabbis, but go as I did to the original manuscript at Byzantium and get it as it was written by its author.

One more book I must ask attention to, that is the *Siphri*. This is more of a chronological and biographical work than anything else, and is by far the most valuable work of them all. It gives the history of the great events of all of them, and mentions the name of all the actors of those events, giving a detailed account of the births, lineage, deaths, as well as all the wise sayings of such men as Abraham, Joshua, Moses, David, Solomon, and many others. I would like to give many extracts

from this work. They would be of deep interest to the American people, as well as of great benefit to the young and rising generation. There is one extract I must give. It will be read with great interest by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in America :

“Jacob had twelve sons ; and when he saw that there was strife and dissatisfaction among them, he went and got him twelve sticks, and when he had bound them together with strong bands, he gave them to his oldest son, and asked him to break them. He tried and could not. Then he gave them to the next and so on until each one down to the youngest had tried to break them. And when they had all failed, the father took the bundle of sticks and untied them. He gave one to the oldest, and told him to break it. He did so. And then he gave one to the next, and so on, till all the sticks were broken, and each one had done his part. And Jacob said, Now, my sons, you must learn two lessons from this : the first lesson is, what neither one of you could do, you all combined can do ; and the second lesson is, when you are all bound together you cannot be broken !”

Besides all these there is the *Pesikta* and *Midrasham*. These are full of interesting items, sermons and extracts of sermons, and wise sayings of

great men of all ages, the decisions of the great Sanhedrin on points of law, doctrine, and many other questions of grave importance, and would be of deep interest to the readers of this day. Now the reader must bear in mind that these several books that have been noticed, are all taken from the Talmud of the Sanhedrin, which was made at Jerusalem. These books were compiled by Hillel the Second, soon after the destruction of the holy city, and were made so that if the scrolls should be destroyed they might be preserved in these. After these, other translations were made to answer the necessity of the Jews in their dispersed condition, such as the *Nagad*, *Kikkil*, *Midrash*, and so on. But remember all these works were compiled by the Jewish priests from the original talmuds, who, of course, would leave out every thing that would have a tendency to favor the Christian religion. In all such works we need not expect to find any thing about Jesus of Nazareth. But this by no means proves that such records are not to be found. We must go to the original scrolls, and there we may expect to get the truth, as the following work will go to show. Therefore let the reader read and see for himself.

I will now ask the reader to go with me and examine and see why it is that none of our ancient his-

torians have made mention of Jesus of Nazareth, nor of any the circumstances connected with his life. First, I will notice the history of Josephus. He lived at the time and place where Jesus, John Baptist, and all the apostles lived. In his seven historical books, entitled "The Jewish Wars," he gives an account of the sect called Zealots, who wanted Jesus to go into battle with them as their leader. Jesus spurned them and their offer, telling them that he came to be a peace-maker and not the destroyer of men's lives; that he that saved his life by the sword should lose this life and the life that was to come. He also says that the refusal of Jesus to join the insurrectionists caused a universal detestation of Jesus among the Zealots and Essenes. They thought he had power to kill by the exercise of his will, and his non-resistance was finally the cause of putting him to death, which they did in a most cowardly and brutal manner.—Senect. 15, in brut. 15, quintil. 3 and 12.

In his twenty books on the "Antiquity and Customs of the Jews," he gives biographical sketches of many of the rulers, priests, and kings of that people. He mentions the name of Jesus, making reference to him in more than fifty places, but does not contradict the general history in referring to him. It would be out of the question

in a work like this to give the reader the quotations. It would require more space than can be allowed. I will give the reference, so that any one can look for himself: Suet. in dom. 13, Martial 9, v. 4. The history of Josephus, as read in this country, is merely an extract translated from the manuscripts originally by Ben Gorion, who was a Jewish Rabbi, and then by Havercamp, of Amsterdam, in 1726; and this work is the basis of our present translations.

I call the reader's attention to the historian Philo, the greatest of his age. There are over one hundred volumes of his writings still in existence. He was a Jew, and lived in Alexandria. His first work was "The History of Creation" thirty volumes; the second was on "Sacred History"; and his third the "Laws and Customs of the Jews." He commenced his writings about A. D. 40. They were first translated by Simon, a Jewish Rabbi. His works are the most extensive of all others. He often refers to Jesus of Nazareth; but we cannot make reference to them for want of space. In 1742 the work by Simon was translated by Mangay of London—two volumes. Tacitus, a Roman historian, wrote his history of Agricola in A. D. 56. It was first translated by Marcus, a Jewish Rabbi;

and so were all the histories written in this age. They were written in the languages of those days, and the Scribes of those days were most all Rabbis. They were the lawyers, doctors, politicians, and statesmen of the day, for they were all students of the Hillel and Shammai schools, which were the most learned bodies of the world. As these were all opposed to Jesus of Nazareth and his followers, of course they kept every thing concealed they could that would advance the cause of the Christians. This is the reason why we never have had any knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth from the outside world or from his enemies. After making mention of these former things, the question comes up, Are these things so? The British museum has lately acquired a grand addition to their library, containing 128 volumes of manuscripts, the writings of great and good men of old. This is enough to start a few enquiries: Who wrote them? When were they written? How were they preserved so long? Some years ago, when I published a little book, entitled "Acta Pilati," the same questions were started. The reader is referred to the chapter just read for an answer on this subject. The question also comes up: Why have not these matters of history been discovered before by our wise men of former ages? In an-

swer to these enquiries I reply, that the wise men, such as Dick, Dwight, Watts, Wesley, and Clark, and all such never made any effort to get hold of such documents. I defy any man living to show me a man that has made the effort to obtain such a document. They, perhaps, like many others, took for granted what the Jewish Rabbis said in their histories, that all these records were destroyed, burned up in the great Alexandrian library. Another reason was perhaps this: It may not have been noticed by many that in the year 748 of the Roman Empire and 337 of the Christian Era. Constantine the Third removed his seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, and took with him all the records of the Christians to that city, as will be shown in a letter from him in this book, in regard to having the holy Scriptures written in manuscript, and having fifty volumes bound and kept on deposit. When Mohammed took possession of Constantinople, he had too much respect for these sacred scrolls to let them be destroyed, but had them all nicely cased and deposited in the St. Sophia Mosque. History informs us of the dreadful struggle that took place between the Greeks and Romans over the sacred parchments in the day of the Crusades; and it seems to me that divine Providence has had something to do in the

preservation of these sacred things. These scrolls look more like rolls of narrow carpet wound around a windlass than anything else. But as I have described them elsewhere I will not attempt a further description here.

Another wonder comes up in the mind of the reader, and that is: How was it possible for these things to be preserved so long? I can answer that there are hundreds of works much older than these in preservation. Homer is 300 years older. Why not these? Another reason why these things have not been brought to the world is, no man that I can hear of has made it his special business to investigate these things as I have done. After getting hold of "*Acta Pilati*" as I did (accidentally), I made the investigation of these questions my special business for ten years—corresponding with many historians and scholars, sending for all the books that could instruct me on these great questions; and then engaging two experts, who are fine scholars, Dr. McIntosh of Scotland, and Twyman of England,—and going to the city of Rome and paying our way through the Vatican; and then to Constantinople, and there going through those ancient records; thus sparing no time nor expense to acquire a knowledge of these things. Where is another man that has done this? Then

it may be asked again: May not I be deceived? May not these men have fooled me? To this I would say: That would be impossible. Then it might be argued: Might not these things have been counterfeited to make money out of? If so, it was a poor business, for this is the first and only book ever produced from them. It certainly was a bad speculation on their part.

But one says: Did not Gregory the Ninth burn twenty cart loads of these talmuds? Who says so besides a Jewish Rabbi? If he did, they were the talmuds of Babylon, and not those of Jerusalem. There is no body of Christians stronger adherents to Jesus Christ than the Roman Catholics. Why should they want to burn the talmuds of Jerusalem, which were so full of the doctrines and historical events that are so near and dear to them? No man can go into the Vatican library without a guard over him, who watch him closely so that he cannot move a leaf or change a word or letter of anything that is there. If they would not consent to even the slightest change, it is hardly probable they would burn their works. Men from all over the world are there. Often when we crossed the Tiber before it was fairly light there were a thousand strangers between us and St. Peter's gate, waiting to be admitted at

the opening of the gate that leads into the Vatican.

One more evidence to the reader: There are at least five hundred quotations made from the Sanhedrin and talmuds of the Jews, by men who have denied their existence. Now I call your attention to history, and I will give the name, page and all, so you can read for yourself:

First, Rabbi Akiba, a reformed Jewish priest, vol. i, page 22, quotes from Celsus, an enemy of the Church. He says there was a dreadful earthquake at the time Jesus was crucified, and that the mist that arose from it covered the earth for three hours. On page 28 he says that Jesus was the son of Mary; that he was the founder of the sect called Christians. On page 48 he says that Jesus was crucified on the eve of the passover. He gives extracts from the apostles, and never denies in a single instance, but admits their genuineness. He quotes the books and makes extracts from the names they bear. He makes particular notice of his incarnation, of his being born of a virgin, of his being worshipped by the Magi, of his flight into Egypt, of the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem. On page 52 he speaks of his baptism by John, and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and of the voice that

was heard out of heaven. He speaks of the miracles done by Jesus, and never doubts the facts in any instance, but attributes them to the art of necromancy he had learned in Egypt. But did the reader ever hear of a thaumaturgist producing the descent of the Holy Spirit, or causing voices to speak from the heavens? Such absurdities are not heard of except when they are against the Christian religion.

Aretas, one of the kings of Arabia, who was a philosopher as well as a king, in speaking of the laws of nature, (vol. 7, page 14), says that Jesus of Judea was a philosopher above the laws of nature; that he controlled all the elements of nature with almighty power; that the winds, thunders, and lightnings obeyed him; and speaks of these facts as being so common that it would be folly to dispute them.

Justin says, in vol. 2, page 42, that the various governors of Rome in their several provinces made reports of the important events that occurred in their jurisdiction, and they were spread on the Senatorial dockets at Rome. We find in this same work, page 128, that he appealed to Antoninus and the Senate for clemency for the Christians, and after referring to their many virtues, and to Christ as their leader, added: "And that these

things are so, I refer you to the records of the Senate made by Pontius Pilate and others in his day." "The learned Tertullian, in his Apology for Christianity, about the year 200, after speaking of our Savior's crucifixion and resurrection, and his appearance to the disciples, and ascension into heaven in the sight of the same disciples, who were ordained by him to publish the gospel over the world, thus proceeds: 'Of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate himself, in his conscience already a Christian, sent an account to Tiberius, then Emperor!' The same writer in the same Apology, thus relates the proceedings of Tiberius on receiving this information: 'There was an ancient decree that no one should be received for a deity unless he was first approved by the Senate. Tiberius, in whose time the Christian name (or religion) had its rise, having received from Palestine, in Syria, an account of such things as manifested the truth of his (Christ's) divinity, proposed to the Senate that he should be enrolled among the Roman gods, and gave his own prerogative vote in favor of the motion. But the Senate, without whose consent no deification could take place, rejected it because the Emperor himself had declined the same honor. Nevertheless the Emperor persisted in his opinion, and threatened pun-

ishment to the accusers of the Christians. *Search your own commentaries (or public writings), you will there find that Nero was the first who raged with the imperial sword against this sect, then rising most at Rome.*''—Horne's Introduction, vol. 1, page 82.

Now I would ask, if there were no such records there, would these men have made such appeals? And if they were there, could such things have been forged and palmed off on the Roman Senate? It seems to me that to ask the question is enough.

CHAPTER II.

*DR. RUBIN'S LETTER—DR. McINTOSH'S LETTER TO THE
PEOPLE OF AMERICA—REV. W. D. MAHAN'S LET-
TER FROM ROME TO HIS FAMILY.*

AN EXTRACT FROM A PRIVATE LETTER FROM DR. RUBIN
TO THE "BRUNSWICKER."

HE says: I saw; while in the Vatican at Rome last week, Dr. W. D. Mahan, of Boonville, Mo., Drs. McIntosh and Twyman, of Scotland, with a number of clerks, both readers and scribes, going through those old manuscripts and scrolls that have been lying there for hundreds, yea, thousands of years; they seemed to be men of great age and learning, and well qualified for their business. They were going next week to Constantinople to go through the records of the Sanhedrin and the ancient talmuds of the Jews. Their object is to bring out a new book as a supplement to "Acta Pilati." I am satisfied, from the character of the men and the nature of the book, it will prove to be one of the most interesting books ever presented to the Christian world, from the fact that all the

works on archæology heretofore have been written in such a style that but very few could read and understand them.

DR. MCINTOSH'S LETTER.

CONSTANTINOPLE, TURKEY, OCT. 16, 1883.

To the People of North America:

DEAR FRIENDS:—I take pleasure in addressing you this letter, as I feel assured I am doing a good service for my Father who is in heaven. Then, friends, permit me to say to you that I was introduced to my friend, W. D. Mahan, of Boonville, Mo., by my friends of Leipsig, Germany. I engaged to meet him in Paris, France, and when he showed me his plans and the subjects that he wanted, and showed me his notes of reference, the names of others, and books that he had been hunting for ten years, I became satisfied that if we could succeed, he would bring out one of the best books ever offered to the Christian world except the Bible. We repaired to the Vatican at Rome, received permission to examine the greatest library in the world, and to my astonishment the first thing we called for was brought to hand in a short time. I mean Pilate's reports, which were more than satisfactory. The next was the Senate's

records respecting the investigation of Herod Antipater's conduct at Bethlehem, and Antipas Herod on various charges (one of which was the execution of John Baptist), the Hillel letters and the Shammai Laws. We then proceeded to Constantinople and went through the records of the Sanhedrin and talmuds of the Jews, that were carried there and preserved by Constantine in the year three hundred and thirty-seven. Here we found Melker's letter (who was priest at Bethlehem at the time that Jesus of Nazareth was born) in respect to the prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus, which is very deep and profound. Next we came upon the report of Gamaliel, who was sent by the Sanhedrin to interview Joseph and Mary concerning the child Jesus, which will prove to be one of the most interesting subjects that was ever read by man. Then the next thing we found was the report of Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin. When read it will awaken the minds of men, and give a very different view of this matter to what we have had. After we had finished the report, Bro. Mahan insisted that we should unwind the scroll further, and in doing so we found his second report, which caused us to weep like children, and we both thanked God that we continued the search. We also found many strange historical

items, such as will be of great interest to the world at this time. And as Bro. Mahan is going to publish his book in America, I can most heartily recommend it.

M. MCINTOSH.

W. D. MAHAN'S LETTER.

MARKET PLATT, CITY OF ROME, ITALY.

DEAR WIFE:—It seems long since I left home, but God is here as well as in America, and it is my chief delight to report you and the children to his throne of mercy daily. I was landed at Marseilles, France, after twelve days out from New York. We had a splendid trip, all but the first two days. We left New York in a gale, and I must confess I was very much alarmed; it seemed to me the water was much higher all around us than it was where the ship was. That made it more frightful, for it looked as if the ship was sunk or sinking, for the two first days. She was sometimes on her end, then on her side, and then would seem to turn almost over; but every tilt she gave I prayed St. Peter's prayer. I think I did more praying the two first days than I had done in two years. But the second day I began to cast up my accounts, not with my Maker, nor my creditors, but with my stomach—I was awful sick.

Capt. Stikes said the storm in starting out made it much worse on us than it would have been if the weather had been clear and calm, but the third day the sea began to calm, and so did my stomach. I was able to go out in the evening, but we were still going up hill; we had no further trouble all the way, but after three or four days it looked like I never would get enough to eat. Our fare was poor, much more so than on the English line, as I was told by men that had traveled both lines. I shall return another route. I met Dr. McIntosh at St. Elgin waiting for me. He is one of the nicest old men and one of the finest scholars I have ever met—he is so noble and grand. I feel ashamed in his presence, though he is so grand and noble he can hide my own defects from me better than I can myself. He was very much surprised when I showed him my notes of reference. He did not see how I could get hold of these things so far away. We found Dr. Twyman and his men at the Vatican, and we are working bravely. The very first thing the guard brought was “Acta Pilati;” the Doctor was delighted when he read it. We have two guards; one brings the articles as we call for them, the other sits and watches to see the books and parchments are not mutilated. To-day was the day of the Pope’s holy

auditory. We were taken in by our guard, and I must confess I never had such feelings in all my life. The room, I suppose, is 300 feet square or more; there must have been ten or twelve hundred in the congregation, all men, mostly priests and officers. The Pope is a plain, venerable old man. I saw nothing different in his dress to any other priest—nothing gaudy about him. He cried mass in the pure old Latin language; his voice was clear and sweet. After he was through quite a number of the priests came and knelt at his feet. He laid his hand gently on each of their heads and pronounced a blessing, but they did not kiss his great toe. I never saw as solemn a congregation in my life; in fact it would be impossible for a man to be otherwise in that room. Of all the painting my eyes ever beheld, and there are hundred glass eyes with golden lids and lashes all uniting their various colors of light, all seemed so natural. I almost thought I could see them wink. This one to represent the all-seeing eye. These eyes are the light of the room, but the scene of magnificence beggars description. There are too many things to be described, but a man will have a higher appreciation of the Catholic Church, where he sees her enthroned in the hearts of this great church, and I shall ever have a different feel-

ing towards them to what I have had. We have all the text books we need, Buxtorf, Gesenins, Laportees and others. We will get through in the Vatican in a few days. We will leave Dr. Twyman and three clerks here, as we find the Hillellite letters and the Shemiate and Abtalian Laws here in book form. They will translate such parts of them as we want and send them to me; they will come in a roll. If they come before I get home, take special care of them. Dr. McIntosh and I, with one clerk, will go to Constantinople in a day or two. The Doctor has been there and he thinks he will find all that I am looking for in the St. Sophia Library. He says the twenty cart loads of talmuds that history tells us was burned by Gregory the 6th, were the talmuds of Babylon, but the talmuds of Jerusalem are all safe, and so are the records of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin; that these documents were carried there by Constantine at the middle of the third century. If so, this is all I want. The Doctor thinks it will be one of the most important books ever brought before the public, except the Bible, as it will give the pros and cons of the outside world at that time. But I have so many things I would like to say, and it is now after 1 o'clock a. m. As to home affairs, I am too far off to say anything

more, besides I have all confidence in your judgment. I think now that I will be home by the 10th or 15th of December, and I shall write no more unless something happens. May God bless you ; farewell.

W. D. MAHAN.

CHAPTER III.

EUSEBIUS' HISTORY OF THE ROMAN EMPERORS—CONSTANTINE'S LETTER IN REGARD TO HAVING FIFTY COPIES OF THE SCRIPTURES WRITTEN AND BOUND.

WHILE in Constantinople I saw one thing that I will take the liberty of describing to my readers. It is known to the historian that Constantine was a great lover of the Christian religion, and that he had fifty copies of the Scriptures made by his order and placed in the public library for preservation. Some historian has said that they were so large, it took two men to open one of them. I found one of these volumes nicely cased, marked with the Emperor's name and date upon it. To me it was a very great curiosity. I got permission with a little *bachsach*, as they call money, to look through it. It was written on *hieotike*, which is the very finest of parchment, in large, bold, Latin characters, quite easy to read. So far as I read it had many abbreviations of our present Scriptures, but

the facts, sense and sentences are as full, and, if anything, more complete than our English version. I judge it to be about two and a half by four feet, and two feet thick. It is well bound, with a fine gold plate on the front, twelve by sixteen inches, with a cross and a man hanging on the cross, with the inscription, "Jesus, the Son of God, crucified for the sins of the world." If the Revision Committee had examined and published this work, they might have said they were giving the world something new; but so far as we examined we saw nothing essentially different from our present Bible. Constantine's letter is on the first page, which we transcribed. The historian will remember that in the Life of Constantine, (written by Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Cæsarea, who only served him a few years) Eusebius writes as follows: "Ever mindful for the welfare of the churches of God, the Emperor addressed me personally in a letter on the means of providing copies of the inspired oracles." His letter, which related to the providing of copies of the Scriptures for reading in the churches, was to the following purport:

"Victor Constantine Maximus Augustus to Eusebius: It happens through the favoring of God our Savior, that great numbers have united

themselves to the most holy church in this city, which is called by my name. It seems, therefore, highly requisite since the city is rapidly advancing in prosperity in all other respects, that the number of churches should also be increased. Do you therefore receive with all readiness my determination on this behalf. I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the Sacred Scriptures, the provisions and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the churches, to be written on prepared parchment, in a legible manner, and in a commodious and portable form, by transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art. The procurator of the diocese has also received instructions by letter from our Clemency to be careful to furnish all things necessary for the preparation of such copies, and it will be for you to take special care that they be completed with as little delay as possible. You have authority, also, in virtue of this letter, to use two of the public carriages for their conveyance, by which arrangements the copies, when fairly written, will most easily be forwarded for my personal inspection, and one of the deacons of your church may be entrusted with this service, who, on his arrival here, shall experience my liberality. God preserve you, beloved brother."

Now this was done about 360 years after the great questions were started, and only about 270 years after the last apostate was dead. Suppose some one should write a book, saying that such a man as Washington never lived; that there never was a revolution of the United States against the King of England; what would people say of him? The children of this country would rise up and show him to be false. Then suppose there never was such a man as Jesus Christ; that he never was born at Bethlehem; that he never had any disciples; that they never organized a Christian Church; and suppose some one should say there was no persecution of the Christian Church for 200 years; what would you think of a king doing such a thing as making the above described books? Remember, too, that nothing was written in those days but the most important affairs of life, because only a few men could write, and the means of writing were very poor. Now the existence of these writings was never denied for twelve or fourteen hundred years afterwards. Their intent and spirituality may have been denied, but the facts never were. Now what ought we to think of a man that would deny events that occurred two thousand years ago, that were recorded in the records of kings and historical writers, when

he had not one single record to prove it? How could he know that such records are false? He would have no history, no records of those days to prove it; and if they were false, is it not as reasonable that they would have been proven so then?

CHAPTER IV.

JONATHAN'S INTERVIEW WITH THE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERDS.—LETTER OF MELKER, PRIEST OF THE SYNAGOGUE AT BETHLEHEM.

Sanhedrin, 88 B. By R. Jose.

ORDER NO. 2.

Jonathan, son of Heziel, investigates the shepherds and others at Bethlehem in regard to the strange circumstances reported to have occurred there, and reports to this court:

Jonathan, to the Masters of Israel, servants of the true God: In obedience to your order, I met with two men, who said they were shepherds, and were watching their flocks near Bethlehem. They told me that while attending to their sheep, the night being cold and chilly, some of them had made fires to warm themselves, and some of them had laid down and were asleep; that they were awakened by those that were keeping watch with the question, "What does all this mean? Behold, how light it is!" that when they were aroused it was as light as day. But they knew it was not daylight, for it was only the third

watch. All at once the air seemed to be filled with human voices, saying, "Glory! Glory! Glory to the most High God!" and, "Happy art thou, Bethlehem, for God hath fulfilled his promise to the fathers; for in thy chambers is born the King that shall rule in righteousness." Their shoutings would rise up in the heavens, and would then sink down in mellow strains, and roll along at the foot of the mountains, and die away in the most soft and musical manner they had ever heard; then it would begin again high up in the heavens, in the very vaults of the sky, and descend in sweet and melodious strains, so that they could not refrain from shouting and weeping at the same time. The light would seem to burst forth high up in the heavens, and then descend in softer rays and light up the hills and valleys, making everything more visible than the light of the sun, though it was not so brilliant, but more clear, like the brightest moon. I asked them how they felt—if they were not afraid; they said at first they were; but after awhile it seemed to calm their spirits, and so fill their hearts with love and tranquility that they felt more like giving thanks than anything else. They said it was around the whole city, and some of the people were almost scared to death. Some said the world was

on fire ; some said the gods were coming down to destroy them ; others said a star had fallen ; until Melker, the priest, came out shouting and clapping his hands, seeming to be frantic with joy. The people all came crowding around him, and he told them that it was the sign that God was coming to fulfil his promise made to their father Abraham. He told us that fourteen hundred years before God had appeared to Abraham, and told him to put all Israel under bonds—sacred bonds of obedience ; and if they would be faithful, he would give them a Savior to redeem them from sin, and that he would give them eternal life, and that they should hunger no more ; that the time of their suffering should cease forever ; and that the sign of his coming would be that light would shine from on high, and the angels would announce his coming, and their voices should be heard in the city, and the people should rejoice ; and a virgin that was pure should travail in pain and bring forth her first born, and he should rule all flesh by sanctifying it and making it obedient. After Melker had addressed the people in a loud voice, he and all the old Jews went into the synagogue and remained there praising God and giving thanks.

I went to see Melker, who related to me much

the same as the shepherds had reported. He told me that he had lived in India, and that his father had been priest at Antioch; that he had studied the sacred scrolls of God all his life, and that he knew that the time had come from signs given, for God to visit and save the Jews from Roman oppression and from their sins; and as evidence he showed me many quotations on the tripod respecting the matter.

He said that next day three strangers from a great distance called on him, and they went in search of this young child; and they found him and his mother in the mouth of the cave, where there was a shed projecting out for the sheltering of sheep; that his mother was married to a man named Joseph, and she related to them the history of her child, saying, that an angel had visited her, and told her that she should have a son, and she should call him Jesus, for he should redeem his people from their sins; and he should rule all nations of the earth, and that all nations should call her blessed forever more.

Whether this is true or not remains to be proven in the future. There have been so many impostors in the world, so many babes born under pretended miracles, and all have proven to be a failure, that this one may be false, this woman only wishing to

hide her shame or court the favor of the Jews.

I am informed that she will be tried by our law, and, if she can give no better evidence of her virtue than she has given to Melker, she will be stoned according to our law, although, as Melker says, there never has been a case before with such apparent divine manifestations as has been seen on this occasion. In the past, in various instances, virgins have pretended to be with child by the Holy Ghost, but at the time of their delivery there was no light from the heavens, and no angels talking among the clouds and declaring that this was the King of the Jews. And, as to the truth of these things, the whole of the people of Bethlehem testify to having seen it, and the Roman guard also came out and asked what it meant and they showed by their actions that they were very much alarmed. These things, Melker says, are all declared in the Scriptures to be the sign of his coming. Melker is a man of great learning, and well versed in the prophecies, and he sends you this letter, referring you to those prophecies:

*Melker, Priest of the Synagogue of Bethlehem,
To the Higher Sanhedrin of the Jews at
Jerusalem:*

HOLY MASTERS OF ISRAEL:—I, your servant, would call your attention to the words of the

prophet in regard to the forerunner, and the rise as well as the conductor of a great and mighty nation, wherein should dwell the true principles of righteousness and the conductor of the outward formation of a national domain of God upon earth. As evidence of the fact, the vision and affliction that has befallen Zechariah of late is enough to satisfy all men of the coming of some great event; and this babe of Elizabeth is the beginning of better times.

What has occurred here in the last few days, as Jonathan will inform you, forever settles the question that the day of our redemption is drawing nigh. The sections of these divisions are three. First, the general survey; the original foundation and destiny of man in his single state; the proto-evangel; the full development of mankind; the promises to the fathers of the covenant people; Judah, the leader tribe; section second, the Mosaic law and the Mosaic outlook; the prophecy of Baalam; section third, the anointed of the Lord; the prophetic covenant in the songs of Israel of the anointed one; and the prophets of the past exile: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; Malachi's prophecy of the forerunner of the Lord. Now, noble masters of Israel, if you will refer to the several sections of the divine word you will not

fail to see that all that has been spoken by the prophets in regard to the works of God upon earth has been fulfilled in the last few days in the two events, the birth of the child of Elizabeth and that of Mary of Bethlehem.

Considering the unlimited freedom which some men take with these holy writings of God, as to the above prophecy, subjects us to the severest criticism. It is, however, most satisfactory to see and hear that the divine grandeur and authority of the sacred oracles are in no way dependent on the solution of carnal critics, but rest on an inward light shining every where out of the bosom of a profound organic unity and an inter-connected relation with a consistent and united teleology; overleaping all time, the historical present as well as the past, and all the past brought to light in these two events that have just transpired. Indeed, all past time is blending with the present horizon, and the works of God in ages past are just beginning to develop themselves at this particular time, and the present scenes are bringing us close on to the ways of God upon earth. While we reverence these men of God, we should not misappropriate their language. Take, for example, the third section of Isaiah, where he prophesies of the captive Israelites, instead of his consolation to the

captive. While one of his words refers to the future condition and the reason therefor, the other is sweet in consolation of the Israelites while in this state of captivity, and full of the blessed promises in the future.

But let the spirit of prophecy bear us on with the prophet into future time, far beyond the kingdoms of this world into a glorious future, regardless of the Roman Babylonian or even the Maccabean rule or rulers; but never forgetting that the prophet is one who is divinely inspired, and is called, commissioned, and qualified to declare the will as well as the knowledge of God. Yes, he is a seer. His prophecy is of the nature of a vision, involving and enveloping all the faculties of the soul, and placing the prophet in the attitude to God of being outside the body and independent of it. Yea, far better without the body than with it; for the further the soul gets from the body the more active it becomes. This fact is demonstrated in our dreams. The vivid powers of the soul are much more active in dreams than at any other time, the perception is clearer, and the sensitive faculties are much more alive when asleep than when awake. We see this verified in the man dying. His eye is usually brighter, his mind is clearer, his soul is more free and becomes

less selfish, as he passes on and nears the eternal state.

So is the prophet. He becomes so personal with God that he uses the personalities with seeming presumption; while it is the indwelling power of God's Spirit inflating the soul and setting the tongue on fire. So was the moving language of the words to which you have been referred. It seems to me those men of God saw distinctly the gathering light; they saw the travailing of the virgin, they saw the helpless infant in the sheep trough; they heard the mighty chanting of the heavenly host; they saw the ambition of human nature in the Roman soldiery aiming to destroy the child's life; and they saw in that infant human nature in its fallen and helpless condition; and it appears as if they saw the advance of that infant into perfect manhood. As he becomes the theme of the world, his advancing nature will triumph over all; as he does escape the Roman authority this day, so he will finally triumph over all the world, and even death itself shall be destroyed.

We, as Jews, place too much confidence in the outward appearance, while the idea we get of the kingdom of heaven is all of a carnal nature, consisting of forms and ceremonies. The prophecies

referred to, and many other passages that I might mention, all go to show that the kingdom of God is to begin within us, in the inner life, and rule there, and from the inner nature all outward actions are to flow in conformity with the revealed and written teachings and commands of God. So is the spirit of prophecy. While it uses the natural organs of speech, it at the same time controls all the faculties of life, producing sometimes a real ecstasy, not mechanical nor loss of consciousness, though cut off for the time from external relations. He is thus circumscribed to speak, as did Baalam, the words of God with human life. This is to be held by us Jews as of the first and greatest importance, and we are to remember that his prophecy has the same reference to the future that it does to the past, and has respect to the whole empire of man. While it specifies individuals and nations, it often has reference to doctrines and principles; and in this light Israel is the result of prophecy as a nation with her religious teachings. So is this virgin's babe born to be a ruler of all nations of the earth. The Torah itself goes back to prophecy, as well as every prophet stands on the Torah, and on this rests all prophecy pronouncing condemnation on the disobedient and blessings on the faithful. It

was on this principle that the covenant of inheritance was made with Abraham, and, in reality, so made with David. Thus all the promises, political, ethical, judicial, and ritual, rest on the Torah. In short, the whole administration finds its authority in the prophetic vision, as set forth by the commands of God, to regulate human life—commencing in the inner life and working outward, until the outward is like the inward; and thus advancing on from individuals to nations.

The Messianic prophecy has no other justification than this. On this rests the Church, and on this rests the theocracy. On this rests the glory of the future kingdom of God upon earth.

The whole chain of prophecy is already fulfilled in this babe; but the development is only commencing. He will abolish the old cultus forever, but with man it will develop commensurate with time itself. There are many types in the shadow, in the plant, in the animal. Every time the Romans celebrated a triumph on the Tiber it shadowed forth the coming Cæsar; so every suffering of David, or lamentation of Job, or glory of Solomon—yea, every wail of human sorrow, every throes of human grief, every dying sigh, every falling bitter tear—was a type, a prophecy of the coming King of the Jews and the

Savior of the world. Israel stands as a common factor at every great epoch of history. The shading of the colors of the prophetic painting does not obliterate the prediction of the literal Israel's more glorious future in the kingdom of God. Her historic calling to mediate salvation to the nations is not ended with this new-comer on the stage of carnal life. The prophecy is eschatological, refining the inner life as well as shaping the outer life in conformity to good laws. Looking also to the end of time and its great importance to us, it has something to teach, and we have something to learn. Along the ages past all the great, good and happy have first learned their duties, and then performed them; and thus for thousands of years Israel has stood, hope never dying in the Hebrew heart, and has been the only appointed source of knowledge of the true God preserved. And this day she stands as the great factor and center around which all nations of the earth must come for instruction to guide them, that they may become better and happier.

These secret scrolls, which we Jews received from God by the hand of Moses, are the only hope of the world. If this was lost to mankind, it would be worse than putting out the sun, moon, and all the stars of night, for this would be a loss

of sacred light to the souls of men. When we consider the surroundings, there never has been a time more propitious than the present for the establishing of the true religion, and it seems, by reviewing our history for hundreds of years past, that this is the time for the ushering in of the true kingdom of God. The nations of the earth that have been given to idolatry are growing tired of placing confidence in and depending on gods that do not help them in the hour of danger, and they are now wanting a God that can and will answer to their calls.

King Herod sent for me the other day, and after I related to him of the God of the Jews and his works, of the many and mighty deeds he had performed for our fathers and for us as a nation, he seemed to think, if there was such a God as we professed, it was far better than to depend on such gods as the Romans had made, of timber, stone, and iron; and even the gods of gold were powerless. He said if he could know that this babe, that was declared by the angels, was such a God as he that saved the Israelites in the Red Sea, and saved Daniel, and those three from the fearful heat of fire, he would have pursued quite a different course toward him. He was under the impression that he had come to drive the Romans

from their possessions, and to reign as a Monarch instead of Cæsar. And I find this to be the general feeling throughout the world, so far as I can hear; that the people want and are ready to receive a God that can demonstrate in his life that he is such a God that the race of men can depend on in time of trouble; and if he can show such power to his friends he will be feared by his enemies, and thus become universally obeyed by all nations of the earth. And this, I fear is going to be a trouble with our nation; our people are going to look to him as a temporal deliverer, and will aim to circumscribe him to the Jews alone; and when his actions begin to flow out to all the inhabitants of the world in love and charity, as is most certainly shown forth in the ninth section of the holy prophet, then I fear the Jews will reject him; and, in fact, we are warned of that already in the third section of Jeremiah's word. To avoid this Israel must be taught that the prophecy of Isaiah does not stop with the Babylonian captivity and return to the kingdom of heaven, and that Ezekiel's wheels do not whirl politically nor spiritually in heaven, but upon earth, and have reference to earthly revolutions or changes, and show the bringing to pass of the great events of which this of Bethlehem is the grandest of all.

Neither is the outlook of Daniel to be confined to the shade of the Maccabean wall of Jewish conquest. Nor are these great questions to be decided by our unsuccessful attempts to find out what the prophet meant or what he might have understood himself to mean; but from the unity, totality, and organic connection of the whole body of prophecy, as referring to the kingdom of this world becoming subject to the kingdom of the Savior of all men. We, as Jews, are the only people that God has entrusted with the great questions, and of course the world will look to and expect us to give interpretation to these questions; and, as we are intrusted with these things, God will hold us responsible if we fail to give the true light on this subject. Up to this time I am fearful the Jews as a nation are as much divided, and perhaps as much mistaken, as to the nature of his works, as any other people. I find, by conversing with the Romans, Greeks, and others, that all their knowledge of these things of Jewish expectation in a Redeemer has been obtained from the Jews, either directly or indirectly, and it was through them Herod got the idea of his being a temporal King, and to rule and reign by the might of carnal weapons; whereas, if we consult the spiritual import of the prophets, his office is to

blend all nations in one common brotherhood, and establish love in the place of law, and that heart should throb high with love to heart and under this rule a universal peace. Wherever one should meet another, they would meet as friends; for what else can the prophet mean, in section nine, where he shows that this King shall destroy all carnal weapons and convert them to a helpful purpose, and thus become the active worker in doing good to all men, and teaching all men to do good to each other?

By reading all the scrolls of God we find that the unity and totality of all the prophets go to bear us out in this idea, and all have reference to this Babe of Bethlehem. If we consult them as to the time taking the revolutions of Ezekiel's wheels, they show plainly that the revolutions of the different governments of the world fix this as the time. Next, consult them in regard to the individuals connected with this great event. These are pointed to as the virgin wife, by Zechariah; next, the place has been pointed out and named; then the light and the appearing of the angels have all been set forth, and also the opposition of the Romans has been declared. Now, I ask the High Court of the living God to look well on these things, and tell us how men that lived in different

ages of the world, that lived in different portions of the country—men that never knew each other—men that were not prophesying for a party—men that had no personal interest in the subject as men—men that jeopardized, and some of them lost, their lives on account of having uttered these prophecies—how could they all point out the place, the time, and the names of the parties so plain and clear, if it was not revealed to them and ordained by God himself? I understand that the Romans and some of the priests have been saying that Zechariah was a hypocrite, and that Mary was a bad woman. Such might be the case, so far as man is able to judge; but who, I ask, can forge such truth as these prophecies, and make them come true? Or who can cause light to descend from the heavens and the angels to come down and make the declaration that this was the Son of God, King of the Jews?

Noble Masters of the Sanhedrin, I was not alone. I am not the only witness of these things. The principal people of Bethlehem saw them and heard them as I did. I would say to you, if this is not the Jews' King, then we need not look for any other; for every line of prophecy has been most completely fulfilled in him; and if he does not appear and save his own people I shall despair

of ever being released, and I shall believe that we have misinterpreted the meaning of all the prophets. But I feel so sure that this is he I shall wait in expectation and with much anxiety, and I have no fears of any harm befalling him. All the Romans in the world cannot harm him; and although Herod may rage, he may destroy all the infants in the world, the same angels that attended his birth will watch over him through life, and the Romans will have to contend with the same God that Pharaoh did, and will meet with similar defeat.

CHAPTER V.

*GAMALIEL'S INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH AND MARY, AND
OTHERS CONCERNING JESUS.*

THE *hagiographa* or holy writings, found in the St. Sophia mosque at Constantinople, made by Gamaliel, in the talmuds of the Jews, 27 B. It seems Gamaliel was sent by the Sanhedrin to interview Joseph and Mary in regard to this child Jesus. He says:

“I found Joseph and Mary in the city of Mecca, in the land of Ammon or Moab. But I did not find Jesus. When I went to the place where I was told he was, he was somewhere else; and thus I traced him from place to place, until I despaired of finding him at all. Whether he discovered that I was in search of him and he did it to elude me, I cannot tell, though I think it most likely the former was the reason, for his mother says he is bashful and shuns company.

Joseph is a wood workman. He is very tall and ugly. His hair looks as though it might have been dark auburn when young. His eyes are

gray and vicious. He is anything but prepossessing in his appearance, and he is as gross and grum as he looks. He is but a poor talker, and it seems that yes and no is the depth of his mind. I am satisfied he is very disagreeable to his family. His children look very much like him, and upon the whole I should call them a third-rate family. I asked him who were his parents. He said his father's name was Jacob, and his grandfather was Matthew. He did not like to talk on the subject. He is very jealous. I told him that we had heard he had had a vision, and I was sent to ascertain the facts in the case. He said he did not call it a vision; he called it a dream. He said after he and Mary had agreed to marry, it seemed that something told him that Mary was with child; that he did not know whether he was asleep or awake, but it made such an impression on his mind that he concluded to have nothing more to do with her; and while he was working one day under a shed, all at once a man in snowy white stood by his side and told him not to doubt the virtue of Mary, for she was holy before the Lord; that the child conceived in her was not by man, but by the Holy Ghost, and that the child should be free from human passions. In order to this he must—that is, his humanity must—be of the extract

of an *almah*, (that is the Hebrew word for virgin), that he might endure all things, and not resist, and fill the demands of prophecy. He said the angel told him that this child should be great, and should rule all the kingdoms of this world. He said that this child should set up a new kingdom, wherein should dwell righteousness and peace, and that all the kingdoms of this world which should oppose him God would utterly destroy. I asked him, How could a virgin conceive of herself without the germination of the male? He said: 'This is the work of God. He has brought to life the womb of Elizabeth, so she had conceived and will bare a son in her old age who will go before and tell the people of the coming of this King.' After telling me all these things, he disappeared like the melting down of a light. I then went and told Mary what had occurred, and she told me that the same angel, or one like him, had appeared to her and told her the same things. So I married Mary, thinking that if what the angel had told us was true, it would be greatly to our advantage; but I am fearful we are mistaken. Jesus seems to take no interest in us, nor anything else much. I call him lazy and careless. I don't think he will ever amount to much, much less be a king. If he does, he must do a great deal better than he has been

doing. I asked him how long after that interview with the angel before the child was born. He said he did not know, but he thought it was seven or eight months. I asked him where they were at the time. He said in Bethlehem. The Roman commander had given orders for all the Jews to go on a certain day to be enrolled as tax-payers, and he and Mary went to Bethlehem, as the nearest place of enrollment; and while there this babe was born. I asked if anything strange occurred there that night. He said that the people were much excited, but he was so tired that he had gone to sleep, and saw nothing. He said towards day there were several priests came in to see them and the babe, and gave them many presents. And the news got circulated that this child was to be king of the Jews, and it created such an excitement that he took the child and his mother and came to Moab for protection, for fear the Romans would kill the child, to keep it from being a rival to the Romans.

“I discovered that all Joseph’s ideas were of a selfish kind. All he thought of was himself. Mary is altogether a different character, and she is too noble to be the wife of such a man. She seems to be about 40 or 45 years of age, abounds with a cheerful and happy spirit and is full of

happy fancies. She is fair to see, rather fleshy, has soft and innocent looking eyes, and seems to be naturally a good woman. I asked her who her parents were, and she said her father's name was Eli, and her mother's name was Anna, her grandmother's name was Pennel, a widow of the tribe of Asher, of great renown. I asked her if Jesus was the son of Joseph. She said he was not. I asked her to relate to me the circumstances of the child's history. She said that one day while she was grinding some meal there appeared a stranger at the door in shining raiment, which showed as bright as the light. She was very much alarmed at his presence, and trembled like a leaf; but all her fears were calmed when he spoke to her; for he said: 'Mary, thou art loved by the Lord, and he has sent me to tell thee that thou shalt have a child; that this child shall be great and rule all nations of the earth.' She continued: 'I immediately thought of my engagement to Joseph, and supposed that was the way the child was to come; but he astonished me the more when he told me that cousin Elizabeth had conceived and would bare a son, whose name was to be John; and my son should be called Jesus. This caused me to remember that Zecharias had seen a vision and disputed with the angel, and for that he was struck

with dumbness, so that he could no longer hold the priest's office. I asked the messenger if Joseph knew anything of the matter. He said that he had told Joseph that I was to have a child by order of the Holy Ghost, and that he was to redeem his people from their sins, and was to reign over the whole world; that every man should confess to him and he should rule over all the kings of the earth.'

"I asked her how she knew he was an angel, and she said he told her so, and then she knew he was an angel from the way he came and went. I asked her to describe how he went away from her; and she said that he seemed to melt away like the extinguishing of a light. I asked her if she knew anything of John Baptist. She said he lived in the mountains of Judea the last she knew of him. I asked her if he and Jesus were acquainted, or did they visit. She said they did not know each other, she did not think.

"I asked her if at the time this angel, as she called him, visited her, she was *almah* (that is, virgin). She said she was; that she had never showed to man, nor was known by any man. I asked her if she at that time maintained her *fourchette*; and after making her and Joseph to understand what I meant, they both said she had, and

Joseph said this was the way he had of testing her virtue. I asked her if she knew when conception took place. She said she did not. I asked her to tell me if she at any time felt any peculiar sensation about the clitoris, and she said she had not. I asked her if she was in any pain in bearing, or in delivering this child. She said, 'None of any consequence.' I asked her if he was healthy; to give me a description of his life. She said he was perfectly healthy; that she never heard him complain of any pain or dissatisfaction; his food always agreed with him; that he would eat anything set before him, and if anyone else complained he would often say he thought it good enough, much better than we deserved. She said that Joseph was a little hard to please, but this boy had answered him so often, and his answers were so mild and yet so complete, that he had almost broke him of finding fault. She said he settled all the disputes of the family; that no odds what was the subject or who it was, one word from him closed all mouths, and what gave him such power was, his words were always accidental, unpretending, and spoken as though they were not intended as a rebuke, but merely as a decision. I asked her if she had ever seen him angry or out of humor. She said she had seen him apparently

vexed and grieved at the disputes and follies of others, but had never seen him angry. I asked her if he had any worldly aspirations after money or wealth, or a great name, or did he delight in fine dress, like the most of youngsters. She said that was one thing that vexed her, he seemed to take no care of his person; he did not care whether he was dressed or not, or whether the family got along well or ill; it was all alike to him. She said she talked to him about it, and he would look at her a little grieved and say, 'Woman, (for such he always called me), you don't know who I am.' Indeed, she said he takes so little interest in the things of the world and the great questions of the day, they were beginning to despair of his ever amounting to much—much less be a king, as the angel said he would be; if so, he would have to act very different from what he was acting at that time. I told her that the Jewish Doctors contended that the amorous nature came from the male. I asked her if she had ever seen in the private life of Jesus any signs of such disposition. She had not. I asked her if she saw in him any particular fondness for female society. She said she had not; if anything, rather to the contrary; that the young *bethaul*, (the word in the Hebrew for young women,) were all very fond

of him and were always seeking his society, and yet he seemed to care nothing for them; and if they appeared too fond of him, he almost treated them with scorn. He will often get up and leave them, and wander away and spend his time in meditation and prayer. He is a perfect ascetic in his life. 'When I see how the people like to be with him, and ask him questions, and seem to take such delight with his answers,—both men and women,—it almost vexes me. They say there is a young woman in Bethany whom he intends to marry; but unless he changes his course very much he will never be qualified to have a family. But I don't believe the report. He never seems to me to care anything about women when he is in my presence.'

“Thus it seems that Joseph and Mary have both lost all confidence in his becoming anything. They seem to think that the Sanhedrin should do something for him to get him out and let him show himself to the people. I tried to console them by telling them that my understanding of the prophecy was that he had to come to the high priesthood first, and there work in the spiritual dominion of the heart; and when he had brought about a unity of heart and a oneness of aim, it would be easy enough to establish his political

claim ; and all who would not willingly submit to him, it would be an easy matter with the sword of Joshua or Gideon to bring under his control. It seemed to me that his parents' idea is of a selfish character ; that they are caring nothing about the Jewish government, nor the Roman oppression. All they think of is self-exaltation, and to be personally benefited by their son's greatness. But I told them that they were mistaken ; that the building up of the kingdom of heaven was not to be done by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, and it would not do for us to use carnal weapons, nor to expect carnal pleasures derived therefrom ; that it was not my understanding of the prophecy that this king was to use such weapons either for himself or for the benefit of a party, but for the good of all men ; that his dominion was to be universal, and it was to be of a spiritual character ; that he was sent to the lost and not to the found.

“His parents told me of an old man who lived on the road to Bethany that had been once a priest, a man of great learning, and well skilled in the laws and prophets, and that Jesus was often there with him reading the law and the prophets together, that his name was Massalian, and that I might find Jesus there. But he was not there. Massa-

lian said he was often at Bethany with a young family, and he thought there was some love affair between him and one of the girls. I asked him if he had seen anything like a courtship between them. He said he had not, but inferred from their intimacy and from the fondness on the woman's part, as well as from the laws of nature, that such would be the case. I asked him to give me an outline of the character of Jesus. He said that he was a young man of the finest thought and feeling he ever saw in his life; that he was the most apt in his answers and solutions of difficult problems of any man of his age he had ever seen; that his answers seem to give more universal satisfaction—so much so that the oldest philosopher would not dispute with him, or in any manner join issue with him, or ask the second time. I asked Massalian who taught him to read and interpret the law and the prophets. He said that his mother said that he had always known how to read the law; that his mind seemed to master it from the beginning; and into the laws of nature and the relation of man to his fellow in his teachings or talks, he gives a deeper insight, inspiring mutual love and strengthening the common trust of society. Another plan he has of setting men right with the laws of nature: he turns nature into a great law

book of illustrations, showing that every bush was a flame, every rock a fountain of water, every star a pillar of fire, and every cloud the one that leads to God. He makes all nature preach the doctrine of trust, in the divine Fatherhood. He speaks of the lilies as pledges of God's care, and points to the fowls as evidence of his watchfulness over the interests of human affairs. Who can measure the distance between God and the flower of the field? What connection is there between man and the lily? By such illustrations he creates a solicitude in man that seems to awe him into reverence, and he becomes attracted towards heavenly thought, and feels that he is in the presence of one that is superior. In his talk he brings one to feel he is very near the presence of God. He says how much more your Father? The plane is one, though the intermediate points are immeasurably distant. Thus by beginning with a flower he reasons upward to the absolute, and then descends and teaches lessons of trust in a loving Father. The lessons of trust in God give a quiet solicitude to the anxious listener, that only awakens an appetite and makes him long for more; and it often seems, when he has brought his hearer to the highest point of anxiety, he suddenly breaks off and leaves his company as though he cared

nothing for him. While Jesus in his talk brings all these illustrations to make man feel his nearness to his kindred, man, teaching also their relation to and dependence upon God, although his method is happy, it does not seem to me that it is the most successful; for although he teaches that man and the flower and bird drink from the same fountain and are fed from the same table, he seems at the same time to do everything to excite suspicion and prejudice. We that are watching him to see his divine mission commence, he is continually tantalizing our expectations, as well as mocking our natural reason and desires. When a man separates himself from all other men, both in point of doctrine as well as discipline, he takes a very great risk on his part—especially when he confines God to one channel, and that one of his own dictation. A man that assumes these responsible positions must have vast resources from which to draw, or he will sink in the whirlpool which his own impertinence has created. Though Jesus in his teaching or talks, (though his words sound so much like the teaching of Hillel or Shammai that I must call it teaching, though he has no special scholars) from Jesus' teaching we learn that God is a spirit, and God is a Father; and he says these are the only two things that are essential for man

to know. Then he illustrates this to the parents, and asks them what would they do for their children. He was telling some mothers a circumstance of a mother starving herself to feed her child, and then applied it to God as our Father; and they commenced shouting, they were so happy; and Jesus got up and left the house in seeming disgust.

‘Massalian says he is tempted at times to become impatient with Jesus, as he devotes so much time to details. It seems almost a waste of time, for a man who came to save a world to be lingering over a special case of disease. He thinks he could hasten Jesus’ physical department. Why not speak one word and remove every patient from his sick bed at the same hour? What a triumph this would be. I asked him if Jesus had healed anyone. He said no, not as yet; but if he is to be the king of the Jews, he was to heal all nations, and why not do it at once? If he would, there would be nothing more required to establish his kingship. But I said to him, ‘Is it not equally so with God’s creative power? See what time and labor it takes to bring forth a grain of corn. Why not have caused the earth to bring forth every month, instead of every year? Christ was talking in defense of his Father. The people must learn to love and obey the Father before they

would reverence the Son. Yes, he said, the God that Jesus represented was one that the people might love and venerate; that he was a God of love, and had no bloody designs to execute on even a bad man, provided he would be bad no more.

“It is to be noted that in all Jesus’ talk there became manifest references to the future. Many of his statements were like a sealed letter—not to be opened but by time. A grain of mustard was to result in a large tree. All his ideas refer to the future; like the parent helping the child with his burden of to-day, by telling of the blessings of to-morrow; and by making to-day the seed corn of to-morrow; keeping the action of to-day under moral control by making the morrow the day of judgment. He stated further that Jesus was a young man who was the best judge of human nature he had ever seen; that he thought at times he could tell men their thoughts and expose their bad principles; and while he had all these advantages of life, he seemed not to care for them nor to use them abusively. He seems to like all men—one as well as another—so much so that his own parents have become disgusted with him, and have almost cast him off. But Jesus has such a peculiar temperament that he seems not to

care, and is as well satisfied with one as another. He said that Jesus seemed fond of Mary and Martha who lived at Bethany, and probably I might find him there.

“Massalian is a man of very deep thought and most profound judgment. He has made the Scriptures his study all his life. He, too, is a good judge of human nature, and he is satisfied that Jesus is the Christ. He said that Jesus seemed to understand the prophecy by intuition. I asked him where Jesus was taught to read the prophecy. He said that his mother said that Jesus could read from the beginning; that no one had ever taught him to read. He said that he, in making quotations from the prophets, was sometimes mistaken, or his memory failed him; but Jesus could correct him every time without the scroll; and that sometimes he thought Jesus was certainly mistaken, but never in a single instance was he wrong. I asked him to describe his person to me, so that I might know him if I should meet him. He said, ‘If ever you meet him you will know him. While he is nothing but a man, there is something about him that distinguishes him from every other man. He is the picture of his mother, only he has not her smooth round face. His hair is a little more golden than hers, though

it is as much from sunburn as anything else. He is tall, and his shoulders are a little drooped; his visage is thin and of a swarthy complexion, though this is from exposure. His eyes are large and a soft blue, and rather dull and heavy. The lashes are long, and his eye-brows very large. His nose is that of a Jew. In fact, he reminds me of an old-fashioned Jew in every sense of the word. He is not a great talker, unless there is something brought up about heaven and divine things, and his tongue moves glibly and his eye lights up with a peculiar brilliancy; though there is one peculiarity about Jesus: he never argues a question; he never disputes. He will commence and state facts, and they are on such a solid basis that nobody will have the boldness to dispute with him. Though he has such mastership of judgment, he takes no pride in confuting his opponents, but always seems to be sorry for them. I have seen him attacked by the Scribes and doctors of the law, and they would seem like little children learning their lessons under a master. His strongest points are in the spiritual power of the law, and the intentions of the prophets. The young people tried to get him to take a class of them and teach them; but he utterly refused.' This Jew is convinced that he is the Messiah of the world.

“I went from there to Bethany, but Jesus was not there. They said he and Lazarus were away, they could not tell where. I went and saw Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and had a long talk with them. They are very pleasant and nice young maids, and Mary is quite handsome. I teased her about Jesus, but they both denied that Jesus was anything like a lover; he was only a friend; though this is so common for young maids I did not know whether to believe them or not, until I told them my real business. And when I told them that this was the same person that was born of the virgin in Bethlehem some twenty-six years before, and that his mother had told me all the facts in the case, they seemed deeply interested in the affair. They then told me upon their honor that Jesus never talked or even hinted to either one of them on the subject of marriage. Martha blushed, and said she wished he had. If he was to be king, she would like to be queen. I asked them if they had ever seen him in the company of young virgins. They said they had not. I asked them if they had heard him talk about young girls, or if he sought their society more than that of men; and they both declared they had not; and they were very much surprised that he did not. I asked them what he talked of when in their com-

pany; and they said, he was not much in their company; that he and their brother would go upon the house-top and stay there half the night, and some nights all night, talking and arguing points of interest to them both. Mary said she had often gone near, so she could listen to them; for she loved to hear him talk, he was so mild and unpretending, and then was so intelligent that he was different from any and all other young men she had ever seen. I asked them what was their brother's opinion of him. They said he thought there never was such a man on earth. He thought him to be one of God's prophets. He said when they were out in the mountains, as they are most all the time, Jesus can tell him all about the flowers, trees, and rocks, can tell him everything in the world, and that none of the wild animals are afraid of him. He says often the stag and the wolf will come and stand for Jesus to stroke their mane, and seem almost loth to go away from him. He says that no poisonous serpent will offer to hiss at him. Brother thinks he is perfectly safe if Jesus is with him. I asked them if he had ever told their brother anything about himself. They said if he had their brother had not told them.

“Now, Masters of Israel, after having made this investigation of this matter; after tracing

Jesus from his conception to the present time; after getting all the information that is to be had on this important subject, and getting it from the parties that are more likely to tell the truth, from the fact they are disinterested parties; and then taking a prophetical as well as a historical view of the subject, I have come to the conclusion that this is the Christ that we are looking for. And as a reason for my conclusion, I will call your attention to the following facts: First, to the prophecy. Isaiah, section 7: 'And he said, Hear now, saith the Lord. Oh, house of David, is it a small thing for you? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name God with men. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good; for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that God abhorrest shall be forsaken of her king.' Section 8: 'Bind the testimony; seal the law among his disciples; the Lord will hide his face from the house of Jacob, and we will look for him.' Here is a literal fulfillment of this word of the Most High God, so clear and plain that none may mistake. Jeremiah, 31st section: 'Turn, oh virgin, to thy people, for the hand of the Lord is upon

thee; for the Lord shall create a new thing in the earth: a woman shall compass a man.' Here again is set forth the same things that Isaiah speaks of, and the same things that I have learned from Mary. Micah, section 5: 'Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, thou art little among the thousands of Judah; out of thee shall come forth unto me him that shall rule my people. He is from everlasting; and I will give them up until the time she travaileth to bring forth my first born, that he may rule all people.' Here we have the city, the virgin, the office, his manner of life, the hunting him by the Sanhedrin. All these things are under our eyes as full and complete as I now could write them, who have all this testimony given in this letter. How can we as a people dispute these things? In the 49th section of Genesis, making reference to the history that is now upon us the writer says: 'A captive shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-maker from him, until Shiloh come, and gather his people between his feet, and keep them forever.'

CHAPTER VI.

*REPORT OF CAIAPHAS TO THE SANHEDRIN CONCERNING
THE EXECUTION OF JESUS.*

Records of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, by Eliezer Hyran, B. 22. Taken in Constantinople, October 16, 1883.

CAIAPHAS, priest of the Most High God, to the masters of Israel, greeting :

In obedience to your call for a reason of my action in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, and in defense of my conduct, I beg leave to submit the following for your consideration : I would assure you that it was not on account of personal malice, envy or hate, that existed in my own nature, nor for the want of a willingness upon my part to conform to the Jewish law in its strictest sense. I had but very little personal knowledge of the Nazarene. The most I knew of this man, was from outside sources. Nor was it because he claimed to be king of the Jews, nor because he said he was the Son of God ; (I would that he were,) nor because he prophesied or ignored the

holy temple. No, nor all of these combined. There is a cause, and a more weighty matter, back of all these things that controlled my action in the matter. Therefore, I hope you will investigate the reasons that I may give strictly on legal principles.

In order that you may be able to see, and weigh the question fully, and remember the responsibility that rests upon me according to the laws of our nation, I will ask you to go back with me to the chronicles of our history as a commonwealth. First, our faith is pledged to one living and true God, this God being indescribable, unchangeable and incomprehensible, and of course unnameable. But yet in our daily communications with, and our applications to him, he has been pleased to give us his name, or his several names, according to his relations to us, and they are found nowhere, only in the ark of his holy temple—there where he presents to us his strength and power. He calls himself, *Eloi*; which means almighty in strength; that he can do what he will without effort; that he does the greatest thing as easy as he does the least. This makes him different from all beings. In this holy ark he records himself *Elaah*—existence without beginning, and no contingency as to his end. Again, he writes him-

self *Hhelejon*—unchangeable ; that is, nothing but his own will can change him. Again, he records his name, *Jah*—knowledge that comprehends without being comprehended. Again, he is written *Adonai*—full and free, and freely full. Combining the several names, we have *Jehovah*—the Hebrew God. A man never can go wrong while he can pronounce this name in its comprehensive sense. This is where the Zealots, the Sadducees and Essenes had their origin, and it is the want of being able to pronounce this name in its comprehensive sense that causes so much dissension among us Jews. Jesus could pronounce this name, but he stole it out of the temple, as I am credibly informed.

But the object of calling your attention to pronouncing this name, with all its bearings, may be seen if we turn to the third Book, Leviticus, section ten, wherein is the special order made by our God to Moses, that we should offer the bullock, the ram, the flour and oil, and the people should fast seven days, and this should be *kaphar*, or atonement, for the sins of all the people. Now, unless Moses was deceived, he has deceived us, or Jesus of Nazareth is a false teacher ; for all he teaches is *metanoëite*, *metanoëite*, as though a man's being sorry for a crime would make restitution to the

offended party. A man might repent ever so much, but what good would that do toward healing the man he had injured? None in the least. This mode of making atonement was ordained of God and revealed to Moses; but if man has nothing to do but to repent, the disease carries its own remedy with it. So a man can sin as often as he may wish to. Look at the first book, section three: "And God said to Abraham, by his own mouth, that each and all that were circumcised by the cutting of the prepus should be saved." This should be the seal of the covenant. Now if this is not true, God must go against his own contract, violate his own promises, as well as deceive the faith and cheat the obedience of his own children. This is all so if Jesus' teaching be true, for he sets up *table* (baptism) as the seal of God. I refer you to section ten, division first, where God said to Moses, that he had changed the laws, converted the elements for the protection of his people, and with his own arm had delivered them out of a strong compact; and that they might remember, and that the generation to be born might remember and never forget to trust in him when in danger, he said that once every year we should roast a kid or lamb, and eat it with unleaven bread, and this should be the sign that

we would trust in him in all times of danger. Now Jesus teaches that common bread and wine are to be used instead thereof—a thing unheard of. And not only so, something that is altogether repugnant to God, and something that fosters drunkenness, and is well qualified to excite men's passions. And oh, ye Masters of Israel, but think once. Jesus calls himself the Son of God; claims to have been born of *almah* (the Hebrew word for virgin); that he and his Father are one—they are equal. These things will establish the following conclusions: If he is right, his Father is false. If they were one, then their teaching should be one; and if his teachings are true, God's must be wrong, or there are not those perfections in him that we learn in pronouncing his holy name. By tolerating the teachings of Jesus, we say to the Romans that all of our former teachings are false; that the Hebrew's God is not to be trusted; that he is weak, wanting in forethought; that he is vacillating, and not to be trusted, much less to be honored and obeyed. Thus the world will lose confidence in our God, and confidence in us as a religious people. This is the impregnation of the whole atmosphere with moral pollution. It does not only cut off, but blocks the way of all Jews from heaven; and not only this, it excludes our

hope in the salvation of our forefathers, who have obeyed God in his ordinances, believed in his promises, and shouted in the triumphs of a holy life for fourteen hundred years. He entirely ignores God's holy temple—the house God had built by our fathers under his own supervision, where he promised to dwell with his children, to hear their prayers, and to be pleased with their sacrifices. This temple is the bond of the Jews. Here all men can come and be blessed. It is the earthly home of the souls of men—the place where men may hide from the storms of sin and persecution. This temple is where the foolish can learn wisdom, the place where the naked soul can be clothed, and where the hungry may be fed. This is the grandest gift of our Father. Jesus perfectly ignores this temple; says that the priests have made it a den of thieves; and sets up a sneer, and even scoffs at its sacred ordinances, and with a sort of selfish triumph says it shall be destroyed; and from his manner of saying it, I have no doubt he would be glad how quick. But what would be the condition of our people if this temple was removed? Where would be the use of priesthood if the temple were absolved? Where would we find an answer by Urim and Thummim? How would the soul of man be purified, if the holy *Bathkole*,

the *Euroch* of God, should depart? There in that sacred temple of God he has been burning to the consuming of sin and the purifying of the heart since our return from bondage in Babylon. My argument is, if this temple is destroyed, or even forsaken by the Jews, we as a nation are finally ruined. We might as well put our necks under the feet of idolatry and give up all hope.

One more subject I place before my Masters of Israel. Is it compatible with our religion, or is it consistent with philosophy, or admitted in his holy Word, that there can be more gods than one? When we pronounce *EleLaahShaddaiHhelyon-Adonai* (which is *Jahovah*), there can be but one living God. By reference to section six, No. 4, he says by mouth of Moses, when he was all aglow with the glory of God—and remember he speaks either by mouth or quill; it is he that speaks, and not man—he says, “The Lord your God is one God; there can be but one. I am and have been with you; I brought you up; I delivered you out of a strong compact; I delivered you out of their hand, and kept you dry, while your enemies were drowned in the sea. I will not forsake you. I promised your Father I would not. But if you forsake me, then desolation will come upon you, and have you in swift destruction.” In section

five, three and four, of David's Song of Joy: "I am God alone. If I turn to the right or to the left, if I go down into the depths of the sea, or into the center of the earth, or over the heavens, I should find no companion." In section third he says, "I am God alone, and alone I am God; beside me there is no help for man nor angels." Then in section 13, this command has been given: "Thou shalt pay to the Lord thy God once a year a half shekel of silver, that thou and thy children, and all the strangers that are in thy gate, may know that there is no God beside me, on whom they may call in time of danger." Now, having all the commands and teachings from the very lips of God himself before my eyes, and being held responsible for the soundness of our doctrine and the proper inculcation of the same among the people of the Jews, what was I to do? Could I stand as the priest of the Most High God, and see your blessed religion perverted by an imposter? Could I stand and see the holy temple of our God deserted and forsaken? Could I stand and see all the holy ordinances, which had been appointed by our God for securing salvation to Israel, perverted by an imposter? All the blessed doctrines that were appointed for the government and the instruction of the priesthood, thence to be imparted to the

youth of our land, set aside, and that by one that could show no authority, only the authority of John Baptist, who could give no authority only the one who sent him to baptize, and he could not tell who he was, nor from whence he came? Hence you can see the responsible position that I as the high priest of God and of the Jewish Church occupied. According to our laws I was made responsible, and stood between my God and my people, to protect them in doctrine and government. I refer you to the capitulation made by the Sanhedrin and Augustus Cæsar, in the holy *Tosephta* of the talmuds. We submitted to taxation by the Romans, and the Romans are to protect our holy religion from foreign foes, in order that the holy temple or any of its sacred ordinances should never be molested, nor the holy city, Jerusalem, be polluted by Roman idolatry. Now the insinuating plan taken by Jesus was well qualified to deceive the common people. It had already led many to forsake the temple, and hold her ordinances in derision, as well as to neglect the teachings of the priest or to pay tithes for their supplies. He had already inculcated into the Jewish mind his pernicious ways of being saved to that extent that the Jewish cause was almost gone. There are two reasons for this: First, the people

to whom he preached were an ignorant set, and knew but very little about doctrine of any kind. They are a restless sort of men, who are always finding fault and wanting something new, and never associate with the more enlightened part of the community in order to learn. Another reason of his having many followers is, his doctrines are congenial to unsanctified flesh. They are so suited to human nature that they require no sacrifices; they need not go to the temple to worship God; they need not fast, and they can pray when and where they please; they need pay no tithes to keep up the temple or the priesthood, but every man can be his own priest, and worship God as he chooses. All this is so compatible with human nature that, although he has not been preaching over three years, he has more followers to-day than Abraham has, and they have become perfectly hostile towards the Jews that are faithful to their God; and if it had not been for the Roman soldiers, on the day of execution we would have had one of the bloodiest insurrections ever known to the Jewish commonwealth. I am told that there was never seen such a concourse of people assembled at Jerusalem as at the cross. One of my guards informs me that there were several hundred thousand, and, although there were two others crucified

at the same time, Jesus was the great center of attraction. They would call out, "Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? What is his crime?" Some of his friends would cry out, "Nothing; he is being executed because he was a friend to the poor. Take him down! Take him down," they would cry out, and the soldiers would have to use their spears to keep them back. But when he yielded up the ghost he proved to all that he was hypothetical (that is a human body), and the *lodi curios* had come from the iclandic covenant, and his *trinitatis unitas* was all a sham, for how could this unpronounced name suffer or be captured by men, or die, unless he is the one that is to die for the many? And if so, I was only accomplishing God's holy purposes, which exonerates me from guilt.

But it seems to me a necessity that he should be removed. That this may be evident to your minds, I ask you to contrast our present condition with the past. Jesus of Nazareth spent two years in Egypt under the instruction of Rabbi Joshua, and learned the art of thaumaturgy to perfection, as has never been taught in any of the schools of necromancy among the heathen. If the healing miracles of Jesus are true, as they must be (for they are so acknowledged by his foes as well as his

friends), he must have learned it from Horus and Serapis, as practiced by those heathen priests. He came back to Palestine as physician, and was by nature an enthusiast as well as a Hebrew patriarch, and when John's preaching excited idealistic minds, Jesus also went to that teacher, and was inspired by him to inculcate and promulgate his doctrines. Notwithstanding his youth and inexperience, Jesus started out as a public orator and teacher with the doctrines of John, and in that capacity referred exclusively to his authority, as every public teacher in these days has to be ordained by some acknowledged authority. As long as John was at large, Jesus in the capacity of an itinerant teacher and physician roused the people of Galilee to *metanoia* (repentance of sin), to bring about a restoration of the kingdom of heaven. He met with the same opposition that John did from those who would not admit that they were more sinful than their progenitors were; or that asceticism was the proper means for the restoration of the kingdom of heaven. But he met with the same success among the lower classes, such as foreign harlots, sodomites, publicans and other Roman agents, but the intelligent portion remained cold and unmoved by his enthusiasm. The cures which he performed appeared miracu-

lous to his followers, but most ridiculous to the intelligent Jews, and those men of sober and reflective minds.

Jesus embraced the humanitarian doctrine of the Hillelites, presenting conspicuously the cosmopolitan spirit of Judaism, and he did it almost in the words of Hillel, who had taught it before. Their faith and doctrine being alike, it was not hard for him to create excitement, or to find plenty of followers. In addition to all this, he taught a system of low morals, and so void of all ritualistic ideas that it was easy for him to get any amount of followers. He taught the people that there was but one living and true God, but he taught them that he was that God, and that his Father was emerged into himself, and could not manifest himself only through him, which theory would confute itself if they would only stop to reflect, for as he was hypostatical or corporeal, his assistance was cut off from all that was not immediately in his presence, which is altogether incompatible with the faith of the Jews. Right in the blaze of this doctrine he would teach that there was a special providence, as well as a general providence, as if there could be a general providence without a God that could be present in all places at all times, as we learn in pronouncing his name. He teaches that

the dead will rise and live again in a future state of happiness or misery according as they have lived here. Therefore he teaches future rewards and punishments, but he being present how can he reward in the future? He teaches the revelation and the prophets, but contradicts all they teach. He teaches the election of Israel by the Almighty, but ignores all the doctrines of Israel. He teaches the eternity of God's laws, and promises in the super-importance of the humanitarian over the ritual laws and doctrines, but I don't think he wished to abolish the latter, or even the traditional laws, but merely to supersede them by a higher life. The natural result of all this was that he disregarded the laws of Levitical cleanness, which were so important to the Shammaites and Essenes, and so important to the Hillelites. This is the point where division commenced, and the breach grew wider and wider until an insurrection must have been the result. He so far cut himself loose from the Jews that he ate with unclean sinners, publicans and lepers, and permitted harlots to touch him, while his disciples went so far as to eat their meals, without washing themselves. Furthermore, he looked upon the whole of the Levitical institutions, temple, sacrifices, and priesthood included, as necessary no longer, and not worth the life of the

animal. This was certainly the opinion of the Hillelites. Jesus, it seems, found in this Hillelite school a party furnished to hand, ready to take up with his heresy (and a large party they are, almost sufficient to divide the whole Jewish commonwealth). They teach the repentance of sin, the practice of benevolence and charity, the education of the young, and good-will towards mankind, as possessing much more moral worth than all the Levitical cleanness, or compliance with the whole moral law given to us by our God to govern us. His preaching was of the parabolical style. He would rely on a text of scripture, for he seems to hold the scriptures in high veneration, so his preaching was on the *midrash* style of the scribes—a maxim expressed in the style of Solon or of Sirach's son. His great object was to come as near the Jewish theology as possible so as to destroy the Jews entirely, and establish his own. Hence he resorted to the allegorical method of the Egyptian Hebrews, uttering many good and wise sayings, which were not new to the learned, but which were taken from the common wisdom of the country, which was known by all who were acquainted with the literature of the Rabbis. But they were new to his class of hearers who were not accustomed to listen to the

wise. He had no education, comparatively speaking. He was full of nervous excitement, all of which went to inspire his hearers with enthusiasm. He took but little care of his health or person; cared not for his own relatives. He traveled mostly on foot in the company of his disciples and some suspicious women, and lived on the charity of his friends. He seemed to take no notice of the political affairs of his country; would as soon be governed by one nation as another. In fact, it seemed if he had any preference, it was for the Romans. It seems that he became so infatuated that he really thought he was head of the kingdom of heaven. This manner of preaching, along with his presumption, aroused his enemies to a powerful pitch, and it was all I could do to keep the zealots from mobbing him in the temple. They had no confidence in a doctrine that set the Jewish laws at naught, and mocked the priesthood of God, and they with the Sadducees and Scribes were not willing to submit to a man who acknowledged no authority higher than himself, and was seemingly endeavoring to overturn everything that they held more sacred and dearer than life. Jesus' mode and manner was well qualified to deceive the unsuspecting. "Let us have all things common," said he, "and he that would be greatest among you

will prove his greatness by rendering the greatest service to all, and if any of the higher powers compel thee to go a mile, let him that is compelled go ten miles." This caused him to be more attacked in his policy than in his doctrine. The great question with us Jews was, here are the Romans upon us; how can we get rid of them? Jesus' idea was to let the Romans alone; it matters not who rules and governs the nations; if they abuse you, love them in return, and they can't be your enemies long; no man can continue to abuse another, who returns injuries with love. Keep from them; pray in secret for the return of the kingdom of heaven and God's grace, and this will soon make all things right. "Pay your taxes," he would say to them; "it is only Cæsar's money you pay, which is unlawful for you to have—unlawful on account of its idolatrous effigies. Again, he would say to his hearers, "You can't conquer the Romans; better convert them, and they are your enemies no longer. They already have your temple in possession; their yoke is getting heavier every day, and the more you fight against them the more they will abuse you; therefore, your only chance is to love them, and try to make your yoke easy, and your burden light by having them your friends." Indeed, the conduct of Jesus was so

strange and incompatible with the interest of the Jews as a nation, it seemed to me that he was a subject employed by the Romans to keep the Jews submissive and obedient to all their tyranny and abuse.

This policy was most powerfully attacked by the officiating priest, by the Shammaites and Zealots, and in fact, the whole Jewish nation was becoming aroused to a war-heat. The reprimands of Jesus were so severe against the rich and highly educated that they had turned against him, and brought all the power they had, both of their wealth and talent, so that I saw that a bloody insurrection was brewing fast. The public mind of the Jews was becoming more and more divided and corrupt; the doctrine of heresy was being diffused all over the land; the temple was forsaken, the holy sacraments neglected, the people were dividing into sects, and these breaches were like a rent in a garment—tearing wider apart continually. As it seemed to me, the whole of the Jewish theocracy was about to be blown away as a bubble on a breaker. As the Jews became more and more divided and confused, this increased the tyranny of the Romans. All they wanted was an excuse to slaughter, massacre the Jews, and confiscate their property. At this time both the doc-

trine and religion of the Jews were spreading rapidly all over Rome, which gave them great alarm. Sejane undertook to have an ordinance passed in the Senate, abolishing the Jewish religion from Rome; and when he found it would produce an insurrection, they banished all the Jews from Rome, and back they came to Judea with all their idolatry and heresy, with many other principles of corruption from the Romans, which fitted them to join any party for profit. Up to this time the Roman kings had showed great kindness to the Jews. There never was a better man than Hircan. The Jews enjoyed great peace during his administration. But a Tiberias has turned against us; Pilate has removed the army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. I say, no nation with any self-respect, or one that had any energy left, would nor could stand it without a struggle.

Now the preaching of John Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth had brought all these things upon us. When Herod Antipas captured John, it gave a quiet to things in Galilee, so that they had peace until Jesus started it up afresh. I had issued orders to Jesus to desist from preaching, unless he taught as the Jews taught. He sent me the impertinent word that his doctrine was not of this world, but had reference to the world to come;

when he was all the time doing all he could to destroy the peace and harmony of this world. Now, according to our law in the *Saphra*, by Jose, B. Talmud, it devolves on me to see that the people have sound doctrine taught them. Hence it is my duty to examine all the *midrashim* or sermons, of all the preaching priests, and, if any taught the people wrong, to cause him to desist; or, if his conduct was not in correspondence with his profession, to cause him to desist; or, if any disregard the holy laws of ablution, or in any way defiled himself, or if he should be guilty of any misconduct in any way, either in manner of life or doctrine, to adjudge such an one, and sentence the value of his crime upon him. This I did upon Jesus of Nazareth, to save the Church from heresy, and to save the cause of the Jewish commonwealth from final ruin. But understand that I did not act rashly nor illegally, as I am accused. I only passed sentence under the protest and order of the whole court belonging to the high priest, containing twelve members, or elders, and priests. Thus you will see it was not an act of my voluntary power, but was legal, as was my place to do according to law. After I examined Jesus on the various charges, he said in the presence of all the court that each

and all of them were true. I then reasoned with him, and asked him if the court of the high priest would forgive him of these charges would he desist from these things in all time to come. He answered most emphatically and positively he would not. Under these circumstances, I was compelled, according to our law, to sentence him to die; for if he continued to promulgate his pernicious heresies the Jews, as a nation, must die with their religion. And, as you find in the *Toseppta*, that the nation has always the right of self-preservation, and as we had conceded the right to the Romans of executing our criminal laws, it became my painful duty to send him to Pontius Pilate, with the following charges:

“Caiaphas, high priest of the Most High God, to Pontius Pilate, governor of the Roman province: Jesus of Nazareth is thus charged by the high court of the Jews:

“First, with teaching the doctrine that there are more gods than one, which is contrary to the teaching of the Jewish law, and he most positively refuses to desist in the presence of this court.

“Second, he teaches that he is a God, all of which is contrary to the Jewish law, and he is visible and comprehensible; and, after being required to

desist by this court, most positively affirms that he is the Son of God.

“Third, he teaches and affirms that the *Bath kole* (Holy Spirit) can't come until he goes away, which is contrary to the teaching of the Jews; because it was he that brooded over the waters, and has been the spiritual light of the world ever since; from all of which he refuses to desist.

“He teaches baptism as the seal of God, instead of circumcision, which was established by the decrees of God with Abraham as a seal of the Jews; and, when abjured to desist by the order of this court, affirmed he would not.

“He teaches asceticism as the means of salvation, contrary to the Jewish custom, and affirmed in the presence of this court he would not desist.

“He teaches the Levitical ablution as of no service, while we hold that the outward washing is the sign of inward purity; and when abjured to desist, he emphatically refused.

“He has abrogated the ordinance given by God to Moses of the pascal supper, wherein we should roast a lamb and eat it with unleaven bread; but Jesus has introduced a different thing—altogether different—without any authority. He has inaugurated common bread and wine, which is not only forbidden, but is well qualified to excite men's

passions and make them forget God rather than to remember and trust him; this feast having been introduced that we should remember to trust him in the hours of trouble. He has established this in the place of it; and the wine is well qualified to make us forget him. When asked why he did this, all he would say, was: 'Hitherto I work, and my Father works.'

"He has abrogated the priesthood, and set the temple at naught, which is the very life's blood of the Jewish faith.

"Were it not that God our Father has given us these holy ordinances we would not be so tenacious for them. But when we know they are the pillars upon which the Jewish theocracy is built, and that we can't live without them; and when Jesus of Nazareth has been abjured time and again to stop teaching these ways of death, he has as often declared he would not; therefore, it devolves on me as the proper and the only officer to pronounce sentence upon him."

These charges were written by my scribe, and sent with the officers to Pilate for his consent. Of course I did not expect him to execute him as he did, but it seemed that the mob was so great that Pilate never received them. Of course I expected Pilate to send Jesus back to me, so I could send

him to you for your approval; and if so, then I would proceed to try him with Urim and Thummim, with the regular *lacktees* on guard, as our law requires; but it seemed that Pilate thirsted for his blood. Like all guilty tyrants, he was afraid of his own shadow, and wished to destroy everything that stood in his way of power.

With these reasons for my actions, I submit the case which I am sure will be considered favorably by my masters of Israel.

CHAPTER VII.

*REPORT OF CALAPHAS TO THE SANHEDRIN CONCERNING
THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.*

AFTER having made the above record of Căia-phas, in unwinding the same scroll, we found another report from him. It may be interesting to the reader, however, to know what we mean by scroll. It is parchment. The Hebrew word, *numet*, means a bark, made from the pulp of the reed, into a paste, and then dried in the sun until it is hard, and then pressed and polished until it shines most beautifully, and its surface is as smooth as our paper. It is of two kinds of qualities, one is called *papyrus*, the other is called *hierotike*. This latter is the more costly, and is used by the priest alone. It is about sixteen inches wide, and is cemented together by a gum that comes from a tree very much resembling our elm tree. It is written upon with some kind of indellible ink or paint, with a common reed quill, which is made to let out the ink in the likeness of

our pens. They were written by the *sepher*, which is the Hebrew word for scribe. He is called *grammateus* by the Greeks. This writing is in what is known as the square Hebrew. The letters are from a half inch to an inch in size, so you can see what an amount of parchment it would take to record a deed. It is very hard to read by the best of Hebrew scholars, and they must have their text books to assist them. But after a man has once got the thread of the subject, he can get along with it. This is the reason why I got Dr. McIntosh to go with me. He and Dr. Twigman have been in the business for many years. The windlass, as it might be called, (for it more resembles our common rope-winders than any thing I can think of,) is a square piece of timber, about three inches in diameter, to which the parchment is fastened at one end. Then it is rolled around like a spool. At the proper distance are tied two transverse sticks to hold the parchment to its proper place. It is placed at the end of a table, and an empty one at the other end, so that as you unwind from the one to read, it winds around the other. The letters are almost as plain as the advertisements of patent medicines on a plank fence. There are multiplied hundreds of these placed along in rows, just like

rolls of carpet, only they are not so rude. They are all lettered and numbered with their dates on them. This makes it easy to find anything you want, but I tell you you must understand hieroglyphics to read it. There is another class of books. These are fine sheep or goat skin, about eight by twelve inches. The writing on these is very fine, and hard to read. They are bound between cedar boards with clasps. They contain from eight to forty sheets to the book. These are the kind of books of which Josephus wrote seventy-two.

But to return to Caiaphas' report. After unwinding several feet we came across another communication from Caiaphas; I hardly know whether to call it a resignation or a confession. One thing I know, it is one of the most solemn things I ever read in all my life. We thanked God that we had ever come to Constantinople, and that Mohammed had given orders to preserve these sacred scrolls in the mosque of St. Sophia. It is as follows:

CONSTANTINOPLE, OCT. 16, A. D. 1883.

Sanhedrin, 89. By Siphri II. 7.:

TO YOU, MASTERS OF ISRAEL:—As I have made a former defense to you, and you have approved the same, I feel in duty bound to communicate to you some facts that have come to my knowledge

since the former communication. A few days after the execution of Jesus of Nazareth the report of his resurrection from the dead became so prominent I found it was necessary to investigate it, because the excitement was raging more heavy than before, and my own life as well as that of Pilate was in danger, and it seemed worse than if he had not been apprehended at all. I sent for Malkus, captain of the royal city guard, who informed me he knew nothing personally as he had placed Isham in command of the guard, but from what he could learn of the soldiers the scene was perfectly overwhelming, and it was so generally believed that it was no use to deny it. He thought my only chance was to suppress it among the soldiers, and have John and Peter banished to Crete, or have them arrested and locked up in prison, and if they would not be quiet to treat them as I had treated Jesus. He said all the soldiers he had conversed with were convinced that he was either resurrected by supernatural power, or he was not dead, or that he was no human being; for the light, and the angels, and the dead that came out of their graves, all went to prove that it was something that had never occurred on earth before. He said that John and Peter were spreading it all over the country, and if it should be so that Jesus

should appear at the head of a host, and declare for the king of the Jews, he believed all the Jewish soldiers would fight for him. I sent for the lieutenant, who gave a lengthy detail of the occurrence there that morning, all of which I suppose you have heard, and will investigate the subject by a committee. From this I am convinced that there was something above the laws of nature transacted there that morning that can't be accounted for upon natural principles, and I find it is of no use to try to get any of the soldiers to deny it, for they are so excited over it that there is no doing anything with them. I am now sorry that I had the soldiers placed at the tomb, for the very things that they were to prevent they have established.

After investigating the soldiers and officers to my satisfaction, my mind being so disturbed that I could neither eat nor sleep, I sent for John and Peter. They came, and brought Mary and Joanna. These are the women that went to embalm his body the morning of the resurrection, as it is called. They are very interesting, as they relate the circumstances. Mary says when they went it was just getting light. They met the soldiers returning from the sepulcher, and they thought nothing strange until they came to the tomb, and found that Jesus was gone. The stone that

covered the sepulcher was rolled to one side, and there were two men dressed in flowing white, sitting, one at each end of the sepulcher. She asked them where was her Lord; they said, He is risen from the dead; did he not tell you he would rise the third day and show himself to the people, to prove that he was the Lord of life? "Go tell his disciples," said they. Joanna said she saw but one man; but this discrepancy may have been on account of their excitement, because they both say they were much alarmed. They both say as they returned they met the Master, who told them that he was the resurrection and the life; all that will accept shall be resurrected from the second death. "We fell at his feet, all bathed in tears, and when we rose up he was gone." Both the women wept for joy while relating these circumstances, and John shouted aloud, which made me tremble in every limb, for I could not help thinking that something that belonged to the exclusive work of God had occurred, but what it all could mean was a great mystery to me. It might be, I said, that God had sent this message by the mouth of this stranger; it might be that he was the seed of the woman, and we his people had executed him. I asked John and Peter if they could give me any further evidence in regard to this man;

that I wished to be informed of his private history. Peter said the first he knew of him he passed by where he was, and bade him to follow him, and he felt an internal drawing after him, but at first it was more through curiosity than anything in the man; that he soon became acquainted with Mary, who told him that this was her son, and told him the strange circumstance respecting his birth, and she was convinced that he was to be king of the Jews, and related to him many strange things concerning his life, which made him feel more interested in him than he should have been otherwise. He said that Jesus was a man so pleasant in his character, and so like a little child in innocency, that no one could help liking him after they got acquainted with him; that though he seemed to be stern and cold, he was not so in reality; that he was exceedingly kind, especially to the poor; that he would make any sacrifice for the sick and the needy, and would spare no pains to impart knowledge to any one that would call on him, and that his knowledge was so profound and deep that he had seen him interrogated by the most profound doctors of the law, and he always gave the most perfect satisfaction, and that the *sepher* or Scribes, and the Hillelites, and Shammaites were afraid to open their mouths in his presence. They had

attacked him so often, and had been repelled as often, that they would shun him as they would a wolf; but when he had repelled them he did not enjoy the triumph as they did over others, over whom they had got the ascendancy. As to his life, he seemed to be not a man of pleasure, nor of sorrow. He mingled with society to benefit them, and yet took no part at all in what was going on. "I had heard many tell of what occurred when he was baptized, and from what his mother told me I was watching for a display of his divine power if he had any, for I knew he never could be king of the Jews unless he did have help from on high; and when we were attending a marriage feast the wine had given out, and his mother told him of it, and he said to some men to fill up some water pots that were sitting near, and they put in nothing but water for I watched them, but when they drew it out it was wine, for it was tested by all at the feast, and when the master found it out he called for Jesus to honor him, but he was gone. It seemed that he did not want to be popular, and this spirit displeased us, for we knew if he was to be king of the Jews he must become popular with the Jews. This spirit of his disgusted his mother, for she was doing all she could to bring him into notice, and to make him popular among the

people, and people could not help liking him when they would see him. And another feeling was peculiar: in his presence every one felt safe. There seemed to be almighty power pervading the air wherever he went so that each felt entirely secure, and that no harm could befall them if Jesus were present. I have some experience: As we were in our fishing boat I saw Jesus coming towards us, walking on the water. I knew if he could make the waves support him, he could me also. I asked him if I might come to him; he said for me to come, but when I saw the waves gathering around me I began to sink, and asked him to help me. He lifted me up, and told me to have faith in God. On another occasion we were sailing on the sea, and there was a great storm. It blew at a fearful rate, and all on board thought they would be lost, and we went and awakened the Master, and when he saw the raging of the storm he stretched out his hand and said, 'Peace, be still!' and the wind ceased to blow, the thunder ceased, the lightnings withdrew, and the billowing ocean seemed as quiet as a babe in its mother's arms—all done in one moment of time. This I saw, and with my own eyes, and from this time I was convinced that he was not a common man. Neither did he work by enchantment as the Egyptian thaumaturgists did,

for all of the many feats they could play, they dared not to attack the laws of nature. In vain might they order the thunder to hush, or the winds to cease, or the lightnings to cease their flashing. Again I saw this man while we were passing from Jericho. There was a blind man, who cried out to him for mercy, and Jesus said to me, 'Go, bring him near,' and when I brought him near Jesus asked him what he wanted. He said he wanted to see him. Jesus said, 'Receive thy sight,' when he was not near enough for Jesus to lay his hands upon him or use any art. Thus were all his miracles performed. He did not act as the Egyptian necromancers. They use vessels, such as cups, bags and jugs, and many other things to deceive. Jesus uses nothing but his plain speech in such a way that all can understand him, and it seems as if the laws of nature were his main instrument of action, and that nature is as obedient to him as a slave is to his master. I saw on another occasion where a young man was dead, and Jesus loved his sisters. One of them went with Jesus to the tomb. He commanded it to be uncovered. The sister said, 'Master, by this time he is offensive; he has been dead four days.' Jesus said, 'Only have faith,' and he called the young man by name, and he came forth out of the tomb, and is living

to-day, and proposed that I should see him for myself.”

Thus argues Peter and John. If Jesus had such power over nature and nature's laws, and power over death in others, he would have power over death, so he could lay down his life and take it again, as he said he would do. As he proposes to bring hundreds of witnesses to prove all he says, and much more—witnesses whose veracity can't be doubted—and as I had heard many of these things before from different men, both friends and foes, (and although these things are related by his friends—that is, the friends of Jesus—yet these men talk like men of truth, and their testimony corroborates with other evidence that I have from other sources, that convinces me that this is something that should not be rashly dealt with), and seeing the humble trust and confidence of these men and women, besides, as John says, thousands of others equally strong in their belief, it throws me into great agitation. I feel some dreadful foreboding—a weight upon my heart. I can't feel as a criminal from the fact that I was acting up to my best judgment with the evidence before me. I feel that I was acting in defense of my God and country, which I love better than life, and if I was mistaken, I was honest in my mistake.

And as we teach that honesty of purpose gives character to the action, and on this basis I try to clear myself of any charge, yet there is a conscious fear about my heart, so that I can have no rest day nor night. I felt sure that if I should meet him I should fall dead at his feet; and it seemed to me if I went out I should be sure to meet him. In this state of conscious dread I remained investigating the Scriptures to know more about the prophecies concerning this man, but found nothing to satisfy my mind. I locked my door and gave the guard orders to let no one in without first giving me notice. While thus engaged, with no one in the room but my wife and Annas, her father, when I lifted up my eyes, behold Jesus of Nazareth stood before me. My breath stopped, my blood ran cold, and I was in the act of falling, when he spoke and said, "Be not afraid, it is I. You condemned me that you might go free. This is the work of my Father. Your only wrong is, you have a wicked heart; this you must repent of. This last Lamb you have slain is the one that was appointed before the foundation; this sacrifice is made for all men. Your other lambs were for those who offered them; this is for all, this is the last; it is for you if you will accept it. I died that you and all mankind might be saved." At

this he looked at me with such melting tenderness that it seemed to me I was nothing but tears, and my strength was all gone. I fell on my face at his feet as one that was dead. When Annas lifted me up Jesus was gone, and the door still locked. No one could tell when or where he went.

So, noble Masters, I do not feel that I can officiate as priest any more. If this strange personage is from God, and should be the Savior we have looked for so long, and I have been the means of crucifying him, I have no further offerings to make for sin; but I will wait and see how these things will develop. And if he proves to be the ruler that we are looking for, they will soon develop into something more grand in the future. His glory will increase; his strength will spread wider and wider, until the whole earth shall be full of his glory, and all the kingdoms of the world shall be his dominion. Such are the teachings of the prophets on this subject. Therefore you will appoint Jonathan or some one, to fill the holy place.

P. S.—Soon after we found Jonathan was high priest though history tells us different.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELPH'S STORY OF THE MAGI.

WHILE investigating the Sanhedrin and the Talmuds in Constantinople, October 22nd, 1883, I came upon the following parchment, written and bound between two cedar boards. It was signed Ben. Eli. Who he was, or where he came from, or when he wrote, we cannot tell, nor can we say it is true; yet it is so compatible with our history, and has so many strange things connected with it that we thought it would be interesting to our readers.

It seems, in the year 29, there were three strange personages appeared before the Sanhedrin, asking admittance; and they were admitted before that body. One claimed to be from Egypt, one from India, and one from Greece, and as such they are mentioned. These appear to be the Magi who had been in search for the child Jesus at Bethlehem, and now had come to make further inquiry. Whether they were required to, or did it

voluntarily, is not known; but they each gave a relation of his history and experience regarding Jesus of Nazareth. The Greek slowly, and like one watchful of himself, began :

“What I have to tell, my brethren, is so strange that I hardly know where to begin, or what I may with propriety speak. I do not yet understand myself. The most I am sure of is, that I am doing a master’s will, and that the service is a constant ecstasy. When I think of the purpose I am sent to fulfill, there is in me a joy so inexpressible that I know the will is God’s.” Here the good man paused unable to proceed.

“Far to the west of this,” he began again, “there is a land which may never be forgotten, if only because the world is too much its debtor, and because the indebtedness is for things that bring to man their purest pleasure. I will say nothing of the arts, nothing of the philosophy, of eloquence, of poetry, of war. Oh, my brethren, here is the glory which must shine forever, in perfected letters by which he whom we go to find will be made known to all the earth. The land I speak of is Greece.” “My people,” he continued, “were given wholly to study. Two of our philosophers, the very greatest of the many, teach, one the doctrine of soul in every man and its immortality ;

the other, the doctrine of one God, infinitely just. From the multitude of subjects, about which the schools were disputing, I separated them as alone worth the labor of solution, for I thought there was a relation between God and the soul as yet unknown. On this, the mind can reason to a point—a dead, impassable wall. Arrived there, all that remains is to stand and cry aloud for help. So I did; but no voice came to me over the wall. In despair I tore myself from the cities and the schools.” At this a smile of delight stole over the crowd.

“In the northern part of my country, in Thessaly,” the Greek proceeded to say, “there is a mountain famous as the home of the gods, where Theos, whom my countrymen believe Supreme, has his abode. Olympus is its name. Thither I betook myself. I found a cave where the mountain coming from the west bends to the southeast. There I dwelt, giving myself up to meditation,—no, I gave myself up to waiting; for what? Every breath was a prayer for revelation. Believing in the God who is invisible, yet supreme, I also believed it possible so to yearn for him with all my soul that he would take compassion upon me, and give me answer.”

“And he did; he did!” exclaimed the Hindoo,

lifting his hand from the silken clothes upon his lap.

“Hear me, brethren,” said the Greek, calming himself with an effort, “the door of my hermitage looks over an arm of the sea, over the Thermatic Gulf. One day I saw a man flung overboard from a ship sailing by. He swam ashore. I received, and took care of him. He was a Jew, learned in the history and laws of his people, and from him I came to know that the God of my prayers did indeed exist, and had been for ages their law-maker and king. What was that but the revelation I dreamed of? My faith had not been fruitless. God answered me.”

“As he does all who cry unto him,” said the President of the Sanhedrin.

This time all the house was bathed in tears.

“That was not all,” he continued, “the man so sent to me told me more: He said the prophets who, in the ages past, followed the first revelation, and walked and talked with God, declared he would come again. He gave me the name of the prophets, and from the sacred books quoted their very language. He told me, further, that the second coming was at hand, and was looked for momentarily in Jerusalem.” Here he paused, and the brightness of his countenance faded.

“It is true,” said he, after a little while, “it is true the man told me that this God, and the revelation of which he spoke was for the Jews alone, so it would be again he that was to come was to be king of the Jews only.” “Has he nothing for the rest of the world?” I asked. “No,” was the answer, given in a proud voice; “no; we are his chosen people.”

With this his countenance fell, and he seemed so sad. There was a sneer and laughter over the whole house, as though none were worthy but them.

“The answer did not crush me,” said the Greek. “Why should such a God limit his love and benefaction to one land, and, as it were, to one family?”

“To show his sovereignty,” said the President, with a proud sneer.

“I set my heart upon knowing the truth of this matter, and at last I broke through the man’s pride, and found that his fathers had been merely chosen servants to keep the truth alive, that the world might at last know it and be saved.”

Here the Sanhedrin hissed him.

“But when the Jew was gone,” continued the Greek, “and I was alone, I chastened my heart with a new prayer, that I might be permitted to see the king when he was come, and worship him.

One night I sat by the door of my cave, trying to get nearer the mysteries of my existence, to know which is to know God. Suddenly on the sea below me, or rather in the darkness that covered its face, I saw a star begin to burn slowly. It arose and drew nigh, and stood over the hill and above my door, so that its light shone full upon me. I fell down and slept and dreamed, and in my dream I heard a voice say, 'Oh Greek, thy faith has conquered. Blessed art thou. With two others, come from the uttermost parts of the earth, thou shalt see him that is promised, and be a witness and the occasion of testimony for him. In the morning arise, go, and meet them, and keep trust in the Spirit that shall guide thee.' And in the morning I awoke, with the Spirit as a light to me. Supposing it to be the light of the sun, I put off my hermit's garb, and dressed myself as of old. From a hiding place I took the treasure which I had brought from the city. A ship went sailing past. I hailed it, was taken aboard, and landed at Antioch. There I bought a camel, and his furniture. Through the gardens and orchards that enamel the banks of the Orontes I journeyed to Emesa, Damascus, Bostra and Philadelphia; thence hither. So, brethren, you have my story; I will listen to yours."

At the end of the Greek's report the Sanhedrin was dismissed by the President, for it was late. The next day the Hindoo appeared and said :

“Ye children of the living God, I speak to you in a language which, if not the oldest in the world, was at least the soonest to be reduced to letters; I mean the Sanscrit, of India. I am a Hindoo by birth. My people were the first to walk in the fields of knowledge, first to divide them, first to make them beautiful. Whatever may hereafter befall, the four Vedas must live, for they are the primal fountains of religion and useful intelligence. From them were derived the Upa-Vedas, which were delivered by Brahma, and which treat of medicines, archery, architecture, music, and the four and sixty mechanical arts; the Ved Angas, revealed by inspired saints, and devoted to astronomy, grammar, pronunciation, charms and incantations, religious rites and ceremonies; the Up-Angas, written by the sage Vyasa. Such, brethren, are the great *shastras*, or books of sacred ordinances. They are dead to me now, yet through all time they will serve to illustrate the budding genius of our race. They were promises of quick perfection. Ask you why the promises failed? Alas! the books themselves closed all the gates to progress. Under pretext

of care for the creature, their authors imposed the fatal principle that a man must not address himself to discovery or invention, for which heaven had provided him with all things needful. When that condition became a sacred law, the lamp of Hindoo genius was let down a well where since it has lighted narrow walls and bitter waters. These allusions, brethren, are not from pride, as you will understand when I tell you that the *shatras* teach a supreme God, called Brahm; also that the *puranas*, or sacred poems of the Up-An-gas, tell us of virtue, and good works, and of the soul. So ages before my people were known the two great ideas, God and the soul, absorbed all the forces of the Hindoo mind.

“In further explanation, let me say that we have three gods: Brahm, Vishnu and Shiva. Of these Brahm is said to be the author of our race, which in course of creation he divided into four castes: First, he peopled the world below and the heavens above; next, he made the earth ready for man—caste nearest in likeness to himself, highest and noblest, sole teachers of the Vedas, which at the same time flowed from his lips in finished state, perfect in all useful knowledge. From his breast, the seat of life, came the *vaisaya*, or producers—shepherds, farmers, merchants; from his foot, in

sign of degradation sprang the *sudra*, or serviles, doomed to menial duties for the other classes—serfs, domestics, laborers, artisans. Take notice further, that the law, so born with them, forbade a man of one caste becoming a member of another. The Brahmin could not enter a lower order. If he violated the laws of his own grade, he became an outcast, lost to all but outcasts like himself.”

At this point, the imagination of the Greek, flashing forward upon all the consequences of such a degradation, overcame his eager attention, and he exclaimed, in such a state.

“Oh, brethren, what mighty need of a loving God!”

“Yes,” added the President of the Sanhedrin, “a loving God like ours.”

The brow of the Hindoo knit painfully. When the emotion was spent he proceeded, in a softened voice:

“I was born a Brahmin. My life consequently was ordered down to its least act, its last hour—my first draught of nourishment; the giving me my compound name; taking me out the first time to see the sun, investing me with the triple thread, by which I became one of the twice-born; my induction into the first order, where all is celebrated with sacred texts, and rigid cere-

monies, I might not walk, eat, drink, or sleep, without danger of violating a rule, and the penalty, oh brethren, was to my soul, according to the degrees of omission; my soul went to one of the heavens *indras*; the lowest *Brahmas*, the highest, or it was driven back to become the life of a worm, a fly, a fish, or a brute. The reward for perfect observance was beatitude or absorption into the being of Brahm, which was not existence as much as absolute rest."

The Hindoo gave himself a moment's thought; proceeding, he said:

"The part of a Brahmin's life, called the first order, is his student life. When I was ready to enter the second order—that is to say when I was ready to marry and become a householder—I questioned everything, even Brahm. I was a heretic. From the depths of the well I discovered a light above, and yearned to go up, and see what all it shone upon. At last—ah, with what years of toil!—I stood in the perfect day, and beheld the principle of life, the element of religion, the link between the soul and God—love."

The shrunken face of the good man kindled visibly, and he clasped his hands with force. A silence ensued, during which the Sanhedrin looked

at him with amazement; the Greek through tears. At length he resumed:

“ The happiness of love is inaction; its test is, what one is willing to do for others. I could not rest. Brahm had filled the world with so much wretchedness; the *Sudra* appealed to me; so did the countless devotees and victims. The Island of Ganga Lagor lies where the sacred waters of the Ganges disappear in the Indian Ocean. Thither I betook myself, in the shade of the temple built there, to the sage Kapila. In the union of prayers with the disciples, whom the sanctified memory of the holy man keeps around his home, I thought to find rest; but twice every year came pilgrimages of Hindoos, seeking purification in the waters. Their misery strengthened my love. Against its impulse to speak I clenched my jaws; for one word against Brahm, or the triad, or *Shastras*, would doom me; one act of kindness to the out-cast Brahmins, who now and then drag themselves to die on the burning sand; a blessing said, a cup of water given, and I became one of them, lost to family, country, privileges and caste. The love conquered, I spoke to the disciples in the temple. They drove me out. I spoke to the pilgrims. They stoned me from the island. On the highway was I tempted to preach. My hearers fled from

me, or sought my life. In all India, finally, there was not a place in which I could find peace or safety, not even among the outcast: for, though fallen, they still believed in Brahm. In my extremity, I looked for a solitude, from which to hide from all but God. I followed the Ganges to its source, far up in the Himalayas. When I entered the pass of Purdwar, where the river in unstained purity leaps to its course, through the muddy lowlands, I prayed for my race, and thought myself lost to them forever. Through gorges, over cliffs, across glaciers, by peaks that seemed star high, I made my way to the lake of marvellous beauty asleep at the feet of giant peaks, which flaunt their crown of snow everlastingly in the face of the sun. There, at the source of the three rivers, Indus, Ganges, and Brahmapootra, where mankind took up their first abode, and from there separated to replete the world, where nature had gone back to its primeval condition, and, secure in its immensities, invites the sage and the exile with promises of safety to the one and solitude to the other, there I went to abide alone with God; praying, fasting, waiting for death. Again the voice fell, and the bony hands were fervently clasped. One night I walked by the shores of the lake, and spoke to the listening

silence: 'When will God come and claim his own? Is there to be no redemption?' Suddenly a light began to glow tremulously out on the water. Soon a star arose and moved towards me, and stood over head. The brightness stunned me. While I lay upon the ground I heard a voice of infinite sweetness say: 'Thy love hath conquered. Blessed art thou, O son of India, the redemption is at hand. With two others from far quarters of the earth, thou shalt see the Redeemer, and be a witness that he hath come. In the morning arise and go to meet them, and put all thy trust in the Spirit which shall guide thee.' And from that time the light hath stayed with me. So I knew it was the visible presence of the Spirit.

"In the morning I started to the world, and as I passed a cleft in the mountain I found a lump of gold. I sold it at Bagdad, and have traveled fearlessly, for the Spirit was and is still with me. Oh, brethren, I shall see him, I shall speak to him, and worship him."

"Your words, brother, are of the Spirit," said Egypt. There are many distinctions I might claim for my race, but I will mention only one: that is history begins with us. Ours is the privilege to claim the first records that tell of the origin of the race of man. It is ours also to boast of the

first light of the holy religion that came from God unto man. Religion is merely the law which binds man to his Creator in purity. It has but these elements: God, the soul, and the mutual recognition, out of which, when put into practice, spring worship, love, and reward. This law, like all others, — like that which binds the earth to the sun — was perfect in the beginning. Perfection is God. Simplicity is perfection. The curse of curses is, man will not let these truths alone. By the mingling of the Ethiopian, Persian, Assyrian, and Macedonian, this God was divided into eight creative qualities, and in the course of time he was still divided until he had lost all his value. We need a unity in God, so that we can approach him under our various necessities, and the time has come for us to have this God concentrated. This God dwelt with the Hebrews when they dwelt with us as slaves. They clung to their God; and when persecution became intolerable they were delivered in a manner never to be forgotten by the Egyptians. I speak from the records, which go to show that Moche, himself a Hebrew, came to the palace and demanded permission for the slaves, then millions in number, to leave the country. The demand was made in the name of the Lord God of Israel. Pharaoh refused. Hear what followed: All the

water was turned into blood, yet the monarch refused. Then frogs came up and covered all the land; he still refused. Then Moche threw ashes in the air, and a plague attacked the Egyptians. Next all the cattle of the Egyptians died. Locusts devoured all the green things of the valley. At noon the light was turned into darkness, so thick that lamps would not burn. Finally in the night the angel destroyed the first born of all the Egyptian families. But when the slaves were gone Pharaoh followed them, and in their extremity the waters divided and let them pass. Pharaoh attempted to follow, and God caused the waves to return and all his hosts were drowned. Since that day we have had two religions in Egypt: one public the other private, and that which is private must live forever. All the trampling by the many nations, all the harassing by kings, all the inventions of enemies, all the changes of time, have been in vain. Like a seed under the mountain awaiting its time, this is the time for it to come forth. This is the time for the world to reform, and there must be a reformer. To reform he must not only come with human sanction, he must come with supernatural power. He must demonstrate all he says. He must give power such as God revealed to Pharaoh. The minds of the Egyptians

have become so corrupt, God has been so divided that the air, water, skies, are all full of gods; and yet in main extremity none of these gods can afford the relief the Israelites enjoyed. And such is the condition of the world. To return to our former hope it will require faith that will take no denial, and death rather than recant. I believe in prayer, and, to make my appeals strong, I retired from the abodes of men. I went into the mountains, and there gave myself up to meditation and supplicating for a solution of these great truths. There in the morning a mountain, blue as the sky, flung its shadow over my soul, and its gentle breezes fanned my burning brow. At the foot of it lay a beautiful lake of clear snow water. The fruit of the palm fed my body, and prayer my soul. One night I wandered in the orchard close by the beautiful lake. The stars of heaven glistened in the sparkling waters, and I said, Is there no hope? Is there no spirit in the invisible heavens that can assuage the grief of mortals? Is there no ruling hand that governs those sentinels of night? Is there no kindling breath that sets those watch-fires going, that could kindle one spark of hope in this cold and stupid heart? Is there no spark that could warm this frozen, this darken unbelief? Is there no light within the ruler's command that

could shine one cheering ray on my gloomy path of life? Such were the forebodings of my heart, and such was the soul's anxiety, that I found myself talking to God in a personal manner: 'Why may I not see thy salvation?' Thus I prayed, and while I gazed on the lake of stars, suddenly one of them seemed to come up to the top of the water, and put on a most beautiful brilliancy, and come and stood over my head. I fell on my face, and I heard a voice not of earth say, 'O Egypt, thy good works have conquered. Arise, and go with thy strange brethren that thou mayest meet in the way, and when thou comest to Jerusalem enquire where is he that is born king of the Jews.'

"And this, oh Masters of Israel, is our first lesson, and by this we shall learn that the kingdom of heaven is to be won not by the sword, nor by human wisdom, but by faith, love, and good works."

At the close of the address, the President arose and said: "If these strangers have anything for the entertainment of the Sanhedrin, they will inform us direct. This house will not be detained longer listening to a history of their several countries, or of their personal achievements. If they have matters of fact the Sanhedrin will hear."

After a pause of a few minutes, the Egyptian proceeded:

“I was born at Alexandria, a prince and a priest. I was educated after my profession, but very early I became discontented. Part of the faith imposed was that after death, upon the destruction of the body, the soul at once began its former progression from the lowest up to man, the highest and last existence, and that without reference to conduct in this life. When I heard of the Persian realm of light, his paradise across the bridge *chinevet*, where only the good can go, the thought haunted me so much that in the day as well as in the night, I brooded over this, that God should make no distinction between the good and the bad.”

At this point he was interrupted by the Sanhedrin asking for something more to the point.

“Then,” said the Egyptian, “after our lonely meeting on the desert sand, and having these interchanges of experience, we started on our mission, when suddenly before us sprung up a lambent flame. As we looked at it, it grew into a beautiful star of brilliancy. We all exclaimed, ‘The star, the star!’ Thus we followed its light until we came to the Joppa gate. Here the scene is perfect confusion—confusion in sounds, actions,

colors and things. This was, according to the Hebrew system, the 25th day of the month *Thebet*, (the Hebrew month for December), the second of the 193d Olympiad, or 747th of Rome, the 67th of Herod the Great, and the 35th of his reign. At the Joppa gate, by the southern wall, was a small group that attracted our special attention. It was a man and woman and donkey. The man stood by the animal holding a leading strap, while the donkey was feeding on some green grass. The man was leaning upon a staff he used as a goad and support. His dress was like that of the Jew. The mantle dropped from his head, and the robe or frock which clothed his person from neck to heel, was probably the garment he was accustomed to wear when attending his own synagogue at home. His features were exposed, and he seemed about thirty years old. He looked round him with a dull and stupid eye, as though there was but little care on his mind. The woman sat in a cushioned pillow on the donkey's back. An outer robe of dull woollen stuff completely covered her person. Once in awhile, impelled by curiosity, she would pull back the white *wimple* or veil to see what was passing. We overheard the man accosted :

“‘Are you not Joseph of Nazareth?’ The speaker was standing close by.

“‘I am so called,’ said the man.

“‘And you—oh, peace unto you, my friend, Rabbi Samuel.’

“‘The same give I back to you,’ the Rabbi answered, looking at the woman; and then added, ‘to you and to your house, and to all that make peace.’

With the last word he placed one hand upon his breast and inclined his head to the woman, who had pulled the white veil from her face enough to show one but a short time out of girlhood.

“‘There is so little dust on you I presume you stayed in the city last night, the city of our fathers.’

“‘No,’ Joseph replied, ‘as we could only make Bethany before night we stayed in the *khan* there, and took the road at day break.’

“‘The journey before you is long—not to Joppa, I hope?’

“‘Only to Bethlehem.’

“‘Yes, yes,’ he said. ‘I see,’ said the Rabbi, ‘you were born in Bethlehem, and you and your daughter are going there to be taxed, as ordered by Cæsar. The children of Jacob are as the tribes of Egypt were, only they neither have a Moses or a Joshua. How are the mighty fallen?’

“‘Joseph answered, ‘The woman is my wife.’

“But the Rabbi clung to the political idea, and he went on without noticing the explanation.

“‘What are the Zealots doing down in Galilee? Tell me,’ said he, ‘is Judas claimed to be the Christ among your people?’

“‘Some think so,’ said Joseph.

“At this the veil of the woman was removed. She did not look over fifteen. Her form, voice and manner belonged to the period of transit from girl to womanhood. Her face was perfectly oval; her complexion more pale than fair; the nose was faultless; her lips slightly parted and ripe; the eyes were blue and large, shaded by drooping lids, giving to her countenance a warmth and tenderness; a flood of golden hair floated down her back upon the pillow. She sometimes raised her head as if she was listening to a calling voice, and seemed in waiting for some vast expectation from some higher and nobler source than anything of an earthly character.”

At this time Gamaliel called the house to order, and declared that the Sanhedrin could not waste its time in having so many things of no importance delineated, taking their time and keeping them from other business.

While the Egyptian was declaring that they were in search of this king of the Jews, Hillel spoke

out and said it was his opinion that the less they had to say about the king of the Jews the better; for the Roman authority only wanted a pretext to massacre the whole Jewish commonwealth and confiscate their property. By others it was argued that of all the questions ever brought before the Sanhedrin there was none so important as this subject; and if these were the Magi that sought the babe in the manger, he thought it was their business to hear all about it. This was the final conclusion of the whole house.

“Then, with your permission, noble Masters of Israel, and with the consent of these, my two brethren, I will proceed to state what we have seen for ourselves. When we arrived at Jerusalem the whole city was in the highest state of excitement over what had been seen in the heavens a few nights before. As we arrived before the gate and asked where was he that was born king of the Jews, we were shown into the high court of the priest and doctors of the law, where there were assembled about fifty men of very grave and magnificent appearance. The room in which they assembled was large and magnificent, in the form of the ancient courts of the Pharaohs. The congregation was seated on a divan with the president seated in the mouth with a tripod standing before him, upon

which were spread the sacred scrolls of the prophets. These persons never assembled except when they were called together to decide great questions of the law or the doctrines of the holy Testament. He who sat before the tripod in the place as the president, having all the rest arranged on his right and left hand, instantly attracted our attention. He had been cast in a large mould, but was now shrunken and stooped to ghastliness. His white robe dropped from his shoulders in folds that gave no signs of muscular power. His hands, half concealed by sleeves of white silk with bands, were folded on his knees. When he spoke he sometimes raised his finger, which indicated more of caution than direction. His hair, as white as fine-drawn silver, lay sprinkled over his towering forehead. All his lower face was covered with a flowing beard as graceful as was Aaron's. This great and venerable man at 106 years was still rector of the great college. There had been many discussions on some great question, and finally by silence they showed that they had come to a satisfactory conclusion. A servant stood behind the Master, who was called to report to the king. After a time two officers entered, one on either side of the door. After them slowly followed a most striking form and personage—an old man, clad in a purple robe,

bordered with scarlet and girt to his waist by a band of gold, linked so fine that it was pliable as leather, the latchets of whose shoes sparkled with precious stones. A narrow crown, wrought in filagree, shone outside a *tarbooshe* of softest crimson plush, which, incasing his head, fell down his neck and shoulders, leaving the throat and neck exposed. Instead of a seal a dagger dangled from his belt. Not until he reached the opening of the divan did he pause or look up from the floor. Then, as for the first time conscious of the company, and roused by their presence, he raised himself and looked haughtily around like one startled and searching for an enemy, so dark, suspicious, and threatening was the glance. Such was Herod the Great—a body broken by diseases, a conscience scarred with crimes, a mind magnificently capable, a soul fit for brotherhood with the Cæsars, now seven-and-sixty years old, but guarding his throne with a jealousy never so vigilant, a power never so despotic, and a cruelty never so inexorable. There was a general movement on the part of the assemblage—a bending forward in *salaam* by the more aged, a rising up of the more courtly, followed by low genuflections, with hand upon the beard or breast. His observation taken, Herod moved on until at the tripod op-

posite the venerable Hillel, who met his cold glance with an inclination of the head, and a slight lifting of the hands. The king, with imperious simplicity, addressing Hillel:

“ ‘Sirs, this city has been thrown into fluttering commotion this night by this strange doctrine, that there is a babe born of a virgin which is to be king of the Jews. Why is this? How is this? I am a friend in general to all men, but I am here by Roman authority, and as the representative of that kingdom it is my duty to look after the people’s interest, and to attack any usurper that may set up against the Roman Government. This is my highest duty.’

“The eyes of the patriarch glowed mildly, and raising his head and looking at the inquisitor full in the face he answered:

“ ‘With thee, oh king, be the peace of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!’ His manner was that of invocation. Changing it he resumed: ‘Thou hast demanded of us where the king of Israel should be born. That is easy.’ The king bowed, though the evil eyes remained fixed on the patriarch. Hillel glanced at the scroll on the tripod. Pointing with his tremulous finger, he continued: ‘In Bethlehem; for thus it is written in section 10: “And thou, Bethlehem, in the land

of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people, Israel.'” The evil eye of the king rested a moment on the parchment, when he said: ‘Why does your prophet call Bethlehem a prince? A prince is one that rules under another, as I rule under Cæsar; and why say he shall rule? It may be he is to rule in your religious affairs under the high priest, or as the priest under me. I don’t see, if your prophet was inspired, as you say, to tell events of the future, but that he certainly had knowledge to tell it plainly so that all could understand it, especially when there was so much depending on it as the reign of an empire. Such might save these nations from being drenched in blood. It seems to me,’ he continued, ‘that you Jews can be controlled further by fiction than any nation I ever saw. I sometimes think that you are a people altogether incapable of self-government, and, if it was not for the Roman authority to govern you, you would fall to pieces like an old and dilapidated house.’ So saying, he bowed himself out, and his officers followed him with a sneer and a hissing triumph.

“Hillel and all his court seemed cowed and dismayed. They were dismissed, and the parchment folded carefully, and borne away. I thought I

never saw any man so much in need of the Spirit as Hillel and his court. From this I learned it was no use for man to contend against evil in his own strength. He must have the help of God's Spirit.

“At a later hour of the night we were lying in the lawn of the *khan*. The stones which served us as pillows raised our heads so that we could see out of the open arch into the depths of the open sky. And as we watched the twinkling stars we thought of the next manifestation. How would it come, or what would it be? We were in Jerusalem at last. We had asked at the gate for him we sought. We had borne witness of his star. It remained only for us to find him, and as to that we placed all confidence in the Spirit. Men listening for the voice of God or waiting for a sign from heaven cannot sleep. While we were in this condition a man stopped under the arch.

“‘Awake!’ he said to us; ‘I bring you a message which will not be put off.’

“‘We all sat up.

“‘From whom?’ I asked.

“‘Herod, the king.’

“‘Each one of us felt the Spirit's thrill.

“‘What would the king with us?’

“‘His messenger is without; let him answer.’

“‘Tell him to abide our coming.’

“ ‘The question put to the people along the road and to the guard at the gate has given us quite a notoriety,’ we said.

“ ‘We arose, put on our sandals, girt our mantles about us, and went out.

“ ‘I salute you, and give you peace, and pray your pardon, but my master, the king, has sent me to invite you to the palace. He wishes to speak to you in private.’

“ ‘The king’s will is our will,’ we answered. ‘We will follow you.’

“ ‘Following the guide, we proceeded without a word through the dim starlight, made dimmer by the walls on both sides, sometimes almost lost under bridges connecting the house tops. Out of a low ground we ascended a hill. At last we came to a portal reared across the way. In the light of fires blazing before it in two great braziers we caught a glimpse of the structure, and also of some guards leaning motionless upon their arms. We passed into a building unchallenged. Then by passages not always lighted, up long flights of stairs, we passed innumerable cloisters and chambers. We were conducted into a tower of great height. Suddenly the guide halted, and, pointing through an open door, said to us:

“ ‘Enter; the king is there.’

“The air of the chamber was heavy with the perfume of sandal-wood, and all the appointments within were effeminately rich. Upon the floor, covering the central space, a turft rug was spread, and upon that a throne was set. We had but time, however, to catch a confused idea of fans and jars and musical instruments, of golden candlesticks glittering in their own light, of walls painted in the style of the voluptuous Grecian school, one look at which would have made a Pharisee hide his head in holy horror. Herod was sitting upon the throne to receive us, clad as when we saw him in the conference of the holy doctors. At the edge of the rug, to which we advanced uninvited, we prostrated ourselves. The king touched a bell. An attendant came in, and placed three stools before the throne.

“‘Seat yourselves,’ said the monarch, graciously. ‘From the north gate,’ he continued, when we were seated, ‘I had last evening report of the arrival of three strangers, curiously mounted, and appearing as if from a far country. Are you the men?’

“‘We are men, each from a far country.’

“‘Who are you? Whence do you come?’ he asked, adding significantly, ‘Let each speak for himself.’

“In reply we each gave him a relation of our former history. He answered :

“ ‘What was the question you put to the officer at the north gate?’ ”

“ ‘We asked,’ “ ‘Where is he that is born king of the Jews?’ ” ”

“ ‘Ah,’ he said, ‘I see now why the people are so excited. You excite me no less. Is there another king of the Jews?’ ”

“ ‘There is one,’ we replied, ‘newly born.’ ”

“He then said, ‘How is it that you all are so widely separated, and each one came to hear of him?’ ”

“ ‘I will tell you truly, oh king. There is an almighty God.’ Herod was visibly startled. ‘He bade us come hither, promising us that we should find the Redeemer of the world, and as a sign we each had a dream, and we saw a star that guided us, and heard a voice saying his Spirit should guide us.’ ”

“To which Herod replied, ‘Are you accustomed to be governed by dreams? If I were to be governed by my dreams, I might tear the world to pieces, and ruin all my fellow men. Or if I were to follow every poisonous vapor that rises from the pools and quagmires of the earth, I should be as much alarmed as those foolish shepherds near

Bethlehem. If you only have a dream as the basis of your confidence, I am thinking that you have missed the mark, and mistaken your calling. And until you people learn to depend more on human reason and judgment, you will always be led about by legends and myths, to your own ruin.'

"With these words Herod arose and left the throne, thus signifying that the interview was over. The guide led us back to the *khan*. We gave gifts to the steward, and started for the Joppa gate and passed out into the open country, taking the road so lately traveled by Joseph and Mary.

"As we came up out of Hinnom, on the plain of Rephaim, a light appeared, at first widespread and faint. Our pulse fluttered fast; the light intensified rapidly; we closed our eyes against its burning brilliancy. When we dared to look again, lo! the star, perfect as any in the heavens, but low down and moving slowly before us; and we folded our hands and shouted with great joy. 'God is with us,' we each repeated at the same moment. The star, arising out of the valley beyond Mar Elias, stood still over a house upon the slope of the hill near the town.

"It was now the beginning of the third watch,

and at Bethlehem the morning was breaking over the mountains in the east, but so feeble that it was yet night in the valley. The watchman on the roof of the old *khan*, shivering in the chilly air, was listening for the first distinguishable sounds with which life awakening greets the dawn, when a light came moving up the hill towards the house. We thought it a torch in some one's hand; next moment we thought it a meteor. The brilliance grew, however, until it became a star. So afraid was the watchman that he cried out, and brought everybody to the roof. The light continued to increase until the rocks, hills and trees shone plainly. Directly its brightness became blinding. The more timid fell upon their knees and prayed, with their faces hidden; the boldest, covering their eyes, crouched, and now and then snatched glances fearfully. Such as dared to look discovered the star standing still over the house in front of the cave where the child had been born. We went straight forward and entered the cave, and found the young child and his mother. We bowed ourselves down in his presence, and when we went to leave we gave the mother many and costly presents. And when we came out of the *khan* the star was gone, which made us know that our mission was ended for that time.

“We went to our own countries, and told our people what we had seen. Some of them laughed at us, some of them wept for joy, but all the old Jews that are scattered through our countries (and be assured they are many), each one to whom we related the above facts held his breath in silence.

“Now, ye noble Masters of Israel, these events transpired almost thirty years ago. Our business is to find out where is the child of promise. From the signs of the times it is fulfilled, the prophetic word is complete, the condition of the nations is ripe. The wretchedness of the masses and their hopeless condition have no relation whatever to religion. Their murmurs are not against their gods, or for the want of gods. In the oak woods of Britain the Druids held their followers. Oclim and Freya maintain Boreanes. Egypt is satisfied with her crocodiles and *anuman*, holding them in equal honor. In hope of the *Nirvana* the Hindoos move on, patient as ever, in the rayless paths of their Brahm. The beautiful Greek mind, in pause of its philosophy, still sings its heroic gods of old, while in Rome nothing is so common and cheap as gods; according to whom the masters of the world, because they were masters, carried their worship and offerings indifferently from altar to altar, delighted in the pandemonium they had

erected. Their discontent (if they are discontented) is with the number of their gods; for after borrowing all the gods of the earth, they now proceed to deify their Cæsars, and vote them altars and holy service. No, the unhappy condition is not from religion, but for the want of it. It is for the want of the true God. It is from misgovernment, and usurpation, and countless tyrannies, into which the common people have been plunged; and now at this time the whole world is praying to be relieved from the oppression that the political authorities have forced upon them. The supplication is universal, everywhere alike. In Lodinum, Alexandria, Athens, even here in Jerusalem, all are praying for a king to conquer rather than for a God to worship. Studying this question closely, we are forced to the conclusion that there is no relief from the universal confusion unless some God can prove himself a true God, and a masterful one, and come to the rescue. But the people at this time, even the discerning and philosophical, discover no hope only in the crushing of Rome. That done, the relief would follow in the restoration and re-organization of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore they pray, they conspire, rebel, fight, and die, drenching the soil to-day with blood, tomorrow with tears, and always with the same

result; and so it will be always without the true God."

At this time a young member of the Sanhedrin, who had become all enthused with the Egyptian's speech, cried out:

"Where is this child that men saw thirty years ago under such strange circumstances?"

"If I could answer you," the Egyptian said in his simple way, "if I knew where he was, how quickly I would go to him! The seas should not stay me; no, nor the highest mountains. I surely would take the wings of the morning and go to him."

"You have tried to find him, then," said a member of the Sanhedrin.

A smile flitted across the face of the men. "The first task we charged ourselves with, after leaving the shelter in the desert, was to learn what became of the child; but a year had passed, and I dare not go back to Bethlehem, for Herod still lived, still held the throne, bloody-minded as ever. In Egypt, upon my return, I preached to the people. A few friends believed my statements, and rejoiced at the wonderful things I told them. Some of them went to Bethlehem to see for themselves. They went first to Bethlehem. They found there the *khan* and the cave, but the steward who sat at

the gate and so kindly admitted us was gone. The king had taken him away, and he was no more to be found."

"But they found some proofs, surely," said one of the court.

"Yes, proofs written in blood—a village in mourning, mothers yet crying for their offspring. You must know when Herod heard of our flight he sent down and slew the youngest of each family. Not one escaped. The faith of our message was confirmed; but they came to me, saying the child was dead, slain with the other innocent ones of Bethlehem."

"Dead!" exclaimed one; and the whole house threw up their hands in holy horror.

The president explained: "This is the reason he has not been found; this is why he has not been brought into court. Will the speaker tell us if he knows anything of him?"

"I have no special knowledge of him," replied the Egyptian; "that is what we came to seek. The child is not dead, as my messengers supposed. I did not believe he was dead when they told me so. I do not believe it yet. My faith is such that I don't believe all the power of the Roman Empire—no, not all the world combined—could destroy his life. From the records of God's holy

prophets, from the burning of the elements, from traveling stars, and from the talking lips of the skies, I can't believe he is dead."

"Then you have some extra knowledge," said a young member of the Sanhedrin, who appeared to be very much interested.

"No, not so, not so; no more than what I have related to this court of Masters. I have no special knowledge," he continued, seeing a gloom settling over the face of his peers. "I have given the subject much thought for many years, inspired by faith, which, I assure you, calling God for witness, is as strong in me now as when I was wandering by the lake, and saw the star, and heard the voice bidding me go in search for the child. We believe in God, and he is the truth. The hills may turn to dust, and the seas be drunk by the south winds, but his word shall stand, because it is the truth. This voice which spoke to me by the lake said: 'With two others thou shalt see him.' I have seen him,—blessed be his name!—but the redemption, which is the second promise, I have not seen. It is yet to come. Seest thou now if the child be dead there is no agent to bring the redemption about, and the word is naught, and God is—no, I dare not say it;" and he threw up his hands in horror. "The redemption is the work

for which the child was born, and so long as the promise abides not death itself can separate him from his work, until it be fulfilled, or at least in the way of fulfilling. That now is one reason for my faith.

“Then give me further attention. The Savior I saw was born of a woman, in nature like us, and subject to all our ills, even death; but not for himself, but for us. And this is the way he is to redeem all mankind—to die for them. What good is there in the death of a lamb, a bullock, yea, even in the death of the first born? They had no redeeming qualities. The purity of the law requires a sacrifice as pure and holy as the law itself. These sacrifices are only signs; but how long can men live on a sign? The world is now ready to perish. They have lived on signs till they can live no longer. They are now hungering for the substance; and the redeeming qualities in this promised Redeemer are to save all. The sacrifice of the bullock saved him that offered it; but who is to save the world? or where is the sacrifice that can be offered for all men? We shall see him, we shall see him. Presently he will come as a refiner’s fire, set upon the hearts of men and refine them as silver is refined. And when all hearts are purified and molded into the likeness of a unit, then the kingdom of heaven is restored,

and all nations as well as national questions are settled, and the kingdoms of this world will all be blended into one kingdom. This is the work set apart for him to do. Is it not a performance for which only man is fitted? a man, wise, firm, discreet; a man, not a child? To become such he had to grow as we grew. Bethink you now of the dangers his life was subject to in the interval, the long interval, between childhood and maturity. The existing powers were his enemies; Herod was his enemy; and what would Rome have done if she could? and, as for Israel, that he should not be accepted by Israel, was the motive for cutting him off. See you now what better way there was to take care of him in his young life, in his helpless growing time, than to pass him into obscurity? Wherefore I say to myself and to my listening faith, which is never moved except by yearning of love—I say, he is not dead, but lost, and his work remains undone. He will come to do his work. His word is too sacred, his work too important, for it to be left undone. The hope of all generations depends upon his compliance with these great and mysterious obligations. Are not these reasons enough, my Masters?

“Speak on! speak on!” cried several voices in the assembly.

“Speak,” said the President; “your words are those of a sage, and we would hear it all.”

“Well,” continued the Egyptian, “seeing that the reasons were good—more plainly, seeing it was God’s plan that the child should not be found—I settled my faith into the keeping of patience, and took to waiting.” He raised his eyes in holy trust, and broke off abstractedly. “I am waiting now. He lives, keeping well his mighty secret. What though I cannot go to him, nor name the hill or the valley of his abiding place? He lives—it may be as the fruit in blossom; it may be as the fruit just ripening; but, by the certainty there is in the promise and reason of God, I know he lives. And as his day is hastening and the work grows more momentous, my spirit is longing for his appearing, and for the redemption of the world, when all flesh shall be sanctified to answer his gracious purpose.”

At this, one of the members of the Sanhedrin arose and said :

“I cannot tell how thankful I am for the counsel this Egyptian has given us. These great questions have been before the Hillel and Shammaite schools. They have engaged the thought and searches of the good and great for ages past. I have tried to look into these things, but never

have seen them in the light I now see them. I feel to return a vote of thanks to this man of Egypt for the holy knowledge he has given us upon these mysterious questions.

Voices cried out: "We will hear more. We want to know if this child is to be king of the Jews, or is he to be king of all nations? Is he to reign from an earthly throne, and have his subjects to bow at his feet, and tax the poor, and fill his coffers with the sweat of his subjects like Caesar and Herod? Tell us all these things that we may be prepared to receive him as our benefactor, or reject him as our master."

The Egyptian Jew continued: "In my house on the Nile, so close to the river that the passers-by in their boats can see it, and its reflection in the water at the same time—in my house a few weeks ago, I sat thinking. A man thirty years old, I said to myself, should have his fields of life all ploughed, and his planting well done; for after that it is summer time, with time scarce to ripen his sowing. The child, I said further, is now about thirty years old. His time to plant must be at hand. I asked myself, as you ask me, and I answer by coming hither, as to a good resting-place close by the land our fathers had from God. Where else should he appear, if not in Judea? In

what city should he begin his work, if not in Jerusalem? Who should first receive the blessings he is to bring, if not the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in love—at least, the children of the Lord? If I were bidden to seek him, I would search well the hamlets and villages on the slopes of the mountains of Judea and Galilee. Failing, I would go east into the valley of the Jordan. He is there now, standing in a door or on a hilltop. Only this morning he saw the sun rise one day nearer the time when he himself shall become the light of the world.”

The speaker ceased, with his finger pointing. All the house were listening with intense anxiety. Finally the spell was broken by one of the members. He was old, and his long white beard flowed gracefully down like Aaron's. It was Zaccheus, one of the oldest members of the Sanhedrin. All the house seemed to be affected by his solemnity.

“I see,” said he, “that thou hast been much and strangely favored. I see also that thou art a wise man, and hast well appropriated what hast been given thee. I am warned of the coming events, and borrow somewhat from thy faith. And while my soul drinks the divine draught, and my mind feasts on

the riches of thy well-developed ideas, yet there are many things of importance to be learned. I would learn more of the important mission of him for whom you are waiting. I would wait, too, as becomes a faithful son of Judah. He is to be a Savior, thou saidst. Is he not to be king of the Jews, also?"

The Egyptian replied: "The mission is yet a purpose of God. All I think about it is wrong, from the words of the voice in connection with the prayer to which they were in answer. Shall I refer to them again?"

"Thou art the teacher," said the venerable man.

"The cause of my disquiet," the Egyptian said—"that which made me a preacher in Alexandria and in the villages of the Nile, that which drove me at last into the solitude, where the Spirit found me, was the fallen condition of men, occasioned, as I believe, by the loss of the knowledge of God. I sorrowed for the sorrows of my kind—not of one class or another, but all of them. So utterly are they fallen it seems to me there can be no redemption, unless God himself would make it his work. And I prayed him to come, and that I might see him. The good works have conquered; the redemption cometh; thou shalt see the Savior.

Thus the voice spoke, and with this answer I went up to Jerusalem rejoicing."

"Now, to whom is the redemption?"

"To all the world."

"And how shall it be?" said the President.

"I know that men say there will be no happiness until Rome is razed from her hills; that is to say, the ills of the time are not, as I thought them, from ignorance of God, but from the misgovernment of rulers. Do we need to be told that human governments are never for the sake of religion? How many kings, my Masters, have you known that were better than their subjects? Oh, no, no; the redemption cannot be for a political purpose—to pull down rulers and powers, and empty thrones, merely that others may take and enjoy them. If that were all of it, the wisdom of God would cease to be surpassing. I tell you, though it be but the blind telling the blind, he that comes is to be a Savior of souls, and the redemption means one more God upon earth, and righteousness, that his stay may be tolerable to himself."

At this speech the Sanhedrin were visibly cowed, and all heads seemed to be dejected.

"By the splendor of God," cried this young member impulsively. "The judgment does away

with all custom. The ways of the world are all fixed, and cannot be changed. There must be a leader in every community, clothed with power, else there can be no reform."

"The wisdom," answered the speaker, "is of the world, and thou dost forget that it is from the ways of the world that we are to be redeemed. Man as a subject is the ambition of a king; the soul of man for its salvation is the work of God."

The young member answered: "I cannot understand this kind of king; I cannot separate the ruler from his powers and duties."

"Who was it thou wast bidden to enquire for at the gates of Bethlehem?"

"Master," replied the Egyptian, "we have the habit of studying things that lie close to our feet, giving but a look at the greater that lie in the distance. We see now nothing but the title, King of the Jews. If we would lift our eyes to the mystery beyond, the stumbling-block would disappear. Of the title, a word. Israel hath seen better days—days in which God called us by endearing names. He called us his people; then he dwelt with us by his prophets. Now, if in those days he promised us a Savior, such as I saw at Bethlehem, the appearance must be according to the promise, if only for the words' sake. And it may

be that the Sanhedrin may be thinking of the dignity of the child. If so, bethink thee. What is it to be a successor of Herod by the world's standard of honor? What? I ask, could not God do better by his beloved? If thou canst think of the Almighty Father in want of a title, and stooping to borrow the inventions of men, why was I not bidden to ask for a Cæsar at once? O, for the substance of that whereof we speak! Look higher, my Masters. I pray thee ask, rather, of what shall he be king? for I do tell you that this is the key to the knowledge we want. There is a kingdom on the earth, though not of the earth. It is a kingdom of wider bounds—wider than the sea and earth though they were rolled together, and beaten thinner than gold by the hammers of the forge. Its existence is a fact as our hearts are facts, and we journey through it from birth to death without seeing it. Nor shall any man see it until he hath first known his own soul. For the kingdom is not for him, but for his soul, and in its dominion there is glory. Such as has not entered into the imagination—original, incomparable, impossible of increase.”

The conclusion to which the Sanhedrin came was conflicting. The king implied a kingdom; he was to be a warrior, glorious as was David; a

ruler, wise and glorious as was Solomon. The kingdom was to be a power against which Rome was to dash herself in pieces. There would be the agonies of death, then peace, meaning the Judean dominion forever. They looked upon Jerusalem, of course as the capital, and Zion as the throne, of the universal Master. Then they would reflect; the hand of man was not in it, nor has the king any use for men or soldiers. The earth must be made new, they would say; and as for government, there must be something beside armed bands to bring it forward. Thus were the various opinions of the Jews who heard the speech of the Egyptian. One old priest said he did not see why the Jews should not be favored with a king and a kingdom from heaven. The Jews said they have always been favored of God in the care of their lives and property. He could see a care that was not his. The simoons which smote others on the desert jumped over the Jews; the storms which heaped the seashore with the wrecks of vessels, only blew the Jews to the harbor that much the sooner; and he could see the hand of God in all this. His intelligence is never wasted. Intelligence like God's never stirs except with design. "I have held the question in heart, lo, these many years," he said, "watching for an answer, I felt

sure if God were, some day, in his own good time, in his own way, he would show me his purposes, making them clear as a white house on the side of the mountain. And I believe he has done it. I believe the prophets—I must believe the prophets. May the testimony of the whole nation be slighted?" Addressing the Egyptian: "Though thou travel from Tyre, which is by the sea in the north, to the capital of Edom, which is in the desert south, thou wilt not find a lisper of the *shema*, an almsgiver in the temple, or any one who has ever eaten of the roasted lamb of the passover, to tell you that the kingdom, and the king who is coming to build for us the children of the covenant, is other than of this world, like our father David's. Now, where got they their faith, ask you? Lend me your listening, and I will show you all. It would be too long to give you the names of the holy men who, in the providence of God, succeeded the prophets, only a little less favored than they; the seers who have written and the preachers who have taught since the captivity; the very wise who have borrowed their light from the lamp of Malachi, the last of his line, and whose great names Hillel and Shammai never tired of repeating in the colleges. Will you ask them of the kingdom? Thus the Lord of the sheep in the

Book of Enoch: 'Who is he? Who but the king of whom we are speaking? A throne is set for him. He smites the earth, and the other kings are shaken from their thrones, and the scourges of Israel flung into a cavern of fire, flaming with pillars of fire.' So also the singer of the psalms of Solomon: 'Behold, oh Lord, and raise up to Israel their king, the son of David, at the same time thou knowest, oh God, to rule Israel, thy children. And he will bring the people of the heathen under his yoke, to serve him. And he shall be a righteous king, taught of God. . . for he shall rule all the earth by the word of his mouth forever.' And last, though not least, hear Ezra, the second Moses, in his vision of the night, and ask him who is the lion with a human voice, that says to the eagle, which is Rome: 'Thou has loved liars, and overthrown the cities of the industrious, and razed their walls, though they did thee no harm; therefore, be gone, that the earth may be refreshed, and recover itself, and hope in the justice and piety of him who made her;' whereat the eagles were seen no more." The priest drank some wine, for he was feeble, and continued: "Surely, oh ye Masters of Israel, this is enough. But the way to the fountain is open; therefore, let us go up and hear what the

Lord says, by his holy prophets. Do ye believe the prophets?" said he, as he took a parchment roll from the tripod. He read: "The people that dwelt in the darkness hath seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined; for unto the nations of the world there shall be born a child. Out of a virgin's womb shall he come unto the nations of the earth. This son shall be given, and all government shall lay on his shoulders. Of the increase of this government and of peace there shall be no end, neither shall his kingdom go to another at his death, for he shall never die. He shall sit upon his throne, even the throne of his father David, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth even forever.' Believe ye the prophets, oh my Masters?" said the priest. Reaching to the tripod he takes another roll and reads: "'But thou, Bethlehem, into thy borders shall a virgin come, even Bethlehem, the least among Israel; yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to rule my people Israel.'" Reaching for another roll he read: "'Behold, the days will come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and shall prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his

days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely. In his days Judah shall reign as a king, and as the Prince of the Most High shall he reign forever.'

“Masters, do ye believe the prophets?” said the priest, reaching for another roll on the tripod. He read as follows: “‘I saw in the night vision, and behold, one like the son of man come with clouds of glory from heaven. He was confined in a virgin’s womb until the time appointed of the Lord, when he came forth. There was light upon the earth, and the heavenly host came down to worship him. There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom over all people, nations, languages. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall never pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.’ Believe ye these promises, oh Masters of Israel? Ye do not know the strength of his kingdom. Begin ye and count Israel as the drops of the sea. Ye think of him as a poor old man weeping by the rivers of Babylon; but go, see the mighty throng on Passover. Take your stand on the Hystus, or in the street of Barter, and see him as he is. The promise of the Lord to Jacob coming out of Padan-aram, was a law under which our people have not ceased to prosper and to multiply, even in captivity. They

grew under the feet of the Egyptian yoke; the clench of the Roman has been but wholesome nurture to them. Now they are indeed a nation, and a company of nations. Nor that only, my Masters. In fact, to measure the strength of Israel—which is, in fact, measuring what the king can do—you should not abide solely by the rule of natural increase, but add thereto the other—I mean the spread of faith—which will carry you to the far and near of the whole known earth. Further, the habit is, I know, to think and speak of the Jews and Jerusalem as being all of Israel. Jerusalem is but a stone in the great temple of God. Turn from beholding the legions, strong though they be, and count the host of the faithful, waiting the old watchword: ‘Each man to his tent, each man to his tent, O Israel!’ Count the many in Persia, children of those who chose not to return with the returning ones; count the brethren, who swarm the marts of Egypt and farther Africa; count the Hebrew colonists, eking profit in the west—in Lodinum, and the trade courts of Spain; count the pure in blood, and the proselytes in grace, and in the isles of the sea, and over in the Pontus and Antioch, and, for that matter, those that are accursed, living under the unclean walls of Rome, and those beyond the Nile, and in the

region beyond the Caspian Sea ; those of Gog and Magog ; those that annually send gifts to the temple, in token that they believe in God—count all these, my Masters, and you find you have an army already for the king at his coming, who will be ready to crown him with diadems of honor. Oh, ye Masters of Israel, there is a work for him to do, and a work for all of us. It devolves on us, as the high court of the Jews, to adopt such measures as will insure success to the cause we have maintained so long ; to make such appropriation of the temple treasure as may be needed in carrying on this work ; and to appoint men of the bravest hearts to do his bidding. Hence, it is the best for us to be ready when he comes, and not allow him to be crushed for the want of preparation.”

While these debates were going on in the Sanhedrin, an Arab courier arrived, bearing a letter to the President of the Sanhedrin, dated Bathabara, Nisan, (the Hebrew month March) :

“A prophet has appeared, whom the people call Elias. He has been in the wilderness for years, and to our eyes he is a prophet. Indeed, such is his speech that all the country has gone after him. The burden of his speech is one that is to come after him, which he says, is his captain,

and is to take the world by storm, and make one kingdom of it all; and he is to be the king of peace. Is not this the promise fulfilled? This man, he says, is greater who is presently to come. This prophet is now waiting for him on the south bank of the Jordan, where the crowd is as thronged as it is at Jerusalem on the feast of the passover."

This letter from Meloch in attendance.

At the reading of this letter the Sanhedrin became wild and frantic. Some shouted, some wept, some prayed, and some threw their garments into the air with the wildest enthusiasm. There was no order, nor could the President command any, and the house broke up in the wildest confusion, and many started over to the Jordan to see for themselves, I with the rest. On the third day of the journey our party nooned by the river Jabbok, where there were a hundred or more men in camp, mostly from Perea, resting themselves and beasts. One of the men approached us saying:

"Are you going over to hear the new prophet? I am returning from there," said the man.

"Well, tell us about the prophet," said I to him.

"Well, a man has appeared out of the wilderness, a very holy man, with his mouth full of strange words, which take hold of all that hear

him. He calls himself John the Nazarite, son of Zacharias, and says he is the messenger sent before the great Messiah of the world. They say of this John that he has spent his life from childhood in a cave down by Engedi, praying and living more strict than the Essenes. Crowds go to hear him preach. I went to hear him with the rest."

"What doctrine does he preach?" I asked of this talkative stranger.

"A new doctrine, one never before taught in Israel. The Rabbis do not know what to make of him. He calls it repentance and baptism. It is a strange doctrine. Some one asked him if he was not the Christ, but he answered them all, 'I am not.' Others asked him if he was not Elias, but to all he has the same answer, 'I am a voice; I am crying; I am sent to cry, Repent in heart, act right outwardly, for the king of heaven is coming, and will burn up the chaff with fire that never can be extinguished. Therefore make straight paths for your feet, lest your ways should be found crooked when the king of Zion comes, and you should have to be left out of that kingdom of purity he is coming to establish.'"

Next day, about the third out, our party came upon the barren steppe east of the sacred river.

Opposite us we saw the upper limit of the old palm lands of Jericho stretching off to the hill country of Judea. Soon we caught sight of booths and tents and of the river, and a multitude collected down close by the bank, and yet another multitude on the western shore. Knowing that preaching was going on, we made great haste, but as we drew near, the crowd began to disperse, which made us know that the preaching was over.

“Let us stay here,” said some one. “The Nazarite will pass this way.”

But the people were too intent on what they had heard to notice us or talk to strangers. They were debating the doctrine to which they had listened.

Looking up the river we saw a personage coming towards us, who was so strange in his appearance that all else was forgotten. Outwardly the man was rude and uncouth, even savage-looking. Over the thin, gaunt visage (of the hue of brown parchment), over his shoulders, and down his back below the middle, fell a covering of sun-scorched hair. His eyes were burning bright. All his right side was naked, and of the color of his face, and quite as meagre. A shirt of the coarsest camel's hair, coarse as Bedouin tent cloth, clothed the rest of his person to the knees, being gathered at the

waist by a broad girdle of untanned leather. His feet were bare. He used a knotted staff to help him forward. His movement was quick and decided, and strangely watchful. Every few minutes he would toss the tangled locks from his eyes, and look through the crowd as if he were searching for some one. One of our crowd asked :

“ Who is that ? ”

I said : “ It must be the Nazarite . ”

While we looked intently upon him, we saw a man sitting on a stone close by the water's edge. He seemed to be in deep meditation, perhaps on the sermon. He arose, and walked slowly towards the Nazarite. As the preacher came near he stopped and gazed at the stranger. His form was slightly above the average in stature, and slender even to delicacy. His action seemed to be calm and deliberate, like that belonging to a man much given to thought and reflection on serious subjects, and it well became his costume, which was an under-garment without sleeves, and reaching to his knees. He had on a loose robe of beautiful texture, with flowing sleeves, with bands or wristbands of blue silk, and a girdle of white linen about his waist. His clothes were much soiled with dust and travel. In all, he looked like a man already worn out with fatigue of mind, and his

body suffering under some constitutional malady. His sandals were of the simplest kind. His head was open to the cloudless sky. His hair was long and wavy, inclined to a golden color. He wore it parted in front. His forehead was large and well-developed. His eyes beamed with brightness; they were dark blue, very large, full of softness; the lashes were of great length, as children's. I could hardly decide whether he was Greek or Jew from his exterior. His intelligence indicated love and tenderness, mingled with pity and sorrow. Slowly he drew near the Nazarite, while he gazed intently upon him. Suddenly, he pointed to the Nazarene and said:

“Behold the Lamb that is to save from sin. This is he of whom I told you that he should come after me. He that sent me to baptize said: ‘Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descend and abide, he it is that is true.’”

And the voice spoke out in the heavens: “This is my son; hear him.”

When this voice spoke, some of the crowd fell to the ground, and hid their faces; some shouted for joy, and others were sore dismayed, and went and hid themselves among the trees. In a few moments he went carelessly down the river.

While the works of God were being transacted,

many and various were the conflicting opinions among the people, especially among the Jews. We could not separate the military from the moral kingdom. We could not see how it was that a man could commence from the lowest strata of life and work up to the highest. Up to this time it had been the custom to go to the rich and highest for help. In fact, we Jews could not see how a man in obscurity could ever come to be a king, and rule the nations of the earth.

In the course of time the Sanhedrin was visited by this same Egyptian that had seen the star, that had heard the voice, that went in search, and found the child at Bethlehem; and when permission was given for him to speak, he bowed his head gracefully, and said:

“I thank my God in heaven that I have lived to see the day when I could once more meet my brethren, and talk to them of the goodness of my Father in heaven. I thank him that I saw him in the *khan* at Bethlehem. I have seen him in the wilderness. On the Jordan I saw the Spirit, most white and beautiful as a dove, descend and light upon his head. I heard God speak from the skies saying: ‘All that came before were impostors; this is my beloved Son, whom I have appointed to be the Savior of men. For this I have, and do

appoint him. Whosoever hears and obeys him I will accept in my kingdom, to live with me forever.' ”

“Where is he now?” I asked the Egyptian.

“He will come to his temple to-morrow, which he says is his Father’s house. He will bring twelve men with him—fishermen, tillers of the soil, one a publican, all of the humbler class of men. They travel on foot, careless of wind, cold, rain, or sun. Seeing them stop for the night to see them break bread, reminds one of the Shepherds in their encampment.”

One of the Sanhedrin spoke out and said: “As to himself, he had but poor opinion of one who had power to convert stones into gold, and yet see the poor suffer for bread, and tell them that the foxes and birds were better off than he was in the way of earthly goods. He has a right to be poor from choice, but I can’t admire the spirit; and if he prefers poverty to riches for himself, he has but small sympathy with his fellow men, if he can listen to the cry of the orphan and the widow for bread, when he could help them so easy if he would.”

Another member spoke out and said: “I have no use for a man that would stand and see his brethren crushed by a wicked tyrant, as Rome is

crushing the very life blood out of the Jews, when he sees that the taxation by the Romans is destroying God's holy people. The priest can't stand to offer sacrifice, the plain man can't offer a sacrifice because he has to sell his bullock or lamb to pay his taxes to these haughty Romans. And it has been reported to this house that when the publican called on him for his tax, he sent one of his followers to the lake, and told him to look in the fish's mouth; he should find a piece of money; to take that and pay their taxes to the haughty tyrants. I am beginning to think he is a Roman God, for it seems of all people, he hates the Jews the worst. If he is a friend to the Jews, why not help them, at least as much as he does others? It has been told in this house that he cursed a fruit tree, and before night it withered away. It is also said that he can cure the blind, the leper, and raise the dead. Now, if he can do all these things, (and they are not denied by any), why does he permit that haughty Roman ruler to still remain on his throne, and crush the very life blood out of God's chosen people? If he expects to find toleration from the Sanhedrin, or from the Jews as a nation, he will have to quit calling us hypocrites and serpents, and comparing us, and especially the holy priest, to everything that is

low and mean, while he thinks high of those idolaters of Rome, and makes Pilate one of his daily associates.”

These speeches so shocked the Egyptian, that he hesitated as though he did not know whether to proceed or not; when one of the members of the Sanhedrin arose, and said, he thought it possible for the Sanhedrin to be too hasty in forming their judgment in this case; he hoped that the members would be more courteous and considerate in the future. The question, he said, was one of the most important they had ever had before them, and he believed the whole of the Jewish commonwealth depended on a proper consideration of the subject. And although this Nazarene came before the world with authentication such as had never been before, although many have tried to palm themselves off on the Jews, yet the Jews never had the authority, much less the evidence, in any of those false saviors that they have in this. Here the priest made reference to the former facts in history regarding those teachers, and then referred to the present instance, giving the evidence of Melker's letter with that of the three strangers that had been before the Sanhedrin before, namely, the Hindoo, the Greek, and the Egyptian, that were present. He went on to state

that the ways of God were higher than man's; and he did not think it the privilege of man to dictate to God when he should come, or how he should come, or what he should do when he did come. From the reading of the prophecy, as Melker had interpreted it, this Jew was to be king of the Jews; but the Jews were the great factor of all the world, and it was through them that the kingdom of heaven was to be reinstated; and this Jesus was only to be the adviser and dictator of the whole affair. And as the Jews were to be the center of action, he thought it time they should not only be willing to be informed, and to get all the knowledge they could on a subject of such magnitude as the one under present consideration, for, said he, in establishing the reign of Jesus as king of the Jews, it would forever establish the Jewish religion, and in doing that all things else would be equally established that we as Jews hold sacred. With these remarks he called for the Egyptian to proceed, and to give all he knew of Jesus.

The old Egyptian most respectfully said, with grace and a divine smile:

“I thank my God for the many and strong advocates he has in this house this day. Such a speech as my Master has said is like the pouring

of snow water from the mountains upon a burning flame. Some of my Masters of this house I saw in the wilderness at the Jordan, and heard and saw what I did. And as for me, my soul was so absorbed in him I could not leave him; and so I have followed him. Since witnessing the increase of his divine power, and with your permission, I wish to make a few statements more, to get the Masters of Israel to see as I see. The complexity of his actions astonishes me no less than it does my young Masters of Israel; yet the evidence on one side contradicts all on the other side. While we as men in our carnal state are qualified to view one man higher than another, and to esteem one thing higher than another, as to honor, riches, power, and so on, it does not seem to be so with Jesus; for although he owns nothing, he does not crave anything. He is so far from envying those that are rich that he seems to pity them; and, to my utter astonishment, he seems to ignore all power, while his friends, beholding his mighty works, were anxious for him to assume the kingship. They gathered around him at the seashore, and were about to crown him, whether he would or no; when he suddenly disappeared from us, and the first thing we saw of him he was in a ship, crossing the lake. It seemed to me, if he was

ever going to be king, why not then? The whole Jewish people could be roused in his defense. There are at this time armed legions, all under full training and well disciplined, that could be called into action in a very short time. For, what would you say to see a man in whom the healing virtue was so great that when the sick only touched the hem of his garment, all that thus came in contact with him were healed of whatsoever malady they had. You all know that death-like disease, called leprosy. I saw while down in Galilee a man come to him all covered over with leprosy, who cried: 'Oh, Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' And the Nazarene went up and laid his hand upon him, and said; 'Thou art clean; thou hast been healed.' And when we looked at the man, he was as sound as any of us. I also saw him heal ten lepers, just by telling them to obey the law; 'it is the violation of law that makes you miserable; go, show yourselves to the priest, as the law requires, and you will see that in the act of obedience, you shall be healed.' And as they went they were healed so completely that the priest pronounced them clean, so they could be admitted into society when their filthy garments were changed. Again: Let me tell you, oh Masters of Israel, I saw him from a few

loaves and fishes feed several thousands of people most bountifully. I ate of the food myself, and never tasted better. And when they had eaten bountifully they took up more in the baskets than there was at first. And again: I saw him as he and his disciples passed into the city of Nennus. They met a corpse being born to the tomb, and the mother of the boy was behind weeping. And Jesus said to her: 'Weep not, only believe;' and he touched the boy, and he stood up—yes, sprung up as one that had been awakened out of sleep—and he sent him to his mother rejoicing. I saw them bring a man on a bed, who had the palsy and was near to death; for he was as helpless as a child; and Jesus healed him on the faith of them that brought him, so that he sprang up, and took up his bed, and went to his house with great joy. And such are his mighty, wonderful works that the whole country has gone after him."

While the Egyptian was relating these things, one of the members of the Sanhedrin interrupted him by saying:

"Did you say that Jesus saved the sick man on the bed on the faith of others?"

The Egyptian answered: "I did, and it is on this condition that he performs all his mighty works."

“Did you not say that others were performed on condition of obedience to law?”

“Yes,” said the Egyptian, “but Jesus accounts faith as the most masterful act of obedience, for faith, in the sense he puts upon it, controls the whole of the man. All other acts of the mind are subserved, and become as wax in the hand, to be molded into conformity to this leading and controlling faculty; but he contends that though a man may say he has faith, unless it does rule his life in love, and all his life in conformity to an obedient discharge of duties and obligations to his God and fellow men, his faith is no faith, although he could remove the mountain into the sea.”

“But does he not teach baptism in place of circumcision?”

“He does,” said the Egyptian. “He was baptized himself as the beginning of a new covenant. Though he says all who are baptized shall be saved, yet he sees the act flows from faith in God, and this obedience is from the fact that he does believe in God, and therefore his life is in accordance; he is obedient.”

“But,” said the old priest, “Suppose he believed in God, and would not submit to his new commands, what would he say?”

The Egyptian replied, that obedience was the

only evidence of faith. "Of course, if a man had no evidence of a thing, it would be prime evidence that he did not have the thing itself. He says that a good tree will bear good fruit."

"But tell us," said the priest, "does he tell why God has changed the seal of the covenant from circumcision to that of baptism?"

To this the Egyptian replied: "He has not told anything of the kind in my hearing. He seems to assume all these rights to change all the elements of nature to suit himself, and when the laws of nature are so completely under his control, it would seem but reasonable that he should change them to suit himself, or do away with them, and make new ones."

"But," said the priest, "does he think he is wiser than God? and as God had established the right of circumcision, and Jesus establishes baptism in its place, does he not virtually say that God's plans are wrong, and he is better qualified to judge of these things than God is?"

To this the Egyptian replied, that it seemed to him that Jesus was a God himself, from the fact that he was capable of doing all that God could do. And as to the change effected that created so much excitement among the Jews, it might originate upon the side of the people instead of from a

defective judgment on the part of God ; that circumcision was right for Abraham and his followers, but was not right for the people in this day. The change has so affected the people that baptism suits them better than circumcision.

“But,” said the priest, “does he not teach contrary to the temple service? Does he not teach that the temple is of no use, and that the sacrifices thereof are worthless? and does he not teach that repentance (that is what he calls a broken heart) is worth more in the way of reformation than all things else? and does he not assail the priesthood, and go so far as to insult them, and call them bad names?”

To this the Egyptian replied : “He does all that you say, to some extent ; but to my mind he sees deeper into these questions than any man. Yea, I think he looks upon them in the light of God, if not in the light of the Spirit of God. He in his wisdom can see the insufficiency of these things. He can see the unholiness of the priest and of the temple service. It seems to me, said he, “the priest and the doctors of the law have so interpreted the Scriptures until it is hard for a poor man to live. He is required to give to the temple service a portion of all he has, and to the service of God a greater portion of his time. And then the commands have grown so fast that there is not

an hour nor a minute of the hour but there is some command to be complied with, so that a man is kept in a momentary dread of his life until life has become a burden, if you serve the God of heaven. And this is the reason why so many are becoming tired, and are quitting the Jewish faith, and the Jews are being divided into so many different branches.”

While the Egyptian was making this speech, one might have seen the disquietude of all the Sanhedrin. They almost gnashed upon him with their teeth. As soon as the house had got over the shock at such a speech, the President arose and called the attention of the house by saying:

“Holy Masters of Israel, our beloved Jehovah has been insulted to his face; his precious name has been blasphemed in our hearing; his holy temple has been desecrated; and what shall we do? Shall we stand still like children and see our heavenly Father insulted to his face?”

“No, ! no !” was the reply from various parts of the house.

“My mind is fixed; my heart has been stirred to the bottom. Holy Masters, it devolves upon this house to take some action on this subject, and to take it now. If we let things go on this way, our whole country will be broken up; our beloved

Zion will lose all its attractions; our priest will have to go into the fields to pick berries; the temple, which is the bond of union, the very home and stay of all God's people, will be entirely deserted, and we will have to hang our harps, as our fathers did in Babylon. If we let this thing alone our bondage will be worse than theirs, and our God will be seen as a tyrant, reverence for him will be lost, and men will come to pay no more respect to him than the Romans do to their deified Cæsars; and Rome, with her thieving legions, will overrun our country, and final destruction will be ours. I, for one, am not willing to stand and see the God of my forefathers insulted to his face."

At this the Sanhedrin broke forth in the most bitter malediction against the impostor; and after many of the members had expressed themselves in this way, it was finally ordered that the high priest and the court of elders should be notified of what was going on, and recommended to reprimand Jesus of Nazareth to desist from his teaching and preaching of these pernicious doctrines, and for him to confine himself to the doctrines of the Jewish testament, and to conform with the ritual as taught by Moses; that he was not to teach baptism as a sealing ordinance; that he was not to intro-

duce any new customs contrary to the customs of God, as set forth in the books of the laws of Moses ; and that he was to cease his malediction against the temple and the priesthood. And to further order and demand, if he refused to obey the orders of the high priest of God and the elders, that he should be arrested and brought to trial before the high priest, with the hope of establishing the people and establishing the ways of God before men. And if he should refuse obedience, then to declare that it is our judgment that he should be brought to trial, and the things whereof he is charged set up against him ; and if he will not desist to teach and preach these heresies, then he shall be put upon final trial ; and if the high court of elders and the high priest of Almighty God find him guilty, and he refuses obedience, then it is the opinion of the Masters of Israel that he should be put to death by the authority of the Roman government. It is the opinion of the Masters of Israel that it is better for one to suffer death as a remedy for the healing of the many ; and furthermore, it is the opinion of the Masters of Israel that if such steps are not taken, the Jewish commonwealth is on the eve of an overthrow, and nothing can save it but Almighty God ; and that we are satisfied that he will not give aid, counsel and pro-

tection to his people so long as they pervert his ways.

While this storm was raging in the Sanhedrin, the old Egyptian had quietly withdrawn himself, no one knew where ; but I kept no further account of the proceedings of the Sanhedrin.

The next time I met the Egyptian was on the day of the passover, when the whole world seemed to be coming to Jerusalem ; and while we were talking about the Nazarene, behold, we saw him and his disciples coming down the hill. The Master was riding on the colt of an ass ; and when they came near the descent of Olives, some strange voice said : "Hail, Master !" and immediately the whole multitude became excited to the highest degree, and they commenced shouting : "Hosannah to him that comes in the name of the God of heaven !" and this cry was kept up for one hour. The whole multitude—men of all nations, of all tongues, women and little children—all shouted, "Hosannah, Hosannah." And what made the scene more strange was there were perhaps a hundred different dialects, and all cried the same thing. This shouting reminded me of the coming of the kingdom of heaven more than all I had seen before. The people seemed so intent and so wild in their enthusiasm, it looked like they were controlled by

some supernatural power. As I was informed by the Egyptian, after this excitement was over, the Master and his disciples held a council, and decided to have their feast to themselves. The Master told them that he had many things to say to them, and he wished to say it in private.

But before the feast was prepared he went into the temple and offered another insult to the priests. There were in and around the temple merchants from all the tribes, selling all manner of sacrifices, such as were required by the law to be offered in sacrifice on that occasion, to the people that were strangers from a far country that could not possibly bring their sacrifices with them. Therefore it was admitted by the high priest to sell and buy these things from those that lived near by, which was a great convenience. But Jesus took up a stick or goad, that had been used to drive cattle, and flourished it around, ordering them at the same time to leave, telling them that was the house of prayer, and not a house of trade. This act of impertinence upon the part of Jesus spread like wild-fire through the city. The Shammaite school was enraged, and sent letters to the Sanhedrin and to the high priest court, asking for and demanding that such gross behavior should not be tolerated at the solemnities of the passover. These letters

called a general meeting that evening of members of the Shammaite school, Sanhedrin, and the high-priest court. What was done we do not know, but we may form some idea from what followed.

While these secret plans and plottings were going on by the courts and councils, there were the friends of Jesus already organized from the various portions of the country, all assembling at Jerusalem, ready to rise up at a signal and make him king. Hence, to a man that knew the secret workings of these parties it was most horrifying. There was a secret watch placed over the Master; and to add to the fury of the priesthood, while he and his disciples were partaking of the passover, Jesus introduced another kind of a sacrament, or feast. This was simple bread and wine. And he told his disciples that this was to be in commemoration of his own death and the shedding of his own blood for the sins of the world. And while he was talking to them, telling them that one of them would betray him, and that they all would forsake him, sure enough, while he was exhorting them to be firm and not dismayed at what might occur in the next few hours, one of his disciples slipped out and went to the court of the high priest and sold him. That is, he agreed to tell them where he was, and they gave him money to go and

show the guard where he was. After the supper was ended, and the new feast introduced and explained, they went out into one of the mountains that stood near by, and there the soldiers or guards of the high priest found him and brought him to Annas, who had been high priest, but he sent him to Caiaphas, as the one that had proper authority to deal with him. At this time there had assembled at this court many of the doctors and Scribes, priests of the Sanhedrin and the Shammaite school. Here his course of conduct was set before him by Annas, who was appointed for that purpose, showing clearly wherein he differed from the laws of the Jews, and wherein his doctrines differed from the Jewish customs, and showing what discord and dissension was made among God's people by him and his doctrines, and how it would terminate in an insurrection, and be the means of destroying much life, and the Church of the living God, and the Jewish nation, God's chosen heritage. After Annas made this pleading and many more (for I can only give the outlines of what was said), Caiaphas asked Jesus if he was willing to cease teaching these false ways. Jesus answered that he came not to do away with the law, but to fulfill the law in obedience to his Father, who had showed him the way; that his mission was love and

charity, but for his love they were his enemies, for his charities they were his persecutors. Such is the natural result of the ways of righteousness among a perverse world; "for," said he, "how can a grain of corn abide unless it die? Unless it be planted it will abide alone. So if I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." These words were so strange and overpowering they filled the house with awe, and some were for letting him go; but Annas spoke out and said:

"You say your Father showed you the way? Who is your Father?"

Jesus said: "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; but I know who you are: you are of your father the Devil, and you will do his works, as I do the works of my Father."

At these words the whole court became incensed at him, and Annas said:

"What need we of further evidence? We have heard his blasphemy ourselves. Let us away with such a blasphemer, who reviles God's high priest."

"Away with him!" cried they all with one voice, After this there reigned a most dreadful silence, during which time the breathing of the Nazarene was heavy, and many of the elders of the court groaned in spirit; after which the Scribe came for-

ward, dressed in a snow-white robe, and slowly read :

“To Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea, by Roman authority, greeting: “We, the high court of the Jews, find Jesus of Nazareth :

“First, teaching that he is God, which is contrary to the doctrine of the Jews.

“Second, he teaches for man to have faith in him as we would in God, which is contrary to the doctrine of the Jews.

“Third, he perverts the appointed ways of our salvation, teaching repentance instead of a holy life, which is contrary to the doctrine of the Jews.

“Fourth, he has perverted the holy temple of God, which is forbidden by the laws of the Jews.

“Fifth, he teaches baptism for circumcision, which is contrary to the laws of the Jews.

“Sixth, he teaches common bread and wine to be used in the passover, which is contrary to the laws of the Jews.

“Seventh, he has blasphemed in the presence of God’s high priest, which is forbidden by the laws of the Jews.

“Eighth, he most positively refuses to desist from his wicked and perverse ways, when reprimanded and abjured by the high priest of God.

“Therefore, it is the unanimous decision of this

court, in the fear and, we hope, the favor of Almighty God, Jehovah, that he should die to save the nation from blood and ruin, and to save the Church of God from heresy and false doctrine and perverse ways.” Signed,

CAIAPHAS,

Priest of the Most High God.

These charges were given to Maleus, who was captain of the royal guard, to take with the prisoner to Pilate's court. And as they left, there was a mob followed, hooting and hallooing, and calling him all sorts of ugly names; so much so, that the priest ordered out some soldiers to keep order. What was done there I can't exactly say but the Egyptian who followed said that Pilate tried to release him. He ordered him scourged, and then washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, thereby declaring him to be innocent, as was the Roman custom. But this being the mode of Jewish condemnation, the soldiers, taking it for granted he was condemned, took him by force, and the mob gathered around him and hurried him off to execution. There never was such a crowd before. The people from all countries had assembled at Jerusalem for the passover. They were composed of all classes of society—servants, camel drivers, market men, gate keepers,

gardeners, dealers in fruit, foreigners, watchmen, and proselytes barefooted and bareheaded, with matted hair and beards—myriads not assignable to any class. Some of them carried swords, spears, or javelins, and there were some with knotted clubs. Among the mass was here and there a man of rank, and some of high degree; scribes, elders, Rabbis, Pharisees, with broad fringed cloaks, and Sadducees, who served as prompters to the rabble. And as they marched they cried: “King of the Jews!” “The blasphemer of God!” “Crucify! Crucify!” would they cry at the top of their voices, and the whole multitude would cry the same thing. There never was seen such a sight before, nor half so many people. I saw the Nazarene pass in front of the crowd, his eyes cast down, and he looked as if all his power that he had so often exercised over the laws of life had left him, and he seemed as if had God ever been with him he was not then.

He was nailed to a cross and after he had hung for about three hours it turned dark. What could have caused it I cannot tell. His friends contended it was the frowns of God; others said it was a meteor passed between the earth and the sun. About the same time there were the shocks of an earthquake, which, connected with the unnatural

darkness, filled the people with great dread. There were gathered around the cross a great body of soldiers, who kept every body else away, except a few of his special friends. When the darkness disappeared the Nazarene was dead; and the old Egyptian, who had seen the star stand over the *khan*, and who had watched him through his mortal life, and had been his advocate before the courts of the world, was found cold and dead near the cross on which his Master had been crucified. Whether the shock of the earthquake or the fright of the darkness was more than his aged and frail frame could stand was not known, or whether his Master did not say to him in his last moments of life, as he did to the fisherman on the lake: "Follow me."

When it was ascertained that Jesus was dead, the high priest gave orders for him to be buried, that his body might not hang till the next day. After he was buried, the priest and officers of the law held a council in the court of the high priest, and it was there reported that Jesus had said he would rise from the dead the third day; and, for fear his friends would come privately and take his body and hide it, there was an officer sent to Pilate, asking for a guard around the grave for ten days. But Pilate told them he had no sol-

diers except a body guard; but they might take the Jewish soldiers and make it as sure as they pleased, and the royal city guard, which was composed of five hundred men. and place a sufficient number to guard it night and day for ten days. But on the third morning there was reported a frightful scene at the sepulcher. Just before day there was a great noise heard, as if it thundered; the heavens flashed up with a most brilliant light; the earth quaked and reeled to and fro, as a drunken man; the air seemed to be full of human voices, and all around the sepulcher were lines of beings dressed in shrouds, who shouted and sung praises to God. The guard was scared, and ran away. This was the report they made when they came into the fort Antonia :

Soon after some women, who were friends of the Nazarene, went to embalm the body of Jesus; they found the body was gone, and they found two angels, they say, sitting at the sepulchre, who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead, and for them to go and tell his disciples. The report soon spread, and thousands went to the grave to see for themselves. And the people gathered together in crowds, and many wild theories were in circulation. Some said that his death was only a sham, and argued their points, saying that two

other criminals were executed at the same time, and that Jesus was taken down three or four hours before the others were dead. This incensed the people against the high priest. Some wanted to mob him, and others contended that Pilate was the cause of his being taken down so quick; and they were enraged at him. The disturbance was so great that the courts of Pilate and the high priest had to be guarded for several days.

The version that the priest gave of the affair was, that this Jesus never was a man from the beginning; that he had been visiting the earth for two thousand years. And in a speech made to the mob assembled at the temple he said that this was the same one that spoke to Moses from the fiery bush; the same that slew the first born of all the Egyptians in one night; the same that met Abraham, and told him that Sarah should have a son; the same that appeared to Abraham, and led Lot out of the burning city; the same that stopped Balaam in the way; the same that raised Samuel from the dead; the same that appeared to Zaccharias, and told him of his wife that she should have a son, and he should call him John. The human body has always been under his control; so have the elements of nature. He is master of life and of death. This mighty actor

has been playing his game on the human stage ever since the world began; and now if he has suffered himself to die, if he had power to destroy or create life in others, of course he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again. And all flesh was in his power; and in this thing he only had some wise and holy purpose in view, and his purposes would develop and peradventure result in the greatest blessings to mankind; and therefore he asked the people to be quiet, and wait and see what the result would be, before they did a rash act, or persecuted the innocent. This speech was attended with a good result: it satisfied the minds of the clamorous multitude; so they began to disperse, and tranquility settled over the city once more.

The women that went to embalm the body at the grave reported that they met him as they returned from the grave, but he was looked for by every one. Many wished to see him, but others were so afraid they would meet him, that they were in momentary dread of seeing him. Not one of the guard that was on duty that night could be induced to venture out for weeks.

It is rather strange how Jesus conducted himself. He was seen in a small town in the country by two of his disciples, but they did not know him

until they went to eat, and in that act he revealed himself to them. But they say he had no sign of the wounds, neither in his hands nor feet ; and when he revealed himself to all his disciples they discovered no signs of the nails in his flesh. But in a week from then he came to them, at least to one of them who had expressed his doubts in regard to his resurrection. "Reach forth thy hand and feel the wounds in my hands and feet, and also in my side, and believe," said Jesus unto him. He made himself very shy among men after his resurrection. He was seen by but few of the private citizens, but he frequently met with his disciples, and blessed and counselled them ; and finally after about a month, he assembled them on a mountain, and after he preached to them with thousands of others, telling them that they had received freely and to give freely ; that they must show his works to all flesh ; telling them that he had died for them, and if they would receive this, they should be saved after death ; that he would go presently and prepare places for them, and that he would bide their coming ; and to let all and each who accept this proposition to prove it to himself by obedience in baptism, and that he would receive all such and assign them places in his kingdom, ("for," said he, "my peace I leave

with you, my peace give I unto you”); and after saying these words he fixed his gaze into heaven, and a bright light like unto fire began to kindle around his feet, which grew larger and brighter until it seemed a bright cloud. It rose and bore him off until he was out of sight. Then the disciples fell on their faces, and the whole multitude set up a tremendous shout, and continued to halloo and glorify God, and seemed to be perfectly wild with enthusiasm. The disciples soon met in secret council, and made arrangements for their work.

In conclusion, I say that many of the things in this history I do not vouch for; for I did not see and hear them myself. But many I did see and much more, which only agree with these facts. I never saw this Egyptian, Hindoo, and Greek till I met them in the Sanhedrin, and there I learned the beginning of this story; and after hearing these three men relate what they had seen and heard, and their tales so well corresponded, the one with the other, and seeing so much deep sincerity in these men, and feeling the drawing of the Holy Spirit towards them and their subject, my mind became all absorbed in this great question—a question that identified my being with my future destiny. I did not feel to let it pass without investigation. I had many private interviews with

the Egyptian, but the Greek and Hindoo I never saw after the first interview in the Sanhedrin, neither could the Egyptian tell us what had become of his companions. Perhaps, having met with such poor encouragement from the Sanhedrin, they had gone back to their own country, and given up all hope; but the Egyptian watched him until the last. I don't think I ever saw more of a devotee in all my life. It was his great confidence and zeal that attracted my attention more particularly, and from the time I first heard him in the Sanhedrin, I was convinced that there was something more than a common question of the day connected with his experience.

And now in conclusion I would say to the reader of these lines I am not disheartened, for I believe that some day the doctrine that Jesus taught will become the ruling doctrine of the world. And this is one reason for my writing this scroll: that it may be read by some one when I am dead, that they may refer to these things as confirmation of a faith set forth by this Nazarene that shall be universally tolerated, and be believed by all the world, so that this Jesus shall be ruler of the kings of this world. Although his mission is not understood by the Jews nor the Romans, yet what he teaches is a principle that will outlive all his oppo-

nents, both as a people and as a nation: First, it has the Almighty Jehovah to back it; and then what he teaches is safe and trustworthy for all men in all times. Therefore it must stand, and every man that opposes it, either as an individual or as a nation, will do so to his own hurt. It is the desire of my soul that the holy precepts taught by Jesus may finally rule the world. Just one precept taught by him is enough: As ye would have men to do to you, do the same yourself. Just this rule carried out would do more good than all the philosophy of the Hillelite School, or the Shammaite Laws, though backed by a thousand Sanhedrins.

BEN. ELI.

CHAPTER IX.

*‘ACTA PILATI,’ OR PILATE’S REPORT OF THE ARREST,
TRIAL, AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS.*

IT was sometime in the year 1856, while living in De Witt, Missouri, that a gentleman by the name of H. C. Whydaman was ice-bound and stopped at my house several days. He was a native of Germany, and one of the most learned men I have ever met. I found him to be free and communicative. During his stay, he told me he had spent five years in the city of Rome, and the most of the time in the Vatican, where he saw a library containing five hundred and sixty thousand volumes. He told me that he had seen and read the Records of Tiberius Cæsar, and in what was called the “Acta Pilati,” that is, the acts of Pilate, he had seen the account of the apprehension, trial and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth ; but said it did not add much to the common teachings of Christianity. He told me he thought a transcript could be secured. After Mr. Whydaman had gone, I remembered what he told me of those records, and thought if a transcript could be

obtained it would be very interesting, even if it did not add much to the present teachings of Christianity, yet the statement would be of great satisfaction. So, after he had been gone some months, I set about tracing up Mr. Whydaman, as the following correspondence will show :

DE WITT, Carroll Co., Mo.,
Sept. 22, 1856.

MR. HENRY C. WHYDAMAN, New York City :

Dear Sir:—After you left my house last spring, I kept thinking of your telling me of reading the acts of Pilate in the Vatican, while at Rome. I want you, if you please, to get me a transcript of those records, if the cost will not be too much. Will you please open a correspondence with some of your old friends at Rome that you can rely upon, and ascertain if it can be obtained ; and if so, what will be the probable cost of getting it? I shall be much obliged, and will pay you for your trouble and expense. Yours, in tender regards,

W. D. MAHAN.

NEW YORK, Nov. 12, 1856.

MR. W. D. MAHAN :

Dear Sir:—Your letter as directed to H. C. Whydaman is received. I will inform you he has

returned to Germany. Your letter has been forwarded.

Yours, &c.,

C. C. VANTBERGER.

—————, March 2d, 1857.

REV. W. D. MAHAN:

Dear Sir:—It is with the kindest regards I remember your hospitality while with you in America. Be assured, anything I can do for you will afford me great pleasure. I have written to Father Freelinhusen, a monk of great learning, at Rome, who is the chief guardian of the Vatican. I have made the request in my own name, as I do not think they would be willing for such a document to go into the hands of the public. When he answers, I will write to you again. I am your most obedient servant,

H. C. WHYDAMAN.

WESTPHALIA, GERMANY,

Nov. 27, 1857.

REV. W. D. MAHAN, De Witt, Mo.:

Dear Sir:—Father Freelinhusen has answered my letter in regard to the transcript you want. He informs me that the writing is so fine, and

being in the Latin language, as I told you, and the parchments so old and dirty, he will be obliged to use a glass to the most of it. He can only give it in the Latin, as he does not understand the English. He says he will do it for thirty-five daries, which will be in American coin sixty-two dollars and forty-four cents. If you will forward the amount, I will have the document forwarded to my brother-in-law, C. C. Vantberger. He will translate it for a trifle. I am yours in tender regards,

H. C. WHYDAMAN.

CHILLICOTHE, MO., Feb. 8, 1858.

MR. H. C. WHYDAMAN:

Dear Sir:—Thanks to you for your kindness; and be assured if I succeed, I shall ever feel under obligations to you for your trouble. Enclosed find a check on the Foreign Exchange Bank of New York for sixty-two dollars and forty-four cents. Please have the work done, and urge Mr. Freelinhusen to have it a true copy of the original.

Send it to Mr. Vantberger, and have him translate it into English, and I will pay the charge. He has my address.

Yours as ever,

W. D. MAHAN.

WESTPHALIA, GERMANY,

June 14, 1858.

REV. W. D. MAHAN:

Dear Sir:—I acknowledge your draft of \$62.44 cents. Will apply as you request.

I am Sir, H. C. WHYDAMAN.

—

NEW YORK, April 26, 1859.

MR. W. D. MAHAN:

Dear Sir:—I am in possession of a document from H. C. Whydaman, with instructions to translate it into the English. My charge is ten dollars. I will expect an answer.

C. C. VANTBERGER.

—

MR. H. C. WHYDAMAN:

Dear Sir:—I hereby forward to you the transcript, as it is on record in the Vatican in Tiberius Cæsar's court by Pilate. I certify this to be a true copy, word for word as it occurs there.

Yours &c., PETER FREELINHUSEN.

—

With this correspondence I received the following document, and I must confess that al-

though it is not inspiration, yet the words burned in my heart as the words of Christ in the hearts of the disciples, and I am satisfied from the spirit it bears that it must be true. I am aware that though the Jews were in subjection to the Romans, yet they still held their ecclesiastical authority, and the Romans did not only submit to their decisions, but executed their decrees on their subjects. Knowing there was not such a piece of history to be found in all the world, and being so deeply interested myself, as well as hundreds of others to whom I have read it, I have concluded to give it to the public.

W. D. MAHAN.

— — —

After getting hold of this report of Pilate, and finding it so deeply interesting to myself as well thousands of others, I commenced the investigation of this subject, and after many years of trial and the expenditure of considerable money, I found that there were many such records still in preservation at the Vatican in Rome and at Constantino-ple that had been carried there by the Emperor of Rome about the middle of the third century, therefore I procured the necessary assistance and on the 21st day of September, 1883, I set sail for those

foreign lands to make the investigation in person, and the contents of this book is the result.

Valleus Patereculus, a Roman historian, was nineteen years old when Jesus was born. His works have been thought to be extinct. I know of but two historians that have made reference to his writings; that is, Priscian and Tacitus, who speak of him as being a descendant of an equestrian family of Campania. From what we gather from these men, he must have been a great friend of Cæsar, for he raised him by degrees until he became one of the great men of Rome, and commanded the army for sixteen years. He returned to Rome in the year 31, and wrote or finished his work which was called "Historia Romania."

He held the office of prætor when Augustus died, and while Vinceus was Consul. He says that he had met with a man in Judea, called Jesus of Nazareth, that was one of the most peculiar characters he had ever seen, and he was more afraid of him than the whole army, for he cured all manner of diseases, raised the dead, and even cursed the orchards or fruit trees for their barrenness, and instantly they withered to their roots.

After referring to his exploits, he says that, although this Jesus had such power, he did not use it to the injury of any one, but seemed always inclined to help the poor. He says the Jews were much divided in their opinions of him. The poor class claimed him as their king and their deliverer from Roman authority. And so it is, if he should raise an army and could give them the power, he could sweep the world in a single day. The rich Jews hate and curse him behind his back, and call him nothing but an Egyptian necromancer; but they were as afraid of him as of death.

Vallieus Paterculus, B. 72, as found in the Vatican of Rome.

To Tiberius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome. Noble Sovereign.—Greeting:

The events of the last few days in my province, have been of such a character that I will give the details in full as they have occurred; as I should not be surprised if, in the course of time, they may change the destiny of our nation, for it seems of late that all the gods have ceased to be propitious. I am almost ready to say, Cursed be the day that I succeeded Vallerius Flaceus in the government of Judea; for since then my life has been one of continual uneasiness and distress. On my

arrival at Jerusalem, I took possession of the pretorium, and ordered a splendid feast to be prepared, to which I invited the tetrarch of Galilee, with the high priest and his officers. At the appointed hour no guests appeared. This I considered an insult offered to my dignity, and to the whole government to which I belong. A few days after the high priest deigned to pay me a visit. His deportment was grave and deceitful. He pretended that his religion forbade him and his attendants to sit down at the table of the Romans, and eat and offer libations with them, but this was only a sanctimonious seeming, for his very countenance betrayed his hypocrisy. But I thought it expedient to accept his excuse, but from that moment I was convinced that the conquered had declared themselves the enemy of the conquerors; and I would warn the Romans to beware of the high priests of this country. They would betray their own mother to gain an office and procure a luxurious living. It seemed to me, of conquered cities, Jerusalem was the most difficult to govern. So turbulent were the people that I lived in momentary dread of an insurrection. I had not soldiers sufficient to suppress it. I only had one centurion and a hundred men at my command. I requested a reinforcement from the prefect of

Syria, who informed me that he had scarcely troops sufficient to defend his own province. An insatiate thirst for conquest to extend our empire beyond the means of defending it, I fear, will be the cause of final overthrow of our whole government. I lived in obscurity from the masses, for I did not know what those priests might influence the rabble to do; yet I endeavored to ascertain as much as I could the mind and standing of the people.

Among the various rumors that came to my ears, there was one that attracted my attention in particular. A young man, it was said, had appeared in Galilee, preaching with a noble unction, a new law in the name of the God that had sent him. At first I was apprehensive that his design was to stir up the people against the Romans; but my fears were soon dispelled. Jesus of Nazareth spake rather as a friend of the Romans than the Jews. One day in passing by the place of Siloe, where there was a great concourse of people, I observed in the midst of the group a young man who was leaning against a tree, calmly addressing the multitude. I was told it was Jesus. This I could easily have suspected, so great was the difference between him and those who were listening to him. His golden colored hair and beard gave

to his appearance a celestial aspect. He appeared to be about thirty years of age. Never have I seen a sweeter or more serene countenance. What a contrast between him and his hearers, with their black beards and tawny complexions. Unwilling to interrupt him by my presence, I continued my walk, but signified to my secretary to join the group and listen. My secretary's name was Manlius. He was the grand-son of the chief of the conspirators who encamped in Etruria waiting for Cataline. Manlius was an ancient inhabitant of Judea, and well-acquainted with the Hebrew language. He was devoted to me, and worthy of my confidence.

On entering the pretorium I found Manlius, who related to me the words Jesus had pronounced, at Siloe. Never have I read in the works of the philosophers anything that can compare to the maxims of Jesus. One of the rebellious Jews, so numerous in Jerusalem, having asked him if it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, Jesus replied: "Render unto Cæsar the things that belong to Cæsar, and unto God the things that are his."

It was on account of the wisdom of his sayings that I granted so much liberty to the Nazarene; for it was in my power to have had him arrested, and exiled to Pontus; but this would have been

contrary to the justice which has always characterized the Roman government in all her dealings with men; this man was neither seditious nor rebellious; I extended to him my protection, unknown perhaps to himself. He was at liberty to act, to speak, to assemble, and address the people to choose disciples, unrestrained by any pretorian mandate. Should it ever happen (may the gods ever avert the omen!), should it ever happen, I say, that the religion of our forefathers should be supplemented by the religion of Jesus, it will be to this noble toleration that Rome shall owe her premature obsequies, while I, miserable wretch, shall have been the instrument of what the Jews call Providence, and we call destiny.

This unlimited freedom granted to Jesus provoked the Jews, not the poor, but the rich and powerful. It is true, Jesus was severe on the latter, and this was a political reason, in my opinion, for not restraining the liberty of the Nazarene,—“Scribes and Pharisees,” he would say to them, “you are a race of vipers; you resemble painted sepulchres; you appear well unto men, but you have death within you.” At other times he would sneer at the alms of the rich and proud, telling them that the mite of the poor was more precious in the sight of God. New complaints

were daily made at the pretorium against the insolence of Jesus. I was even informed that some misfortune would befall him; that it would not be the first time that Jerusalem had stoned those that called themselves prophets; and, if the pretorium refused justice, an appeal would be made to Cæsar. However, my conduct was approved by the Senate, and I was promised a reinforcement after the termination of the Parthean war.

Being too weak to suppress a sedition, I resolved upon adopting a measure that promised to establish the tranquility of the city, without subjecting the pretorium to humiliating concession. I wrote to Jesus, requesting an interview with him at the pretorium. He came. You know that in my veins flows the Spanish mixed with Roman blood—as incapable of fear as it is of puerile emotion. When the Nazarene made his appearance, I was walking in my Basilic, and my feet seemed fastened with an iron hand to the marble pavements, and I trembled in every limb as a guilty culprit, though he was calm; the Nazarene was as calm as innocence itself. When he came up to me he stopped, and by a signal sign he seemed to say to me, “I am here;” though he spoke not a word. For some time I contemplated with admiration and awe this extraordinary type of man—a type

of man unknown to our numerous painters who have given form and figure to all the gods and the heroes. There was nothing about him that was repelling in its character, yet I felt awed and tremulous to approach him.

“Jesus,” said I unto him at last—and my tongue faltered—“Jesus of Nazareth, I have granted you for the last three years ample freedom of speech; nor do I regret it. Your words are those of a sage. I know not whether you have read Socrates or Plato, but this I know, there is in your discourses a majestic simplicity, that elevates you far above these philosophers. The Emperor is informed of it, and I, his humble representative in this country, am glad of having allowed you that liberty of which you are so worthy. However, I must not conceal from you that your discourses have raised up against you powerful and inveterate enemies. Neither is this surprising. Socrates had his enemies, and he fell a victim to their hatred. Yours are doubly incensed against you, on account of your discourses being so severe against their conduct; against me, on account of the liberty I have afforded you. They even accuse me of being indirectly leagued with you, for the purpose of depriving the Hebrews of the little civil power which Rome has left them.

My request—I do not say my order—is, that you be more circumspect and moderate in your discourses in the future, and more tender toward them, lest you arouse the pride of your enemies, and they raise against you the stupid populace, and compel me to employ the instruments of law.”

The Nazarene calmly replied: “Prince of the earth, your words proceed not from true wisdom. Say to the torrent to stop in the midst of the mountain gorge: it will uproot the trees of the valley. The torrent will answer you that it obeys the laws of nature and the creator. God alone knows whither flow the waters of the torrent. Verily I say unto you, before the rose of Sharon blossoms the blood of the just shall be spilt.”

“Your blood shall not be spilt,” said I, with deep emotion; “you are more precious in my estimation on account of your wisdom than all the turbulent and proud Pharisees, who abuse the freedom granted them by the Romans. They conspire against Cæsar, and convert his bounty into fear, impressing the unlearned that Cæsar is a tyrant and seeks their ruin. Insolent wretches, they are not aware that the wolf of the Tiber sometimes clothes himself with the skin of the sheep to accomplish his wicked ends. I will pro-

tect you against them. My pretorium shall be an asylum, sacred both day and night.”

Jesus carelessly shook his head and said with a grave and divine smile: “When the day shall have come, there will be no asylums for the son of man, neither in the earth nor under the earth. The asylum of the just is there,” pointing to the heavens. “That which is written in the books of the prophets must be accomplished.”

“Young man,” answered I mildly, “you oblige me to convert my request into an order. The safety of the province, which has been confided to my care, requires it. You must observe more moderation in your discourses. Do not infringe my order. You know the consequences. May happiness attend you; farewell.”

“Prince of the earth,” replied Jesus, “I come not to bring war into the world, but peace, love and charity. I was born the same day on which Augustus Cæsar gave peace to the Roman world. Persecutions proceed not from me. I expect it from others, and will meet it in obedience to the will of my Father who has shown me the way. Restrain, therefore, your worldly prudence. It is not in your power to arrest the victim at the foot of the tabernacle of expiation.”

So saying, he disappeared like a bright shadow

behind the curtains of the Basilic to my great relief, for I felt a heavy burden on me, from which I could not extricate myself while in his presence.

To Herod, who then reigned in Galilee, the enemies of Jesus addressed themselves, to wreak their vengeance on the Nazarene. Had Herod consulted his own inclinations, he would have ordered Jesus immediately to be put to death; but though proud of his royal dignity, yet he was afraid of committing an act that might diminish his influence with the Senate, or, like me, was afraid of Jesus himself. But it would never do for a Roman officer to be scared by a Jew. Previous to this Herod called on me at the pretorium, and, on rising to take leave, after some insignificant conversation, asked me what was my opinion concerning the Nazarene. I replied that Jesus appeared to me to be one of those great philosophers that great nations sometimes produced; that his doctrines are by no means sacrilegious, and that the intentions of Rome were to leave him to that freedom of speech which was justified by his actions. Herod smiled maliciously, and, saluting me with an ironical respect, departed.

The great feast of the Jews was approaching, and the intention was to avail themselves of the popular exultation which always manifests itself at

the solemnities of a passover. The city was overflowing with a tumultuous populace, clamoring for the death of the Nazarene. My emissaries informed me that the treasurer of the temple had been employed in bribing the people. The danger was pressing. A Roman Centurion had been insulted. I wrote to the Prefect of Syria for a hundred foot soldiers, and as many cavalry. He declined. I saw myself alone with a handful of veterans in the midst of a rebellious city, too weak to suppress a disorder, and having no other choice left but to tolerate it. They had seized upon Jesus, and the seditious rabble, although they had nothing to fear from the pretorium, believing, as their leaders had told them, that I winked at their sedition—continued vociferating: “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Three powerful parties had combined together at that time against Jesus: First, the Herodians and the Sadducees, whose seditious conduct seemed to have proceeded from double motives: they hated the Nazarene, and were impatient of the Roman yoke. They could never forgive me for having entered the holy city with banners that bore the image of the Roman Emperor; and although in this instance I had committed a fatal error, yet the sacrilege did not appear less heinous in their eyes.

Another grievance also rankled in their bosoms. I had proposed to employ a part of the treasure of the Temple in erecting edifices for public utility. My proposal was scorned. The Pharisees were the avowed enemies of Jesus. They cared not for the government. They bore with bitterness the severe reprimands which the Nazarene for three years had been continually throwing out against them where ever he went. Too weak and pusillanimous to act by themselves, they had embraced the quarrels of the Herodians and the Sadducees. Besides these three parties, I had to contend against the reckless and profligate populace, always ready to join a sedition, and to profit by the disorder and confusions that resulted therefrom.

Jesus was dragged before the High Priest, and condemned to death. It was then that the High Priest, Caiaphas, performed a divisory act of submission. He sent his prisoner to me to pronounce his condemnation and secure his execution. I answered him that, as Jesus was a Galilean, the affair came in Herod's jurisdiction, and ordered him to be sent hither. The wily Tetrarch professed humility, and, protesting his preference to the Lieutenant of Cæsar, he committed the fate of the man to my hands. Soon my palace assumed the aspect of a besieged citadel. Every moment in-

creased the number of the seditionists. Jerusalem was inundated with crowds from the mountains of Nazareth. All Judea appeared to be pouring into the devoted city. I had taken a wife from among the Gauls, who pretended to see into futurity. Weeping and throwing herself at my feet, "Beware," said she to me, "beware, and touch not that man; for he is holy. Last night I saw him in a vision. He was walking on the waters; he was flying on the wings of the wind. He spoke to the tempest, and to the fishes of the lake; all were obedient to him. Behold, the torrent in Mount Kedron flows with blood, the statues of Cæsar are filled with gemonide; the columns of the interium have given away, and the sun is veiled in mourning like a vestal in the tomb. Ah! Pilate, evil awaits thee. If thou wilt not listen to the vows of thy wife, dread the curse of a Roman Senate; dread the frowns of Cæsar."

By this time the marble stairs groaned under the weight of the multitude. The Nazarene was brought back to me. I proceeded to the halls of justice, followed by my guard, and asked the people in a severe tone what they demanded.

"The death of the Nazarene," was their reply.

"For what crime?"

"He has blasphemed; he has prophesied the

ruin of the Temple; he calls himself the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of the Jews."

"Roman justice," said I, "punishes not such offences with death."

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" belched forth the relentless rabble. The vociferations of the infuriated mob shook the palace to its foundations.

There was but one who appeared to be calm in the midst of the vast multitude; it was the Nazarene. After many fruitless attempts to protect him from the fury of his merciless persecutors, I adopted a measure which at the moment appeared to me to be the only one that could save his life. I proposed, as it was their custom to deliver a prisoner on such occasions, to release Jesus and let him go free, that he might be the scapegoat, as they called it; but they said Jesus must be crucified. I then appealed to them as to the inconsistency of their course as being incompatible with their laws, showing that no criminal judge could pass sentence on a criminal unless he had fasted one whole day; and that sentence must have the consent of the Sanhedrin, and the signature of the president of that court; that no criminal could be executed on the same day his sentence was fixed, and the next day, on the day of his execution, the Sanhedrin was required to review the whole pro-

ceeding; also, according to their law, a man was stationed at the door of the court with a flag, and another a piece off on horseback to cry the name of the criminal and his crime, and the name of his witnesses, and to know if any one can testify anything in his favor; and the prisoner on his way to execution had the right to turn back three times, and to plead any new thing in his favor. I urged all these pleas, hoping they might awe them into subjection; but they still cried, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

I then ordered him to be scourged, hoping this might satisfy them; but it only increased their fury. I then called for a basin, and washed my hands in the presence of the clamorous multitude, thus testifying that in my judgment Jesus of Nazareth had done nothing worthy of death; but in vain. It was his life these wretches thirsted for.

Often in our civil commotions have I witnessed the furious animosity of the multitude, but nothing could be compared to what I witnessed on this occasion. It might have been truly said that on this occasion all the phantoms of the infernal regions had assembled at Jerusalem. The crowd appeared not to walk, but to be borne off and whirled as a vortex, rolling along in living waves

from the portals of the pretorium even unto Mount Zion, with howling screams, shrieks and vociferations such as were never heard in the seditions of the panonia or in the tumult of the forum.

By degrees the day darkened like a winter's twilight, such as had been at the death of the great Julius Cæsar. It was likewise the Ides of March. I, the continued governor of a rebellious province, was leaning against a column of my Basilic, contemplating athwart the dreary gloom these fiends of Tartarus dragging to execution the innocent Nazarene. All around me was deserted. Jerusalem had vomited forth her indwellers through the funeral gate that leads to Gemonica. An air of desolation and sadness enveloped me. My guards had joined the cavalry, and the centurion, to display a shadow of power, was endeavoring to keep order. I was left alone, and my breaking heart admonished me that what was passing at that moment appertained rather to the history of the gods than that of men. A loud clamor was heard proceeding from Golgotha, which, borne on the winds, seemed to announce an agony such as was never heard by mortal ears. Dark clouds lowered over the pinnacle of the temple, and setting over the city covered it as with a veil. So dreadful were the signs that men saw both in the heavens

and on the earth, that Dionysius the Areopagite is reported to have exclaimed, "Either the author of nature is suffering, or the universe is falling apart."

Whilst these appalling scenes of nature were transpiring, there was a dreadful earthquake in lower Egypt, which filled everybody with fear, and scared the superstitious Jews almost to death. It is said Balthasar, an aged and learned Jew of Antioch, was found dead after the excitement was over. Whether he died from alarm or grief is not known. He was a strong friend of the Nazarene.

Towards the first hour of the night I threw my mantle around me, and went down into the city towards the gates of Golgotha. The sacrifice was consummated. The crowd was returning home, still agitated, it is true, but gloomy, taciturn and desperate. What they had witnessed had stricken them with terror and remorse. I also saw my little Roman cohort pass by mournfully, the standard bearer having veiled his eagle in token of grief; and I overheard some of the Jewish soldiers murmuring strange words which I did not understand. Others were recounting prodigies almost similar to those which had so often smitten the Romans by the will of the gods. Some times groups of men and women would halt, then, looking back towards

Mount Calvary, would remain motionless in expectation of witnessing some new prodigy.

I returned to the pretorium sad and pensive. On ascending the stairs, the steps of which were still stained with the blood of the Nazarene, I perceived an old man in a suppliant posture, and behind him several Romans in tears. He threw himself at my feet and wept most bitterly. It is painful to see an old man weep, and my heart already overcharged with grief, we, though strangers, mutually wept together. And in truth it seemed that the tears lay very shallow that day with very many whom I perceived out of the vast concourse of people. I never saw such a complete division of feeling, both on the extreme. Those that betrayed and sold him, those that testified against him, those that said, "Crucify him, we will have his blood," all slunk off like cowardly curs, and washed their teeth with vinegar. As I am told that Jesus taught a resurrection and a separation after death, if such should be the fact I am sure it commenced in this vast crowd.

"Father," said I to him, after gaining control of my feelings, "who are you, and what is your request?"

"I am Joseph of Arimathea," replied he, "and

am come to beg of you upon my knees the permission to bury Jesus of Nazareth.”

“Your prayer is granted,” said I to him; and at the same time ordered Manlius to take some soldiers with him to superintend the interment lest it should be profaned.

A few days after the sepulcher was found empty. His disciples published all over the country that Jesus had risen from the dead, as he had foretold. This last report created more excitement than the first. As to its truth I cannot say for certain, but I have made some investigation in the matter; so you can examine for yourself, and see if I am in fault, as Herod represents me.

Joseph buried Jesus in his own tomb. Whether he contemplates his resurrection or calculated to cut him another I cannot tell. The next day after he was buried one of the priests came to the pretorium and said they were apprehensive that his disciples intended to steal the body of Jesus and hide it, and then make it appear that he had risen from the dead, as he had foretold, and of which they were perfectly convinced. I sent him to the captain of the royal guard (Malcus) to tell him to take the Jewish soldiers, place as many around the sepulcher as were needed; then if anything should happen they would blame themselves, and not the Romans.

When the great excitement arose about the sepulcher being found empty, I felt a deeper solicitude than ever. I sent for Malcus, who told me he had placed his lieutenant, Ben Isham, with one hundred soldiers around the sepulcher. He told me that Isham and the soldiers were very much alarmed at what had occurred there that morning. I sent for this man Isham, who related to me as near as I can remember the following circumstances: He said at about the beginning of the fourth watch, they saw a soft and beautiful light over the sepulcher. He at first thought that the women had come to embalm the body of Jesus, as was their custom, but he could not see how they had got through the guards. Whilst these reflections were passing through his mind, behold, the whole place was lighted up, and there seemed to be crowds of the dead in their grave clothes. All seemed to be shouting and filled with ecstasy, while all around and above was the most beautiful music he had ever heard; and the whole air seemed to be full of voices praising God. At this time there seemed to be a reeling and swimming of the earth, so that he turned so sick and faint that he could not stand on his feet. He said the earth seemed to swim from under him, and his senses left him, so that he knew not what

did occur. I asked him in what condition he was when he came to himself. He said he was lying on the ground with his face down. I asked him if he could not have been mistaken as to the light. Was it not day that was coming in the east? He said at first he thought of that, but at a stone's cast it was exceedingly dark; and then he remembered it was too early for day. I asked him if his dizziness might not have come from being wakened up and getting up too suddenly, as it sometimes had that effect. He said he was not, and had not been asleep all night, as the penalty was death for him to sleep on duty. He said he had let some of the soldiers sleep at a time. Some were asleep then. I asked him how long the scene lasted. He said he did not know but he thought nearly one hour. He said it was hid by the light of day. I asked him if he went to the sepulcher after he had come to himself. He said not, because he was afraid; that just as soon as relief came they all went to their quarters. I asked him if he had been interrogated by the priests. He said he had. They wanted him to say it was an earthquake, and to say they were asleep, and offered him money to tell that the disciples came and stole him; but he saw no disciples; he did not know that the body was gone

until he was told so. I asked him what was the private opinion of those priests he had conversed with. He said some of them thought that Jesus was no man; that he was not a human being; that he was not the son of Mary; that he was not the same that was said to be born of the virgin in Bethlehem; that the same person had been on the earth before with Abraham and Lot, and at many times and places.

It seems to me if the Jewish theory be true, these conclusions would be correct, for, to sum up his life, it would be in accord with this man's life, as is known and testified by both friends and foes; for the elements were no more in his hands than the clay in the hands of the potter. He could convert water into wine; he could change death into life, diseases into health; he could calm the seas, still the storms, call up fish with a silver coin in its mouth. Now, I say if he could do all these things—which he did, and many more as the Jews all testify; and it was doing these things that created this enmity against him; he was not charged with criminal offenses, nor was he charged with violating any law, nor of wronging any individual in person; all these facts are known to thousands, as well by his foes as by his friends; so I am almost ready to say, as did Man-

ulas at the cross, "Truly this was the Son of God."

Now, noble Sovereign, this is as near the facts in the case as I can arrive at them, and I have taken this pains to make the statement more full so that you may judge of my conduct upon the whole, as I hear that Antipater has said many hard things of me in this matter. With the promise of faithfulness and good wishes to my noble Sovereign,

I am your most obedient servant,

PONTIUS PILATE.

CHAPTER X.

*HEROD ANTIPATER'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE ROMAN
SENATE IN REGARD TO HIS CONDUCT AT
BETHLEHEM.*

ROME, Italy. I find in the library of the Vatican, in a scroll, the following record, marked Herod Antipater's Defense :

Noble Romans, in the case whereof I am accused, these Jews are of all people the most superstitious, and no more to be trusted than the Hindoos. They have taught themselves to believe there is but one God, and he dwells in a foreign world, so they can neither see nor hear him, nor in any way approach him by their senses. They believe that he is unchangeable ; that he dwells apart from them ; that he is unapproachable ; that he can only manifest himself through some angel or spirit, or some light, or the thunder, or any strange and uncommon phenomenon. Hence, they are so superstitious that they can be made to believe anything.

In order that you may know what kind of a

people I have to deal with, I will give you some of their maxims: (1) when the sun shines, they say their God smiles; (2) when it is cloudy they say he knows; (3) when it thunders they say he is angry, and they hide themselves; (4) when it rains they say he weeps, and all such sayings as these. Now, my lords, you can see at once how far this people might be led, if they could be made to believe this strange God was at the head, and commanded their cause.

Now, as a foundation for all this foolishness, they have a book, and a set of men, called priests, who read and expound this book to them, and they will believe anything these priests tell them. To show how far they may be led, these priests tell them that some thousands of years ago one Moses died, and went to where this strange God dwelt. He was gone forty days, and when he came back he brought this book that was written by this God for their government. Now, to prove the whole thing is a forgery, the whole book is made for the benefit of the priest. The poor have to work and toil continually, and pay half what they make, and sometimes almost starve to keep up the lazy priests and furnish them and their women with plenty of fine garments and wine, and the best of all the food. The priests tell these poor Jews that this

God requires them to bring the best calf, the best lamb, and the best of the flour and oil to the Temple, to offer in sacrifice; and the priest and their party get all this for themselves. I often tell them when they set up an objection against the Roman taxation, that they could keep up a thousand Cæsars for much less than they can keep up their God and his priests.

These leaders are divided, and are always quarrelling and fighting among themselves, and dividing off in different sects. Miracles are as common as poor physicians. Essenes are noted for both. They prophesy, work miracles, see visions, and dream dreams, and stand in reputation as quack doctors. They pretend to know all about angels, ghosts and spirits; they profess the art of managing ethereal citizens of transatmospheric regions. They live together in colonies, some of them are Cenobitic, and some are Celibate communities. They maintain that each of them are priests and high priests; therefore their daily baptisms as the priests on duty. Their garbs are the Levitical garments; their tables are their altars, and their meals their only sacrifices. With this sanctimonious misanthropy, which is their highest virtue, they use the allegorical method of expounding the Scripture. When we think, reason and reflect,

and use our faculties to obtain our ideas of duty, they shut their eyes and fold their hands, waiting to be endued with power from their God; and when they get it, it proves to be all to their own advantage and interest, to the ruin of their fellow citizens.

The Sadducees are another party, as equally absurd. They get their doctrine from Antigonus Sochæus, who was President of the Sanhedrin. They reject all tradition of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Then we find the Sepher, or Scribe. They are the writers and expounders of the law. Pharisees, derived from *Pharash*, to separate. They separate from all men on account of their sanctity. But it is useless to give all these sects, with their peculiar views, each differing from the other. They are all strict monotheists, yet they differ from each other more than the polytheists do.

I have given this detailed description of the people and their various sects that the Senate may have an idea of the situation I am in. But if you could be here and see and associate with them as I do—to see them with all the sanctity of life, and then behold their treachery to each other; see how they will lie and steal the one from the other; and then to see how low and base are their priests—

you would be much better qualified to judge of my actions.

As to this great excitement at Bethlehem, there were three strange phantastic looking fellows called on my guards at the gate, and asked them where was the babe born that was to be King of the Jews. My guards told me of it, and I ordered the men to be brought into court. I asked them who they were. One of them said he was from Egypt. I asked him what was their business. He said they were in search of the babe that was born to rule the Jews. I told them that I ruled the Jews under Augustus Cæsar. But he said this babe would rule when I was gone. I told him not unless he was born under the purple. I asked how he knew of this babe. He said they had all had a dream the same night about it. I told them that the devil played with our brain when we were asleep. He drew a parchment roll from his bosom, and read in the Hebrew language: "Thou, Bethlehem, least among the kingdoms of the world, out of thee should come a man that should rule all people." I asked him who wrote that. He said the God of Heaven. I asked him where he got that parchment. He said it was the law of the covenant of the Jews. He also said a star had traveled before them all the way to Jeru-

salem. I told him his God was mistaken; that Bethlehem was not a kingdom, neither was it the least in the Kingdom of Judea. I told them that they were superstitious fanatics, and ordered them out of my presence.

But the excitement still grew until it became overwhelming. I found nothing could control it. I called the Hillel court, which is the most learned body of talent in Jerusalem. They read out of their laws that Jesus was to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem; that he was to rule all nations, and all the kingdoms of the world were to be subject to him; and that his kingdoms should never end, but his appointees should continue this rule forever. I found this court just as sanguine as those strangers, and, in fact, it was in everybody's mouth; and I thought I could discover already a sort of dividing and mocking spirit among the lower classes in regard to the Roman authority. Now, it is my opinion that the scene that occurred at Bethlehem was nothing more than a meteor traveling through the air, or the rising vapor from the foot of the mountains out of the low marshy ground, as is often the case. And as to the noise, heard by Melker and those shepherd boys, it was only the echo of the shepherds on the other side of the mountain calling the night-watch, or scaring away the wolves

from their flocks. But although this was nothing but a phenomenon of nature, and the whole thing a delusion, it did not better the condition I was in. A man will contend for a false faith stronger than he will for a true one, from the fact that the truth defends itself, but a falsehood must be defended by its adherents, first, to prove it to themselves, and, second, that they may appear right in the estimation of their friends. But the fact in this case is about the following: The Roman taxation was cutting off the support of the priests, and they were smarting under it. Again, the double taxing—that is the tithes to the priests, and the tax of the Romans—was bearing heavy on the common people, so that they could not stand it, and the priests saw that one of them would have to go unpaid; and as they saw the Romans were the stronger, they wrote these things in the Tosephta, and read it daily in all their synagogues and temples, that the Jewish mind might be prepared for the event, knowing that they would magnify a mote into a mountain, when it come to anything outside of the common laws of nature, and knowing, if they could get the common people to believe in the things, that there would be no end to their fighting. And from all appearances the excitement was driving the people fast that way. It

had already become a by-word with the children of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, that the Jews had a new king, that neither Cæsar nor Herod would reign any more, that they would have to pay no more taxes to keep up the Roman government. All such talk and sayings were common among the poorer classes of society. So I saw an insurrection brewing fast, and nothing but a most bloody war as the consequence. Now, under these circumstances, what was I to do? In my honest judgment it was best to pluck the undeveloped flower in its bud, lest it should be permitted to grow, and strengthen, and finally to burst, and shed its deadly poison over and destroy both nations, impoverish and ruin them forever. My enemies can see I could have no malice at the infants of Bethlehem. I had no delight in listening to the cries of innocent mothers. May all the gods forbid! No; I saw nothing but an insurrection and a bloody war were our doom, and in this the overthrow and downfall, to some extent, of our nation.

So these are the grounds of my action in all this thing. I am satisfied I did the best thing that could be done under the circumstances. As my motive was purely to do the best I could for my whole country, I hope you will so consider

it, as I submit these things for your action, promising faithfulness and submission to your judgment.

HEROD ANTIPATER.

CHAPTER XI.

*HEROD ANTIPAS' DEFENSE BEFORE THE ROMAN SENATE
IN REGARD TO THE EXECUTION OF JOHN BAPTIST.*

CITY OF ROME, September 26th, 1883.

WE found on the records of the Roman Senate, Herod Antipas' defense respecting the various accusations preferred against him by different persons. In his defense there are some very important items, as regard the Christian Church. The reader will notice that these events were recorded with no intention of establishing other facts. 1st. The history of John Baptist. 2nd. The history of Jesus Christ. 3rd. The killing of the children by his father at Bethlehem.

To Tiberius Cæsar and the Senate of Rome. My Noble Lords.—Greeting:

It is true, as my opponent asserts, that I was defeated in the battle with Aretas, king Arabia, but I was forced into a battle when I was not prepared for the engagement, and I either had to do this or have the country over-

run by this wicked people. It is true I was defeated, but it was for the want of time and a better preparation. Aretas came on me before I was notified of the fact. Notwithstanding I was defeated, his army was so crippled that he had to withdraw his forces from the field, and has not been able to rally them since. So our country was saved from a devastation of the foreign foe.

I understand that the superstitious Jews say my defeat was for my wickedness in beheading John Baptist. My understanding of the God of the Jews is, that he does not chastise the innocent for the crimes of the guilty. What did my actions have to do with the poor, suffering soldier? But if he had to punish all in order to reach me, then where is his almighty power they boast so much of? I do not know whether their God was angry at me or not. There is one thing I know, the act was done with the holy intention of bringing the greatest amount of good to the greatest number of people; and if this is so, no court can gainsay it or condemn it.

The facts in the case are about the following: John Baptist had set up a new mode of religion altogether different from the Jewish religion, teaching baptism instead of circumcision. This

had been the belief and custom of the Jews in all ages past. According to their theory, God had appeared to Abraham hundreds of years before, and told him with his own lips how and what to do to be saved; and according to this the Jews had lived until it had become their nature, and all their forefathers had lived in this way. David, Solomon, Isaac, Jacob, and all the holy prophets had gone to heaven in this way of God's own appointment. Now, the question came to them as they suggested it to me: "Has God found that he was wrong? Has his wisdom failed him? or has the unchangeable changed, and is he wavering in his purpose?" Such would be the natural conclusions of a sensible man under the circumstances. Now, John Baptist has no authority from God for what he is doing, like Abraham had. All he can say is, "He that sent me to baptize is true"; and he can't tell who he was. Then his going into the wilderness: God had ordered Solomon to build the finest temple that was ever built in the world, and made promises that whosoever came to that house with his offerings, his prayers should be heard and answered; which had been the place of their meeting for hundreds of years, for the Jews think this temple the next place to heaven.

Now see the difference :

1st. John has no authorized authority.

2nd. He changes God's place of worship.

3rd. He changes the doctrines.

4th. He changes the mode of applying.

Now, the idea of Gamaliel was that John wanted to be some great man ; hence, he took this mode of eccentric life to establish it. And there is nothing better qualified than the course he took to make an impression upon the ignorant and unlearned—to go away out in the wilderness by himself, get a few friends from Jerusalem to go out and hear him, and come back and tell of the great wonders which they had seen in the wilderness. Then John's appearance—his long, uncombed hair and beard, his fantastic clothing, and his food : nothing but bugs and beans—such a course and such a character are well qualified to lead the illiterate astray. These troubles on the Jewish mind were very heavy, and gave such men as Hilderium, Shammai, Hillel, and others, great trouble. And no wonder, for in their judgment it was vacating the temple of religious worship ; it was blocking the road to heaven, and driving the poor and unsuspecting to ruin, as well as ruining the whole nation. So it was, by their request, as so ordered, that it was better to execute one to

save the many from a worse fate. And this is the true reason for the deed, and not to please the whim of a dancing girl, as you have heard. Now, my Lords, if this is not satisfactory, I would ask my accuser, Caius, to write to any of the learned Jews, and see if my statement is not correct.

As to Agrippa's accusing me of having arms for seventy thousand soldiers, it is correct; but they were left me by my father Herod the great. And as they were needed to defend the province, and I did not know it was necessary to report them, I never thought of keeping them secret. But as to my being in league with Sejonius, I appeal to the virtue of my conduct, and demand investigation.

As to what Pontius Pilate says in regard to my cowardice and disobedience in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, I will say in my own defense: I was informed by all the Jews that this was the same Jesus that my father aimed to destroy in his infancy; for I have it in my father's private writings, and accounts of his life, showing that, when the report was circulated of three men, enquiring where was he that was born King of the Jews, he called together the Hillel and Shammai schools, and demanded the reading of the sacred scrolls; that it was decided he was to be born in Bethle-

hem of Judea, as read and interpreted that night by Hillel. So when my father learned that there was a birth of a male child in Bethlehem under very strange circumstances, and he could not learn who nor where the child was, he sent and had the male children slain that were near the age. Afterwards he learned that his mother had taken him and fled into the wilderness. For this attempt to save the Roman authority in the land of Judea the world has not ceased to curse him to this day; and yet the Cæsars have done a thousand worse things, and done them a thousand times, and it was all well. Just think how many lives have been lost to save the Roman Empire; when those infants were only removed from the evil to come, while in their innocency. The proper way to judge of action is to let the actor judge, or the one on whom the action terminates. If this should be done, and there is a life of happiness beyond this for innocency to dwell in, those infants as well as the Rachels would be thankful to my father for the change. Again, my Lords, Pilate is a higher officer than I; and you know in our law the lower court always has the right to appeal to the higher.

As to Pilate's saying that Jesus was a Gallilean, he is mistaken. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, as the records show. And as to his citizen-

ship, he had none. He wandered about from place to place, having no home, but making his abode principally with the poor. He was a wild fanatic, who had taken up the doctrines of John (except his baptism), and was quite an enthusiast. He had learned sooth-saying while in Egypt to perfection. I tried to get him to show some miracle while in my court, but he was too sharp to be caught in a trap, like all those necromancers: they are afraid to show off before the intelligent. From what I could learn he had reprimanded some of the rich Jews for their meanness, and they were not out of the way; but from what I heard from him they would have been much better men if they had practiced what he preached.

So this is my defence. I submit it for your consideration, praying for clemency.

HEROD ANTIPAS.

CHAPTER XII.

*THE HILLEL LETTERS REGARDING GOD'S PROVIDENCE
TO THE JEWS, BY HILLEL THE THIRD.*

FIRST LETTER.

To the noble and persecuted sons of my Father, God, who is too wise to err in his judgment, and too mighty to let his kingdom suffer, or his children to be persecuted beyond what is good for them :

Beholding our desolate condition, we must know there is a good reason somewhere. From our former history, and the dealings of God with our forefathers, it is evident that it is not because he is slack or neglectful of the interests of his children. It must be on our own account.

In calling your attention to these subjects, it is necessary to call your attention to the acts of God in the history of the world. By this we may be led to see a reason for our present condition. When he was dissatisfied with the wicked world his eye rested on one good man, Noah. Now, it is no use for us to set up a controversy as to how

Noah came to be good. That is nothing to us. The great question for us is: Are we good? and, if not, why are we wicked? No doubt this is the cause why we are forsaken. If we could not help our being wicked, then we are persecuted wrongfully. But it was the goodness of Noah that preserved his life, and made him a great and a happy man; while it was wickedness that caused all the balance of the world to be drowned, and created their misery and death. Then follow along the line to Abraham. God found him faithful, and on this account he made him the father of all that are faithful and good. And so with hundreds of others that I could name in our former history. I would ask all the Jews in their dispersed condition to read the history of our race, and see the 'dealings of God to the good, and his judgments upon the evil. Now, God makes selections of certain individuals to relieve others. These selected ones may not be good, but the one for whom they are selected must be good, or they can have no favor from God. See Moses. He was an infant. He could neither be good nor bad, because he was at that time powerless. But Israel was good, and it was upon the account of Israel's goodness that Moses was selected. Hence, from this babe in the basket we find the long chain of mighty displays of God's

works in saving, and defending and comforting the good, simply and alone because they were good, and this is the only reason why God has ever bestowed special favors on any one; just because he is good. Now, in a certain sense, he is good to all; but this goodness of God may be confined to one thing alone, and that is, he affords ample means and opportunities to be good; and I am sure this is all that is necessary to justify him in all his dealings with the sons of men. If he creates men, and gives them all necessary power and opportunities to be good, and they refuse, then they are to blame, and not he. This is the reason he condemned the world by a flood. This is the reason that the Egyptians were drowned. This is the reason why the Sodomites were burned. This is the reason why the Canaanites were destroyed. This is the reason why we were sold into Babylon. And oh! for a master spirit to rise up as did Samuel to Saul, to tell us the reason why we are again forsaken and cast away; why it is that our city and the holy temple is forsaken and desolate; why it is that God fights no more battles for Israel; why it is that we have no leader that the people would be safe to follow; why it is that Israel is turned against herself, that every evil bird is permitted to pluck her, and her best friends are turned to be her

enemies. Why is it that Josephus sold Galilee to the Romans? Why is it that the sanctifying of the Spirit is withdrawn? Why is it the Urim and Thummim in the Temple has not changed the color of its stones in thirty years? Why is it that the light of the threshold in the Temple has ceased to burn? and why is it that the Jews have lost the feeling of Brotherhood, and fought each other like beasts of hell until God has given us over, and permitted the Romans to devour our heritage, to burn our city, to destroy our beloved Temple, and drench it with the blood of its devotees?

I know that many of my brethren, more particularly the priests, will bring heavy charges against the ministration, and of course indirectly impeach God, but it may be, my brethren, we mistake God's designs in all this thing. And may we not be equally mistaken in regard to our desert or our demerit in his dealing with us? We know that the guilty party is apt to think that the law is too severe; but we never think so when others are to suffer, and especially if we are the party against whom the criminal has offended and done wrong. When a Jew becomes mean and wicked, and violates the Jewish law and becomes our personal injurer, then we propose to stone him till he is dead, if his actions are such that this is to be his condem-

nation ; and we are equally guilty if we in any way try to screen the criminal from suffering the just penalty of the law. Now let us, as honest Jews, look in our own natures and examine our actions in the light of God's holy revelation, and see if our present condition is not deserving upon our part ; and if we learn that it is we who have forsaken God, instead of his having forsaken us, then let us do as our fathers did in Egypt ; then let us do as our fathers did in Babylon. They hung their harps ; they clothed themselves in sackcloth and ashes ; they set up their mourning as the dove and as the pelican. So did they seek rest until the Lord God Jehovah was moved with compassion. They not only ceased to do wickedly, but they showed by their regrets and acknowledgment that they would act differently in the future ; and God had compassion on them, moved the heart of their wicked king to pity them, that they might return and rebuild their Temple. These are the ways in which they conducted themselves ; and then we see the results that followed. Now these things were for their own good, but they were recorded that we might learn how to do, provided we should be brought into the same condition.

Now, I wish my Jewish brethren, to understand that I am not a follower of this Nazarene that has

created so much strife among the people, neither do I indorse his new doctrines; yet I think it would be well for us not to be too hasty in forming our conclusions on this or any other subject. I heard Peter preach the other day; and as he and John came out of the Temple, there was a man that had been laying around at the gates and public crossings for years. He was impotent, having no soundness in his feet and ankle-bones. As they were passing him he asked them for help. Peter said he had nothing to give, but, said he, "In the name of Jesus, the Son of God, I say unto thee, rise up and walk;" and the man sprang to his feet, seemingly perfectly sound, and commenced praising God at the top of his voice, which caused a great disturbance among the people, and the police came and took Peter and John to prison as peace-breakers. I thought I never saw such an outrage. It is right to arrest men for doing bad or wicked, but to arrest and imprison men for doing good is something that I can't see into. This has been the fault of us Jews in all time. No odds what good was done, if it was not done just as the priest thought it ought to be done, it was not done. When I saw the act of Peter with the impotent man, I said to myself, "There is the power of Moses; there is the power of Jehovah manifest in

human flesh; there is the power wanted by us Jews to reinstate the Kingdom of Heaven; this is the power that has followed the Jews in times past, and the only distinguishing mark that makes us different from the other nations of the earth. This was the peculiar power of Jesus of Nazareth; and because he did not work according to Jewish rule they condemned him to die. It was not because his works were not good works, but because he did not do them according to Jewish custom.

I was forcibly struck with Peter's sermon. He said: "There was a rich man who had one son. This son had been trying for a long time to build him a house. He was houseless and exposed to all dangers and trouble for the want of a house, until he was almost exhausted and was ready to perish. And his father had compassion on his son and built him a nice house, and finished it up in the best of style in all its apartments; made everything just to suit the wants and necessities and comforts of his child. And when it was all finished he went and brought his son to see it. And his son was so delighted, and said it was the very thing he needed, and so much better than he could build for himself. And his father said, 'Son, I love you. I give you this house. Will you accept it?' 'With all my heart, dear father; with great-

ful acknowledgments.'” “Now,” Peter said, “here is the picture of the world which has been working, struggling, and striving for ages to build them a home for the soul of man. They have worked by legislative enactments, by building fine temples, by offering sacrifices, by paying tithes to the Lord, by walking hundreds of miles to the temple bare-footed and bare-headed, by keeping holy days and festivals, and all to no purpose. The soul had become wearied out of patience, and still no rest, until man had become not only dissatisfied with themselves, but with their God and his service. And while in this despairing condition, God our Father comes in the person of Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, and in his death he prepared a house of rest, and now proposes to his children to accept what he has done for them, and quit working and worrying to try to fit themselves for a higher station and a happier life.” And he said, “who will accept?”

Again Peter said: “This house was beautiful to look at, and was every way suited to the son, yet the son could not enjoy it from the fact it had no furniture. So the son went to work and toiled and sweat, trying to make furniture to suit himself. But all he could do he could not get a piece that would last. And it soon became useless, be-

cause it did not suit him. Well, the Father went to work and made all manner of ware, both of plate and furniture, just to suit, and presented it to his son, all nicely arranged in the house. Every piece nicely fitted the place and purpose for which it was made, so that the son was well pleased. And the father says: 'All this I will give you, my son, because I love you. Will you accept?' The son said, 'With all my heart, dear father; this suits me much better than I could have suited myself if I had had the power to make it myself.' Now," said Peter, "this is what God has done for the world. Instead of purifying ourselves by washing, by purifying, by fasting, by prayers, by penitence, and by all the works of the law, God has invented a purity that will last forever, that will suit us and will suit him."

Again, said Peter: "This son was all ragged. His clothes were all worn thread-bare in trying to build and fit him up a house, and he was ashamed. So he went to work trying to dress himself; and the more he worked the less he put himself in shape to suit himself. And after he had worked hard, his father went to work and wove him a seamless robe, (it was woven throughout to show that it was not made by hand or art), and presented it to his son, and said, 'My son, I love you,

and I have prepared a white robe ; will you accept it?' 'With many thanks, dear father,' said the son. 'Oh, how beautiful it is ! How snow white ! how well it fits me ! Oh ! father, I never can feel grateful enough. I thought thou wast angry and hated me, because I was poor, and homeless, and miserable, and ragged ; but if thou didst love me in my abject state, I know thou canst love me now, and wilt delight to make thy abode with me forever more. Oh ! father, I don't know how to express my gratitude to thee.' And thus the son seemed wild with delight, and seemed so delighted with his new situation, while the father seemed equally delighted with the son. So there was mutual joy in them both. And the father said to the son : 'I delight to dwell with my children when they live in a manner that is suited to my taste ; and of course this suits me, from the fact it is all my own work. Only be content, and do not soil thy robe ; for it is so white and clean. A very little mixing with dirt and filth will so contaminate it, it will not be fit to be seen. And as long as you keep it unspotted from the world it will distinguish you from the world, and make you a welcome visitor into the company of all that are dressed in the same robe ; for this is merely the outward showing of the principles that live within ;

which principles are only developed by the outward appearance. And even it will be admired by those who may reject it; yet inwardly they must respect it. Though they may covet it, and raise the spirit of persecution against you, it is not because they dislike you, but because they are not like you; and this is the cause of envy everywhere.' This," said Peter, "is the way God our Father has treated us spiritually. He has prepared us a holy habitation, where our immortal souls can live and be happy through all eternity, and then has given us the Holy Spirit, the same that Jesus promised, and the same that fell on the people the other day. This Spirit renews and begets within us holy anxieties to love God and to serve him, by obeying all his commands and doing honor to his name. And this same Spirit begets within us a holy desire to see all men embrace the offering of this good and noble Father, that they may be happy now and happy forever—more so after death than before; for it is the dread of meeting an interminable doom for our sins that makes our lives intolerable. Oh!" said Peter, "behold the riches offered on terms so easy by our Father. All we need is to accept. Who will accept?" And there were two or three hundred cried out, "We will;" and then followed a mighty

rising up and rejoicing, all of which made a very strong impression on my mind.

I am going to make a most thorough examination into these things to see if they are so—if God has provided an easier and a better plan to save the souls of men than the Jewish economy. I feel that the subject is worth looking into; for of long time it has seemed to me (and my father saw and spoke of the same) that the ways of God's service were hard, and enough to make men tire and become indifferent, and almost to look on God as a haughty tyrant; while Peter's illustration shows him in such a lovely light, it makes me love him.

SECOND LETTER.

After having viewed our present condition it may be well for us to look back and review our former history, and get a knowledge of the state of the world in former times. If we look at the world from the pages of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai, the last of God's prophets upon earth, we will see a period of nearly five hundred years to the present, during which time the world underwent greater changes than ever before. We will see our nation returning from a seventy years' cap-

tivity, recommencing their national existence after having been overrun and absorbed in the first great monarchy that swept over the earth. Our acquaintance with the rest of the world was very limited, only extending to the Chaldeans, the Phenicians, the Egyptians, and a few inconsiderable tribes. Our ideas seem to be limited likewise, and to extend but little beyond the principles of the Mosaic religion, which had been promulgated about fifteen hundred years before.

I am informed that the accusation of Jesus was written over him as he hung upon the cross in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; whence come these dialects? When the prophets closed their writings (which is nearly five hundred years ago), the Greek was scarcely a written language, confined to a small corner of Europe; and Rome, from which the Latin language went abroad, was a straggling village on the banks of the Tiber. Of this whole period, in which nations and monarchies were born, flourished and decayed (showing clearly a providential preparation), the intermingling of the various languages, all go to show preparation for some great event, and to my mind makes the juncture most opportune for the introduction of a universal religion. That is, if I understand it aright, God has arranged the position and existence of the sever-

al nations of the earth in such a manner as to promote the recognition, the establishment, and the propagation of true religion, the knowledge and worship of the true God.

Whatever knowledge may have been imparted to our ancestors, or however long it may have lasted, certain it is that at the time of Abraham the nations generally had fallen into idolatry. To him God was pleased to make himself known, and to promise that of him he would make a great nation, and in him and his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. That is through him and his posterity he would impart the greatest possible good, the knowledge of the true God. To accomplish this purpose God selected the spot in which he and his posterity were to be placed; and no spot on earth could have been more opportune for the purpose. The land of Canaan, afterwards called Judea, afterwards called Palestine, a tract of country situated about midway between the three great divisions of the earth,—Asia, Africa, and Europe—on the great highway of nations, in the very path of conquest, commerce and travel, equally accessible to all parts of the then known world. But in the time of Abraham those circumstances did not exist, which afterwards made Judea so favorably located as the radiating point of the

true faith. There was then neither conquest, nor commerce, nor travel. The world was then overspread by wandering tribes, scarcely having boundaries or a fixed habitation. Chaldea, the cradle of the human race and Egypt, the birthplace of human learning and the arts, were the only considerable nations in the time of Abraham.

It is not probable that any such thing as alphabetic writing existed; for we read that he took no other evidence of the purchase which he made of a burying place for his family, than living witnesses of the bargain. At that period, therefore, divine communication must have been confined to individuals. The fullness of time had not come even for that partial revelation which was made by Moses. There was no mode by which it could be recorded and preserved. The invention of writing was necessary to prepare the world for it. That invention took place some time within the five hundred years, which elapsed between Abraham and Moses.

Into Egypt, the mother of the arts, the posterity of Abraham were sent as if to school, not in divine things (for in the knowledge of them, the shepherds of Canaan as far exceeded the refined Egyptians as light exceeds darkness), but in the knowledge of those things by which life is rendered comfortable. When they had become sufficiently

numerous to take possession of the destined territory, a leader was raised up for that especial purpose—Moses, the child of a slave, his life exposed in infancy in a frail cradle of rushes upon the waters, yet destined to be the mightiest agent in the affairs of men that the Almighty had ever employed on earth. Who can but admire the wisdom of divine Providence in the education of this great founder of nations, this prophet of divine truth, this enlightener of the world? Who can apprehend the glorious position which he holds in the world's history? What a distinction to have framed the constitution of a nation which lasted fifteen hundred years, and stamped a people with the marks of nationality, which time itself has not obliterated! To have written a book which has been read with interest and ardor by revolving ages, and growing millions of the human race! To impart to nations and continents the saving knowledge of the one true God! What a glory to have laid by one sentence the foundation of true religion in so many millions of minds: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The more I contemplate the mission of Moses, the higher he rises in moral sublimity in my estimation. If I contemplate him during the forty years of his sojourn in the wilderness, he is the

only depository of the true religion on earth, with the exception of the tribe he led. The whole world was sunk in the debasement of idolatry. What a noble use did the Almighty make of the recent invention of man's ingenuity, the invention of letters, to engrave upon stone his awful testimony against the great, fundamental, and all-polluting sin of the world, the worship of idols: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them." To realize and carry out this one thing was the purpose in separating the Jews from the balance of the world; and with all the seals and signs, and God's special judgments, it took fourteen hundred years to do it; so prone are we to worship the things that are seen, instead of the unseen. And this is one of our great troubles this day. This is one reason of our desolation. We thought too much of our holy city and temple; but if this was our sin, what might we expect from men in the uncultivated state in the days of Moses? Oh, brethren, let us ask ourselves, Are we not more inclined to worship the created things than we are to worship him who created them? Look at this people I am

speaking of. Forty days had not elapsed from the utterance from Sinai of this fundamental precept, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," until the very people to whom this command was given, made for themselves a golden calf, after the manner of the idolatrous Egyptians, and danced before it with great joy.

To secure this one grand and fundamental point (that is, the worship of the only living and true God), the whole Mosaic economy was contrived. For this purpose we were forbidden to marry with foreigners; for this purpose our sacrifices were all to be offered in one place, and by one family of priests, lest we should wander away and become corrupt by association with idolaters. For this purpose we were forbidden certain kinds of food, such as were offered in sacrifice to heathen deities. We were not to be present at idolatrous feasts, nor to become accustomed to those moral abominations with which heathen worship was invariably accompanied. More effectually to secure this point, divine Providence so arranged it, that our national existence and prosperity depended on our fidelity to the great purpose for which we were set apart. Whenever we worshipped the true God and obeyed his laws, temporal prosperity was the natural consequence; then were union, and peace,

and industry, and prosperity. But whenever we forsook God and worshiped idols, a corresponding degeneracy of morals and manners took place. This was followed by discord, weakness, poverty, and subjection to foreign nations.

But the event which exerted the most decisive influence upon the national existence of us Jews was the erection of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem. Before that time our sacred rites had been conducted in a very humble manner. Our sacred utensils had no better covering than a tent. Often they were in private custody; and once the sacred ark itself, which contained the heaven-derived charter of our national existence, was taken captive and remained for months in the country of the Philistines. That ark for near four hundred years was almost the only bond of our national union, the only object around which gathered our national reverence; and, although in our younger years, we were apt to regard that ark and its contents with a childish curiosity, in after years we come to look upon it as an object of higher significance. It is the written testimony of God against idolatry. It contains the fundamental articles of our nation's constitution. It is a charter from God for a nation's establishment and independence. It is a declaration of principles which was borne before

us like a banner, proclaiming to the world for what we were to live, for what we were to fight, for what we were to die. It was our confession of faith, which we upheld before the world as sacred, true, and vital to the best interest of humanity, and the only hope of our final success. Once abandon this, and we are lost, disgraced, fallen forever. On the tables in that ark were written, "Thou shalt have no other God before me;" and, "Thou shalt not make any graven image nor the likeness of anything; thou shalt not bow down to anything or serve them." There it remains from age to age as the memorial of the purpose of our national existence; and how mightily has it worked in the earth!

There is an incident related by the sacred historian which may seem symbolical of the mission of the whole dispensation, which that sacred enclosure contained. It is in the fifth section of Samuel: "And the Philistines took the ark and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdad. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon; and when they of Ashdad arose early on the morrow behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord, and they took Dagon and set him in the place again; and when

they arose early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground again before the ark of the, Lord and the head of Dagon, and the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold: only the stump of Dagon was left unto him." So is all idolatry destined to fall before the word of the Almighty. So has our Dagon fallen—and oh! what a dreadful fall it is to us Israelites. Let me ask you what was achieved in the Temple of Azotus was gradually accomplished throughout the land of Israel. Many times has Dagon been set up in his place again; many times has idolatry been revived; the ark of God has been in the hands of the enemy (it is there now at this time), and the true religion about to be extinguished, when the Almighty interposed to vindicate his honor, and reestablish his worship, and at last obtained a triumph by the very means which at first sight threatened to overthrow it forever.

I have said that the objects of our national existence were greatly promoted by the building of the Temple at Jerusalem. It was a splendid edifice, calculated to awaken the curiosity, to attract the attention, and command the respect of the world. It furnished a place of appropriate convenience, beauty and dignity for the celebration of

our daily sacrifices and our national rites. It made more interesting our three yearly festivals, when all the males were obliged to present themselves before God. It gave us what we all need at this time—a fixture to our religion, a local habitation to our religious applications and associations. It connected the sentiment of religion with another, no less strong: that of patriotism, and enlisted them both in the maintenance and defense of the national institutions of Moses; and it also led to the formation of a national literature which gave expression to these two most powerful sentiments of the human heart, and thus operated to call forth and strengthen them in each succeeding generation. Still the Mosaic institutions, assisted by the magnificence of the temple service, failed to extirpate entirely the propensity to idolatry. Occasionally, it sprang up and overspread the country, till at last the Almighty saw fit to suffer that temple to be overthrown; his people to be carried into captivity, and his worship to be suspended for seventy years; and his judgments accomplished what his mercies could not do. The very measure of divine severity which at first sight threatened to destroy the worship of the true God from the face of the earth, and give up the world to the interminable dominion of idolatry, was the means of establish-

ing it on a firmer basis than ever. Although Jerusalem was overthrown and the temple razed to its foundation, the Jews carried the true Jerusalem in their hearts. And so it is to-day. Although our holy city is no more, and although we are dispersed and many of us sold into slavery, yet the holy temple of our God lives and will continue to live in our hearts forever. Wherever we go, whether in the splendid cities of the east, or amid the fascinations of Egypt, or the tents of the wandering shepherds, still our affections will be in the holy land, and, like Daniel, we will turn our faces towards the land where our fathers worshiped the God of heaven. Nehemiah, when serving in the courts of princes, lamented when he heard that the walls of Jerusalem were thrown down. There in slavery—our fathers had time to reflect upon the cause of their calamities; there they read in the Book of Moses, which was the companion of their exile, the awful curses which he had denounced against them if they forsook the worship of the true God, and felt them to be fulfilled in themselves; there they read the prophecy which had been written by Moses, more than a thousand years before, in the book number three, section twenty-two: “If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book,

that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God, the Lord will scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth to the other, and among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord will give thee then a trembling heart and failing eyes, and sorrow of mind, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and have no assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would to God it were evening; and in the evening that thou shalt say, Would to God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." Thus were our fathers smitten to the heart by the fulfillment of such awful threatenings. All propensity to idolatry was forever cured. Never after this period could the allurements of pleasure or the threats of pain, neither dens of wild beasts, nor the fiery furnace, neither instant death nor lingering torture, ever induce them to offer sacrifice to idol gods. Now all propensity to idolatry was cured. This same providence which had scattered them in foreign lands now restored them to their own. Their temple was rebuilt, the daily sacrifice was resumed, and was never intermitted, with the exception of about three years

under Antiochus Epiphanes. But now let us look at our present state, and see how we, their children, have fallen. The ark once more is taken from us, Jerusalem is in ruins, over-trodden by the foot of the Gentiles, ruin has driven her ploughshare through her crumbling walls, and we are scattered to mix and mingle among all nations.

THIRD LETTER.

As all the nations of the earth lacked the knowledge of the true God except us Jews, it was devolving on us as a nation to extend this knowledge to all the world, which was brought about by the following plan: First, by the universal diffusion of the Greek language, and, second, by the conquest of the world by the Romans. Another cause almost as essential was the scattering of our nation among all nations of the earth; for narrowness and bigotry had almost made us a barren tree as to any general good for the world. So stale were our habits and fixed our customs that spiritual life was almost extinct; therefore it was necessary for us even to learn a new language, that the knowledge of the true God might be infused into a new medium, and thus be spread from land to

land. It was necessary that the true medicine of life should be dissolved in an element which flowed on every shore and in every stream, that all men might taste thereof and be saved. It was necessary, too, that a foreign language should be forced upon us; for nothing but conquest and constraint, nothing but this could overcome our bitter prejudices. It will be the object of this letter to show how this was brought about.

The great designs of God were equally submerged by our misfortunes as well as our prosperity, and God's purposes of preparing the world for the advent of a higher life and greater attainments in godliness, and each event had a ripening tendency. Whether we worshiped in Jerusalem in peace, or wept by the rivers of Babylon, everywhere and under all circumstances we taught a knowledge of the true God; and everywhere our nation have cherished the hope of triumph in the expectation of a coming Messiah. The first great empire to which Judea fell a prey was the Babylonian. Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar five hundred and fifty-seven years ago; and the remnant of the people was carried to Babylon and the neighboring countries, whither the main body had been removed eighteen years before. The glimpses of those times and

countries are very short, but enough is given us to see that the residence of our fathers in those countries was not without effect. It is impossible to put out the light of a Jew's eye, or to extinguish the fire that burns in his heart; and the life of our fathers made lasting effects both on the people they were with and themselves also. One person especially adorned that dark period of God's exiled Church. The prophet, Daniel, gives us almost the only sight we get of the mighty Babylon; his writings furnish us with a number of great truths. He passes before us from youthful beauty to extreme age. We see him rising like Joseph, by early wisdom, piety, and integrity, from slavery, to be the chief minister of State, and it is altogether probable that it was through him that Cyrus was prompted to restore our people to our holy land again. The edict was issued in the first year of his reign immediately after the capture of Babylon, which Daniel had foretold by interpreting the writing on the wall. But the restoration of our nation, an event so wonderful and strange in the history of the world, though properly attributed to the providence of God, was brought about by means more circuitous than is generally supposed. Fifty or a hundred thousand Jews did not live in Babylonia, Media, and Persia

seventy years for nothing. Such a singularly religious impression, and our people among these oriental nations appear to have been treated with much more respect than in the western world. The reason of this probably was that the Persians, like the Arabians their neighbors, had not declined so far from the patriarchal religion, or sunk into such gross and degrading idolatry as those nations which had wandered farthest from the paternal hearthstone of the human race. It is in this period of our nation's sojourn in the east that the famous reformer, Zoroaster, appeared. I look upon him as the second Moses, though without inspiration; but, availing himself of the light of the true revelation, he attempted not to introduce a new religion, but to refine, purify, and build up the religion of his country by introducing into it the most important principles of the true faith, and thus, with a mixture of base and noble motives, to benefit his country, and reflect glory on himself. The secret of his success was, he taught the theology of Moses, and his theology was so simple and sublime, and so consonant at the same time with the best conceptions of mankind that it clothed this impostor with the veneration of his countrymen, and sanctified even his crimes and follies. It was from Moses that Zoroaster

derived the idea of one living God, the maker of heaven and earth; but he corrupted this pure doctrine by making two subordinate gods, the authors respectively of good and evil. From Moses he received an utter abhorrence to all images, and to temples in which they were worshiped, but he introduced, in connection with the true faith, the doctrine of evil spirits, dividing the government of the universe. So it happened that there was not only an action of the religion of our fathers upon that of the Persians, but a reaction of the Persian religion upon that of our nation.

The Jews, as would appear from the book of Tobit, first learned in their captivity those ideas of the agency of evil spirits in the world, of which we find traces in all their histories. Cyrus was a Persian, and in all probability had been instructed in the doctrines of Zoroaster, a combination, as we have seen, of Judaism and the ancient Persian religion; hence his extraordinary partiality for the Jews is explained, and his zeal in rebuilding the only temple on earth, which was dedicated in his phrase, to the God of heaven, and was free from the all-pervading and polluting sin of idol worship.

But the influence of Zoroaster did not end here. The successors of Cyrus were educated in his reli-

gion. The priests and teachers of his religion were called Magi, and exerted a powerful influence in the State. Darius Hystapus, son-in-law and successor of Cyrus, most warmly espoused the religion of the Persian philosopher, and when Zoroaster was slain by an eruption of the Scythians, he amply avenged his death, and rebuilt the fine temples which the Scythians had destroyed, especially the one in which Zoroaster ministered, with more splendor than before. It was this enmity to idolatry, thus derived through Zoroaster from Moses, which was the only redeeming principle that the Persian monarchs carried with them in all their extensive conquests. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, madman and tyrant as he was, derives a sort of dignity from his zeal against idolatry. His indignation, at seeing the Egyptians worship a living brute, does honor at least to his Persian education, though in other respects he was a cruel and detestable tyrant. When Darius and Xerxes marched their mighty armies into Europe, the only idea which these vast expeditions were intended to carry out, that can excite the least sympathy in the mind of a Jew, was the destruction of idolatry, which they everywhere threatened and attempted to realize. Thus it is that the mind governs at last. The Persian kings, with their vast armies,

bearing war and subjugation to remotest lands, were only realizing ideas which had been matured by Zoroaster in his cave, and which he in turn had derived from Moses. Thus through our exiled fathers the hand became the executive of the brain to establish the worship of the true God, and in the revolution of the wheels of nature, as seen by Ezekiel, the soldier is the machine of the thinker, and armies are assembled and battles fought to carry out a few ideas with which the men of letters have filled the mind of a nation, and scholars and sages, prophets and impostors, good men and bad men, kings and generals, armies and revolutions, are all equally used to accomplish the purposes of that eternal Mind, who sitteth supreme over all, which we as the only nation known on earth recognize as divine providence.

The ambition of Cyrus and his successors, though in a manner which they did not anticipate, was the means made use of by our Father of introducing among the enslaved and stagnant multitude of the east the civilization, the arts, and the learning which Greece, with her wonderful genius, had matured. Cyrus, whose sudden irruption into Babylon, broke off Belshazzar's feast, and fulfilled so terribly the writing on the wall, had already extended the Persian empire over a greater part of

Asia Minor. Belshazzar, the last King over Babylon, attempted to strengthen himself against the growing power of the Persians, by forming an alliance with Crœsus, King of Lydia, so famous for his riches. This monarch, puffed up by his great wealth, and the command of an army of near a half million, resolved to encounter the Persian power, but lately become formidable. To make assurance doubly sure, he sent to enquire of the Oracle at Delphi in Greece. The result of his expedition was that he obtained for answer: "If Crœsus pass the Holys," the boundary between Lydia and Persia, "he shall destroy a great empire." He went, and found that empire was his own. He was defeated by Cyrus and his whole kingdom came into the hands of the conqueror five hundred and forty years ago. This conquest brought the Persians in collision with the Greeks, and was the cause of those wars which were waged with such bitterness for generations between the two nations, and finally resulted in the destruction of the Persian monarchy. The Greeks, though natives of Europe, had planted many colonies on the Asiatic coast. These colonies, though infinitely superior to the effeminate and luxurious Asiatics in every physical, intellectual, and moral attribute, were altogether unable to re-

sist the overwhelming weight of an empire, which reached from Ethiopia to the Caspian Sea, and from the Indus to the Bosphorus. They were obliged to submit like the rest, and pay an annual tribute to their conquerors, no less to the humiliation and annoyance of the mother country than themselves. The yoke at length became so oppressive that they resolved to throw it off. To effect this they applied to Athens and Sparta for aid. Receiving assistance from these most considerable states of Greece, they rebelled, marched to Sardis, took it, and accidentally set the city on fire, by which it was totally consumed. The loss of this city, the richest in Asia Minor, exasperated Darius, King of Persia, in the highest degree, and kindled in his breast such a flame of resentment that he resolved upon revenge. Lest in his multifarious affairs he should forget the offenders, he appointed officers, whose duty it was each day to repeat to him as he dined, "Sir, remember the Athenians." Resolved to punish these presumptuous republics, which had dared to brave the whole power of the Persian empire, he collected a fleet and army sufficient, as he supposed, to crush so small a country at one blow. After an ineffectual attempt to reach Greece by the circuitous route of Thrace and Macedonia, a second armament was

fitted out of the flower of that army, which had borne conquest on their banners from the Euphrates to the Nile, and transported by sea directly towards the little republic of Athens, able then to send into the field from ten to fifteen thousand men. The Athenians met and vanquished them on the plains of Marathon, leaving six thousand dead on the field. Thus ended the first attempt of Persian despotism upon the liberties of Greece. This may be said to be the first demonstration that was ever given to the world of the benefits of free government. A few ages of absolute political liberty had trained up a race of men such as had never been seen before. Intelligence combined with physical force, thorough discipline and an enthusiastic love of country, for the first time were brought to contend hand to hand with the pampered sons of eastern luxury, and the spiritless automata of a despotic government. The result was what it will ever be. The orientals fell like grass before the swords of the free.

But this defeat, so far from discouraging the conqueror of the Indies, only roused him to mightier efforts. He immediately resolved on invading Greece with a larger army than before; but in the midst of his preparations he fell before a mightier conqueror, and left the inheritance of his kingdom

and his revenge to his son Xerxes, who was destined still further to add to the glory of Greece, though it would seem that this son could have seen, in the providence of God, that man with men combined could not contend with the Almighty. But this youth, succeeding to the mightiest monarchy which the world had ever known, was resolved to signalize his reign by extending still further the boundaries of his hereditary dominions. Asia was not enough to satisfy his boundless ambition. Europe must likewise be subjected to his power. His father's quarrel with the Greeks furnished him with a convenient apology for such enormous injustice. He spent four years in preparation for this great event, and Xerxes then ruled over the most fruitful portion of the globe, and the simple habits of life which then prevailed enabled the earth to sustain some three or four times the number that can be supported in the more costly and luxurious mode which has since been adopted by all civilized nations. He called upon every nation to furnish its quota of troops, or shipments, or provisions from Ethiopia to the Caspian, from the Ægean to the Persian Gulf. Four full years were consumed in making preparation, and all for what? To crush a small nation.

We naturally turn our eyes to Greece, the devoted object of all this expense. There she lies, with her beautiful islands laved by the crystal waters of the Ægean Sea. There is Athens, with her exquisite arts, her literature, and her science, with her constellations of genius just ready to burst upon the world. There was Sparta, less cultivated, but the bulwark of Grecian independence. There was Leonidas, with his three hundred. There, in a little peninsula, lay the intellectual hope of the world, the sole germ of free government for ever and ever. Is this brave and gallant people to be crushed at a blow? Shall the Persian banners float on the hills of subjugated Greece? Is it to be announced at Susa that order reigns in Attica? Is Asiatic despotism to overwhelm, in one long night of oppression, the very dawn of human greatness? In that contest literature had her stake. The very existence of those men was suspended on the issue of this vast enterprise, whose works have been the study and delight of all succeeding time—that whole galaxy of genius, whose clustering radiance has since encircled the earth. The religion of our fathers had much at stake.

Standing now and gazing back upon this epoch of history, we are made to tremble, for the whole

of those nations was given to idolatry. Everywhere is religion, temples, priest; but both priest and people, the noble and the base, the learned and the simple, all alike grope in Cimmerian darkness as to the knowledge of the true God. There is but one exception to this in all the earth—the temple at Jerusalem. We turn our eyes eastward to Palestine, and there we see the temple of the true God just rising from the ruin of seventy years' desolation. Its builders, a feeble company, have just returned from a long captivity. The very language in which their holy oracles were written has become obsolete. Their speech is Chaldean, and their religious teachers are obliged from Sabbath to Sabbath to interpret from a dead language the records of their faith. This may answer for a narrow territory, and for a feeble few, as was at that time, but the world needs light; and how shall the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man unite and carry God's wisdom round the world, so that all may know the living and true God? If Xerxes prevail this can never be. Forbid it, then, freedom! Forbid it, then, religion! Forbid it intellect! Arise, O God, and let thine enemies be scattered, and those that rise up against the liberties of thy people be driven away like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

So Xerxes did not prevail; the soil of Palestine would not bear the tread of a foe to the religion of the true God. The Jewish nature, breathing the invigorating air of freedom, disciplined by science, and animated and enlightened patriotism grows up to a strength, a firmness and courage which hosts of slaves can never subdue, and by which the tenfold cord of oppression is rent asunder like the bands that bound the limbs of Sampson. This army, though it was raised by Xerxes, is under the command of the God of heaven. It is not, it must not, it shall not conquer. It is to teach the Greeks that they are the masters of the world. It invites them to roll back the tide of conquest on Asia and Grecian manners, arts, science, and language into the east. They shall penetrate to our holy land; into their language our holy oracles shall be translated; in their language shall be recorded the words of eternal life, and laden with the priceless treasure that language shall come back to Palestine, bearing light and truth, and salvation to nations and generations yet unborn.

This diffusion of the Greek language took place by means of conquest. Although the action was man's, the ruling was God's; and that it entered into the divine plan of Providence we may know from the fact that it was a subject of pro-

phesy. In a vision of Daniel, in Section 7, in the first year of Darius Hystapus, it is written: "Behold, there shall stand up three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; and by his strength and through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia."

Of this great attempt of Xerxes against Greece I have given account in my last letter. After the retreat of Xerxes into Asia, there was no attempt of the Greeks to make reprisals for many years. Unfortunately they were divided among themselves, and exhausted their energies in mutual destruction. But the ages immediately succeeding the Persian invasion were the most wonderful in intellectual development that the world has ever seen. More great minds were produced within that century than in any other within the recorded history of our race. Providence seems to have kept back that wonderful nation until her intellectual treasure-house was full, and then to have sent her forth conquering and to conquer—not to destroy, but to fertilize the lands she overflowed; not to extinguish civilization by barbarism, but to carry intellectual light to those who were sitting in the regions of ignorance and darkness. Nothing occurred of great interest between the Persians and the Greeks for nearly eighty years. The

Greeks went on to create the most beautiful literature and the profoundest philosophy that human genius has ever produced, and their mutual contentions perfected them in the science and practice of war. At that time a circumstance took place, which gave them a greater practical proof of their superiority over the Persians than even their victories over Xerxes. Cyrus the Younger was sent by his brother Artaxerxes to Asia Minor as the governor of the western provinces. Here he became acquainted with the martial valor of the Greeks, and thought by means of them to march to Susa, and dethrone his brother. For this purpose he collected an army of more than one hundred thousand. Thirteen thousand of them were Greeks, and advanced into the plains of the East. He was there met by his brother with an army of nine hundred thousand, defeated, and left dead on the field. The thirteen thousand Greeks, now reduced to ten thousand, found themselves two thousand miles from the nearest Grecian city where they would be safe, without one day's provisions, in the midst of an enemy's country. Undismayed by this most appalling condition, they commenced their retreat, cut their way through enemies in front, and guarded themselves from foes in the rear. They went over mountains covered with snow,

through forests without inhabitants, and over rivers rapid and deep, and reached their homes in safety. This exploit filled the world with its fame and perhaps more than anything else convinced the Greeks, that, few as they were, they held the destinies of Asia at their disposal. But confederated republics, however efficient for defense, are generally ill-calculated for conquest. It was not till more than forty years after this, when all Greece had been subjected to Philip, king of Macedonia, that the nation turned their eyes to the conquest of the East. Philip had himself elected general-in-chief of all the Greeks for the prosecution of the war with their ancient enemies, the Persians. Just at the moment when the conquerer of Greece was meditating a descent upon the Persian empire, he fell by the hand of an assassin, leaving his kingdom to his son Alexander, a youth of twenty. This happened three hundred and eighty years ago, and may be considered as one of the great epochs of the world.



FOURTH LETTER.

Alexander, by his personal endowments as conqueror and statesman, did more in twelve years to affect the future condition of the world than any

uninspired man that has ever lived. He was in no respect better than his modern rivals, and was animated by no better motive than personal ambition. He was used as an instrument in the hand of God of lasting good to mankind. Endowed with an intellect of unusual power and comprehension, he received an accomplished education from one of the greatest minds that have ever lived. At the age of eighteen he began to mingle business with study, and became a soldier as well as a scholar. At the age of twenty, when summoned to assume the reigns of empire—the sovereign, in fact, of the Greeks—he stood before the world a perfect representative of his nation. He combined their genius and learning with their valor and conduct; and entering Asia with the sword in one hand and the poems of Homer in the other, he became the armed leader of Grecian learning, art, and civilization. Wherever he went, Greece went with him. His conquests were not so much those of Macedonian arms as of Grecian letters. Wherever he went there went with him the genius of Homer, the sublime soul of Plato, and the practical wisdom of Socrates; and not only monarchies sprung up in his path, but schools of philosophy and academies of learning. Entering Asia with an army of thirty-five thousand men, in the space

of twelve years he made himself master of the whole Persian empire, and of many nations which had never been subjected to the Persian yoke. He carried the Grecian language and manners to the Indus, and subjected to his power nearly as large a portion of the human race as there were in existence. His first battle gave him Asia Minor. The second all of Syria to the Euphrates; Egypt, the whole valley of the Nile, surrendered without striking a blow. The third great battle, on the banks of the Euphrates, opened to him the whole of the Asiatic plains to the mountains which bounded the habitations of the Scythian tribes. Wherever he went the Greek language and literature took up their abode, and every city on this side the Euphrates in a few ages became the residence of Greek philosophers, poets, rhetoricians, grammarians, historians, till the whole circuitous shore of the Mediteranean became almost as Grecian as Greece herself. Our beloved Palestine of course came under his sway, and the influence of his career on the fortunes of us Jews was more decisive, perhaps, than upon any other nation, for it was his conquest alone which introduced the Greek language into our holy land. And so much do the most important events turn on the slightest causes, that on the chances of one

life almost daily exposed to destruction by the dangers of war, depended the issue whether the records of the holy oracles should ever be sent to the perishing world through this beautiful language. It has been declared that when the mighty warrior and statesman was approaching Jerusalem, Judua, who was our high-priest at that time, came out to meet him in solemn procession, and that Alexander was so struck by his appearance, that he not only spared the city, but granted to us Jews many favors that he did not show to others, giving as a reason therefor that he had seen the same person in a dream before he left Macedonia, who had assured him of the conquest of the Persian empire.

From Syria he passed on to Egypt, and his conquest of that country had a greater influence upon the future condition of our nation than that upon Judea itself; for on his return from Ethiopia he sailed down the western branch of the Nile, and, with the instinct of genius, fixed upon the site of a city between the lake Mareotis and the sea, which he called after his own name. It sprung up immediately to be one of the most magnificent cities of the world, reigning as a sort of queen of the east, as the mart of commerce and the seat of wealth. To people this city we Jews were in-

vited by the most liberal offers. A large colony was formed, where the Greek language was only used. Hence, it became necessary to have our Scriptures translated into Greek, or we would have lost our knowledge of them altogether. It is said on good authority, that the occasion of translating the Scriptures into the Greek language was the desire of Ptolemy Philadelphus to have a copy to go into the Alexandrian library, which was begun not long after his death. However that might be, such a version we know was made, which is now the standard of the world. It was made about three hundred years ago, and by this translation, our theology has gone to the whole world. Thus we see that divine providence works the nations of the earth like a machine.

Another important factor in God's providence is the rising of the Roman empire. While all these things were transpiring in the east, a nation was rising into notice in the south of Italy destined to exert a more extensive influence upon the world by her arms than Greece did by her learning. About seven hundred and fifty years ago a small band of refugees from the ruins of Troy joined other adventurers, and established themselves on the banks of the Tiber. Their government at first was monarchical. They were poor in resources, temperate

and frugal in their habits, but, either from choice or necessity, warlike from the first. Italy was not then a new nor an uncultivated country. It must have contained states and cities of great wealth, for there are discovered vast receptacles for the dead dating back much earlier than the time of Romulus. These were a nation of soldiers and statesmen, trained from their earliest years to politics and war. Their monarchy lasted about two hundred years. While that continued there was little indication that these Romans were to become the masters of the world. The establishment of a popular government, however, rapidly developed their national characteristics—a love of conquest and military glory. This character once formed, and all honor and promotion coming from the people, none could hope to succeed without bending the whole force of his talents to that object which every citizen had most at heart—the honor of the Roman name, and the extension of their dominions over foreign nations. The senate, composed either of the most distinguished and influential of the citizens, or of those who had made their way through the regular grades of the magistracy to the highest which was known in the State, constituted a body, which, for more than a thousand years, for talent, for weight, for wisdom

and experience, was unrivalled in the history of the world. The Roman from youth to age lived in the eye of his country. To gain the favor of the arbiters of his destiny was his perpetual study and his constant endeavor. Thus from the first, every faculty was put upon the utmost stretch, and nothing was omitted through the whole course of his education which could give him eloquence before the people, valor and conduct in the field, and wisdom in the senate.

The whole nation was a sort of military school. No man could be a candidate for office until he had served his country ten years as a soldier in the camp. The result was, that by thus bending all the powers of human nature in one direction, they excelled all mankind in that art to which they were exclusively devoted. They became a nation of soldiers; and pursuing with steady aim and untiring perseverance, one exclusive object for eight centuries, they naturally became the conquerors of the world. A Roman army was the most terrible object that ever trod the earth, it was a vast human machine contrived for the subjugation of the world, instinct with intelligence, shielded from assault by an almost impenetrable armor, and animated with a courage which was then most at home when in the shock of battle. When we hear of a Roman

camp, we cease to wonder why that nation carried conquest from the sands of Africa to the borders of the world, to the skirts of the Arabian desert. After the age of seventeen, every Roman was liable to be enrolled and sent to the war at any time. When he arrived at the camp he entered on a course of life, in which ease and indulgence were altogether unknown. He commenced a discipline of hardships that is almost incredible, and of which there was no end; and with all this training it took the Romans five hundred years to conquer Italy. It took two hundred more, and they were the masters of the whole earth.

About one hundred years ago the Roman conquest reached our holy land. Pompey the Great, polluted with impious tread the holy of holies, and the Roman legions planted their standard upon the rampart of the temple. About seventy years ago Cæsar subjugated the liberties of his country, putting an end to the republic which had existed four hundred years; and fifty years ago, all the world was given peace. Thus it is that the Grecian letters and Roman arms were founded on the mission of Moses; also the Roman statesman was made quite as subservient to the great plan of providence as the valor of the Roman commanders; for they alone of all nations that ever existed were

able to retain and consolidate their conquests. Their polity, perfected by the experience of ages, greatly alleviated the burden of their yoke, and it is often said that after conquering like savages they ruled like sages; and if it is objected: how can God's providence permit so many minds to come under a rule so hostile to liberty and freedom? To this I reply: the governments destroyed are always worse than the ones set up in their place, though it may not always be seen by man.

FIFTH LETTER.

Man is essentially a human being. He is made so by the faculties of his mind, as well as the emotions of his heart. He is so both by the intellectual and moral nature. One of the first and most spontaneous exercises of the reason of man is the investigation of cause and effect, and one of the first convictions which are developed in the mind is, that there cannot be an effect without a cause. The next is, that the nature of a cause must correspond with the nature of the effect, and can certainly be known by it. It is so in the works of man. When we see an exquisite painting it is impossible for us to doubt its having been the creation of intelligence. When Aristippus was cast on a shore

where there appeared to be no inhabitants, he wandered about until he found some mathematical diagrams traced in the sand. "Courage," said he, "my friend; I find the traces of men." And so I say to the wandering and forsaken Jews of God: Courage; I see the finger of God pointing. Men see in everything the traces of power and wisdom. Nay, we know that we are the effects of superior power and wisdom. Unbelief has not prevailed much in the world, and it has been quite as rare among the heathen as among those who have had a revelation. So much for abstract religious convictions.

Men are led to God by their understanding, and by their moral nature. On the first dawn of his faculties man experiences within him certain moral perceptions. This is right, meritorious, honorable; that is wrong, base, despicable, worthy of punishment. This moral nature he finds exists not only in himself but in others. It is a universal attribute of man. It is not a fortuitous endowment. It is given to man by his Creator as the law of his action. It can come from no other source. But the moral power in man is only the faculty to see them because they exist. Then God sees them and they are realities, and he created both them and us. Our consciousness of

the power to choose between the good and the bad creates within us a sense of responsibility to the being that made us. Connected with this idea of God, which seems to be necessary and universal, is that of a providence, an intelligence which not only made the world but governs it; which therefore knows the past, the present and the future, and which of course observes not only all that is seen by mortal eyes, but likewise all that passes in the human mind. Men have seen that the general course of events is, that vice should be punished, and virtue rewarded; vice, therefore, is regarded by God with displeasure; and as he now punishes it, so he will continue to do. As a good man now and ever must be the subject of his approbation, and as God is infinite in power, the good man will be forever rewarded. Such are the natural convictions of mankind, which result from the operations of his own mind. Such are the convictions of the heathen world. The great men of the old world, poets and philosophers, have entertained such opinions in all time. They all take for granted one superior being, and all others inferior beings that are responsible to him. This is not only the last and highest conclusion of human intellect, but likewise the consenting voice of the most ancient tradition.

But then, even in the best minds the subject was

surrounded with great doubt and difficulties. God himself is an object of none of the senses. It is in vain, therefore, for the human mind to form an idea of the mode of his existence. Not being then a matter of sense or of demonstration, the wisest of men, though he might arrive at the truth, could not be sure that it was true, or that he had done so. Wanting certainty himself, he could not impart certainty to others. He could not propagate his doctrine with confidence. The wisest of men, therefore; wanted that authority which was requisite even for the propagation of the truth. They wanted certainty for themselves, and authority for others. Now certainty and authority are the very things which are necessary to make a religion powerful in the world. While religion, therefore, was in the hands of the philosophers, (that is the thinkers) it effected next to nothing in guiding and restraining mankind, it being merely a matter of opinion, that is, of dim probability. One man felt that he had just as good a right to his opinion as another. One philosopher differed from another, and thus weakened the authority of the opinions of both. A religion, therefore, in the true sense of the word—that is, one that shall take hold of the faith and control the conduct of mankind—must have certainty and authority. Neither of these can be ob-

tained without revelation inspiration and miracles. Had Moses himself received no divine aid, either from inspiration or miracles, even if he had uttered the same truths and laid down the same precepts, he would have accomplished nothing in the world. His doctrines would have rested for evidence on his own reason, and his precepts upon his own personal character and influence. Another man of equal wisdom and the same weight of character might have overthrown what he had built up. Besides, his manner would have been entirely different. No man can inspire confidence in others who has not confidence in himself. No man in high religious matters can have full confidence in himself without conscious divine inspiration. It was reasonable, therefore, in him, when sent by God into Egypt to bring out his enslaved brethren, to demand miraculous credentials; and without them he could neither have brought them out, nor established among them the religion he was commissioned to teach. This distinction was perceived by the people, though the reason upon which it was founded was beyond their comprehension. The difference arose from the difference between knowledge and opinion. One is necessarily proposed with diffidence; the other with confidence, which no one uninspired can counterfeit. Those who knew

best about these among the heathen had no means of guiding the multitude. But then mankind must have a religion. The understanding demands it, and the heart craves it. It is not with the multitude as with the philosophers; a matter of quiet contemplation. They must act as well as think and feel. The sentiments of the heart demand expression, and expression they will have, through the actions of the hands, and through the words of the mouth. Occasions were continually occurring, demanding immediate action. Some public calamity bowed down the hearts of thousands, and seemed to indicate the wrath of superior powers. Those powers must be supplicated and appeased. Who shall contrive the rite? Not the wisest, but the man of the greatest boldness and readiness of invention. Once established, proscription took the place of reason, and habit consecrated that which was at first wanting in propriety.

Then again, religion has much to do with imagination. Everything relating to God is invisible. There is nothing positively to determine and fix our ideas; but in pure spirituality our imaginations find no play, nothing to lay hold of. Still, it is impossible to keep them quiet, even in our most solemn devotions, and perhaps it has been found absolutely impossible for the most spiritual man

altogether to separate the idea of corporeity from God. How much more impossible, then, must it have been for the uninstructed heathen, with the best intentions? Therefore, there must have been diversities and great imperfection in heathen opinions and heathen worship. Such we find to have been the fact. Certain of the existence of a God, yet uncertain of the mode of his existence, it was natural that the human mind should run into a thousand vagaries and a thousand errors. It was natural that mankind should fancy that they had found God in those parts of the material universe where his attributes are most displayed. Hence, the most ancient species of idolatry is said to have been that which deified the heavenly bodies, the sun and moon and the host of heaven. The sun is perhaps the brightest emblem of God, except the human soul. To us he is in fact the mightiest instrument, as it were the right hand of the benignity of the Most High. He riseth, and the shadows of night flee away. Joy and beauty go forth to meet him in the morning. At his call universal life riseth as it were from a universal death. He draweth aside the curtains of darkness, and saith unto man, Come forth! He shineth, and the face of nature is glad. He hideth his face, and all things mourn. He withdraweth from the western

sky, and darkness resumes her ancient dominion, and all things seem to wait his return. The soul itself as it were deprived of its support, gradually loses its energies, and sinks into a profound repose. What wonder, then, that in the native ignorance of mankind of the true nature of God, the wise should have worshiped the sun as the fittest emblem of God, and the ignorant as God himself. Such was probably the idolatry of the nations from among whom Abraham was called to the worship of the true God. Such was the worship of the Chaldeans and Egyptians. It is a record of the talmud that Abraham, when returning from the grotto, where he was borne to the city of Babylon, gazed on a certain star. "Behold," said he, "the God, the Lord of the universe." But as he gazed the star sank away and was gone, and Abraham felt that the Lord was unchangeable and he was deceived. Again, the full moon appeared, and he said, "This is our God;" but the moon withdrew and he was deceived. All the rest of the night he spent in profound meditation. At sunrise he stood before the gates of Babylon, and saw all the people prostrate before the rising sun. "Wondrous orb," he exclaimed, "thou surely art the creator and ruler of nature, but thou, like the rest, hasteneth away, so the creator is somewhere else." How much more

sublime as well as rational the doctrine which he originated and the sentiments which were afterwards expressed by one of his followers, which make these glorious orbs only the manifestations of something far more glorious than they themselves.

One great source of corruption was the priesthood. It seems natural that men should be chosen to conduct religious service. They became better acquainted with these rites than others, and are more sacred by the power of association which renders their ministration more satisfactory, and of course more profitable, to those in whose behalf they perform sacred offices. A priesthood seemed to be so necessary, but there is nothing more dangerous to a nation than to have a priesthood that is governed by the political parties of the nation, as was done by all nations except our own. Here the priest was governed by the laws of Moses, and it was impossible for the priest or any body else to change them. It is to be attributed to these heathen priests that idolatry is so common. Go down into Egypt, and you find men worshipping an ox. Cats and crocodiles occupy the places of the inferior gods, and are worshiped by the poor. Thus in all nations except our own, this dreadful state of idolatry prevails. The idolatry of Greece is no better. Athens is full of statues erected to imaginary gods. Her superstition is not only

bigoted but bloody. It was there that Socrates suffered death merely on suspicion of maintaining opinions subversive of the popular faith.

SIXTH LETTER.

The end of all religion as a positive institution is to enlighten the understanding and cultivate the devotions. The mind must think, and the heart must worship. So it must be through life. The cares of the world are continually effacing religious impressions, and truths once clearly seen and vividly felt by lapse of time wax dim and lose the influence of present realities. The soul, moreover, feels the want of support and the guidance of religion at all times. Every day the soul experiences the need of communion with God. It is as necessary as our daily food. Therefore, all religion has its sacred rites, by which the heart speaks to God and God communicates to the heart. So do all religions have some mode of training the mind and moving the affections, of taking hold of the memory and perpetuating themselves. This is derived from an innate consciousness. If God should extinguish all the lights of the world and blind every human eye, religion would be just the same.

But these outward institutions must all be adapted to the present condition of man. Religion can only use those instruments which are furnished to hand. In the absence of writing it must use ceremonies and forms, which have a conventional meaning, and thus come to be symbolic of certain truths. Thus, our patriarchal religion consisted almost entirely of prayer and sacrifice. The Mosaic religion, which came after the invention of letters, added to prayer and sacrifice a written code of duty, a formal declaration of truths and principles, which lay at the foundation of the whole institution. The patriarchal element was still strong and predominant in all our Church, yet there was no express mode of religious instruction. This was enjoined on the heads of families: "And these words which I command thee this day, thou shalt teach them to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house." And as the written laws were scarce and hard to get, it was said: "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house and upon thy gates." Then the Levites were to stand and say with a loud voice: "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven image; and all the people shall hold up

their hands and say amen ;” and thus he went through the whole law. Then, at the annual meeting upon the mountains at new moon all the people met and held up their hands and cried amen. Thus it is evident that devotion predominated over instruction ; the cultivation of the heart was made more prominent than that of the understanding. But in the Hebrew commonwealth Church and state were closely amalgamated. The code of Moses prescribed a like religious and civil duty. The Levites, of course, were the judges and magistrates, as well as the religious teachers of the people. But as books were scarce, we find in the third year of the reign of Jehoshaphat that he sent princes and Levites to teach the people, and they took the book of the law and went through all the cities of Judea and taught the people the law of the Lord.

This same thing was carried out in all the Jewish life. Our tabernacle in the wilderness, and afterwards in the holy land, was intended as a perpetual memorial of God, and a symbol of his presence. It called the people off from idolatry, and reminded them that their worship was to be directed to Jehovah alone. Its services, and those afterwards of the temple were perpetually renewed every morning and every evening, that no pious

Israelite should ever feel that the duties of adoration and gratitude could be omitted for a single day. The morning and evening sacrifice, we have every reason to believe, were to the religiously disposed an essential aid to devotion through the many centuries of the continuance of that imposing rite. Then, if we transfer these imposing ceremonies to the temple, this godly house was the rallying point of our political power, the consecrated seat of our religion, and the heart of our national affections. It was built by Solomon more than a thousand years ago. It was built on Mount Moriah, in the southeastern part of Jerusalem. It was built for worship alone. It was intended as a place for national worship. It consisted of four enclosures, one within another on three sides, but having a common wall on the fourth. Only one of these was covered with a roof in our sense of the term, and that was the last or innermost inclosure—the holy of holies, containing the ark, the cherubim, and the mercy seat. The outer enclosure, into which all nations were permitted to enter, was very large. The second was the court of women—so-called, not because none but women was permitted to enter there, but because they were permitted to go no further. Within this was the court of Israel, which again surrounded on

three sides that of the priests, where was the great altar, upon which the daily sacrifice was offered, morning and evening.

Oh, these sacred ordinances. How can the world do without them? It seems that the world could do as well without the light of the sun, as well without food to eat or water to drink, as to do without these doctrines and teachings of the Jews. But they are all gone. The city, the temple, the doctrine, the priest, the law, and the nation, are all gone. Is it so that God has become tired of his own appointments? or does he see a defect in his own ways, or has he become dissatisfied with his own covenant made to our fathers and to their children?

I write you these letters, my beloved countrymen, asking you to look at these things, and find out the cause of our abandonment. Is it the cause that sent our fathers into Egypt? or is it caused by the same thing that sent them into Babylon? Let us look and find out the cause, so that we may seek a remedy. And let us not forget the morning and evening sacrifice. Let us turn our faces towards that holy temple and pray. Although it is not in existence in fact, yet it lives in each of our hearts, and shall ever live. Though we may be thousands of miles away, and be sold into bondage,

and bound in chains, yet we will not, we cannot, forget our land, our religion, and our God. He is the God of Abraham, and still is merciful, and will remember his promises and keep his covenant made with our fathers. And so shall I abide.

SEVENTH LETTER.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE JEWS.

NOT only was the expectation of a remarkable personage universally prevalent among the Jews at the appearance of Christ, but the phraseology was already in use which designated what he was to be and accomplish. There was at the time of Christ a Messianic phraseology derived from different parts of the Old Testament, which embodied and expressed all their anticipations. Whatever inspiration accompanied the first composition of the prophecies, there was evidently none in their interpretation. This much was certain, that there was to be a Messiah, there was to be a new dispensation. No one knew precisely what he was to be. Imagination of course was set to work, and each one for himself formed his own, and made whatever passage of the Old Testament he

chose, to be descriptive of his person and office. Not only the imagination, but the passions were concerned in the formation of their expectations. The pious thought of him as a religious reformer, and the new state of things to be a condition of higher religious perfection. The Rabbins interpreted concerning the days of the Messiah such passages as this from the thirty-first chapter of Isaiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they all shall know me, from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more." This seems to have been the expectation entertained by the Samaritans, if the woman with whom Christ talked at the well of Jacob is to be

considered as speaking the sentiments of the nation.

The universal expectation seems to have been, that he was to be a prophet like unto Moses, but greater. In accordance with this sentiment, Peter in one of his first discourses after the resurrection of Jesus, cites the promise of Moses to the Israelites, just before his death, as applicable to Christ. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." These were the sentiments of those who had seen the miracle of feeding the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, bearing so strong a resemblance to the feeding of the Israelites in the desert. "Then those men when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.'"

Another and much larger class gave the Messianic prophecies a more worldly meaning. The Great Personage whose coming they shortly expected was to be a king, but greater than any who had sat upon the Jewish throne. It was with this expectation evidently that his disciples followed

him through his whole ministry. And even after his resurrection they seem for awhile to have entertained the same hopes. One of the first questions which they asked him after he rose was: "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And at the last supper they disputed "which of them should be the greatest," that is, who should be highest in office in the new kingdom that he was about to set up. It was with this idea that he was hailed by the multitude into Jerusalem with the shout, "Hosanna to the son of David." This was the idea which Nathaniel meant to express when he said, on receiving the evidence that he was a prophet: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." That it was his temporal character to which Nathaniel here referred, we have sufficient evidence in the information which first directed his attention to Jesus. "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The part of the Old Testament, from which this title and expectation were taken, was principally the second Psalm. The person described in this poem is represented as exalted by God to be a king on Mount Zion in Judea. The surrounding heathen are represented as being enraged. But God has nevertheless

determined that he shall reign ; and as a king sets his son upon his throne while he yet lives, so has God, as supreme king of Israel, exalted this person to share his authority, and pledges his own power to support his throne. One idea of the kingdom of the Messiah, derived from this Psalm, was, that he was not only to reign over the Jews, but destroy all other nations.

“ Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me. Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

This Psalm was interpreted by the Jews almost universally of the Messiah, and the more readily

as the title Anointed is translated in the Septuagint *Christos*, so that it there reads "against the Lord and against his Christ." The Messiah therefore was to reign in Mount Zion, one of the mountains on which Jerusalem was built, and reign over the Jews, and by God's assistance subdue the heathen by war and conquest, break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel. Such was the kingdom which the great majority of the Jews expected their Messiah to set up.

The phrase, "kingdom of heaven," is taken from the second chapter of the Book of Daniel. After foretelling that there should arise four great monarchies, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, the last of which should be a kingdom of iron, he goes on to say, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." In another passage: "I saw in the night vision, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should

serve him, his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." From this last passage was probably derived the opinion once glanced at, that the Messiah should never die. Jesus said on a certain occasion, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The people answered him, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou the Son of Man must be lifted up. Who is this Son of Man?" The new dispensation under the figure of a kingdom was the subject of the commencing petition of one of the chief prayers recited in their synagogues, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and had been so for ages. There was a time specified in the Book of Daniel of seventy weeks, which was to intervene between the building the second temple and the times of the Messiah, which, interpreting according to the prophetic style, a day for a year, would bring the period of his appearance some where near this time, at which John the Baptist began to preach.

So prevalent had this expectation become that it had spread beyond the Holy Land. Tacitus, a historian who wrote in Italy, records the fact, that among many "there was a persuasion, that in the ancient books of the priesthood it was written, that

at this precise time the East should become mighty, and that those issuing from Judea should rule the world." Suetonius, another Latin historian writes, "that in the East an ancient and constant opinion prevailed, that it was fated there should issue at this time from Judea those who should obtain universal dominion."

This confident expectation of the Jews had already caused no little political disturbance. It was this proud anticipation of universal conquest, which made them so restive under the government of the Romans. That they, who were destined to reign over the world, and whose King Messiah was to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, were to break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, should be in vassalage to a foreign power, was more than they could bear. Josephus relates that about the time of the birth of Christ, when Cyrenius was sent to take a census of Judea, Judas, a native of Gamala in Galilee, rose up, and resisted the Roman commissioner, and raised a great rebellion. He is mentioned likewise by Gamaliel, in his speech before the Jewish Sanhedrin, when the apostles were brought before them for preaching Jesus as the Messiah immediately after his ascension. "After this man rose

up Judas of Galilee, in the days of taxing, and drew away much people after him ; he also perished, and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." Josephus speaks generally of the troubles of those times, without specifying their causes. "And now Judea was full of robberies, and as the several companies of the seditious would light upon any one to head them, he was created a king immediately, in order to do mischief to the public." This was exactly the state of the country during the ministry of Jesus, and it explains his caution in proclaiming himself the Messiah, and his withdrawal as soon as a multitude collected about him and manifested any tendency to sedition or disturbance. It is recorded of him that after the miracle of feeding the five thousand, and the declaration made concerning him: "This of a truth is that prophet that should come into the world." "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, and make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." In another instance likewise, when he had healed the man at the pool of Bethesda: "And he that was healed wist not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place."

Such being the expectation of the Jews, as we

learn, from profane history, a man of singular habits and appearance began to preach in a retired part of Judea, where there were but few large towns, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This man was of the sacerdotal tribe, and had been consecrated to God from his infancy by the vow of the Nazarite. His habits and dress were those of a hermit, his food such as he could pick up in the fields and woods. He was literally the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." He professed to have been moved by divine impulse to proclaim the immediate approach of the Messiah. A man of such singular appearance, and being such an important message, produced a great sensation, and excited the strongest curiosity. Crowds from all parts of Judea flocked together to see and hear him. Some thought that he was the Messiah. His fame soon reached Jerusalem, and the Jewish authorities sent a deputation of priests and Levites to him to enquire who he was. He told them that he was not the Messiah, but was sent to introduce him. "I come to point him out to Israel." Here was undoubtedly stated the true reason why he was raised up by Divine Providence, to prepare the Jewish mind for the great message from God

which they were about to receive, to shape their ideas from the crude mass of traditions which had existed among them into some resemblance to the dispensation that the Messiah was about to establish. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness, that all men through him might believe. He was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness of the Light."

The effect of his preaching was precisely what was intended. He produced a strong impression upon the public mind, and though he wrought no miracle, all men held him to be a prophet. He presented a strong contrast, and probably by design, to the pretenders to a divine mission, who appeared about that time. It was on this account that the multitudes which gathered about him created no uneasiness in the public authorities. A man, like John, who clothed himself in the coarsest attire, in a country where the higher classes were studious of ornament, and all who had any pretensions to official dignity were distinguished by gorgeous apparel, would naturally escape all suspicion of political ambition. A religious teacher evidently sincere and pious, and withal free from fanaticism and enthusiasm, after the cessation of prophecy for four hundred years, must have pro-

duced a great impression. He must have recalled to the minds of his countrymen the days when Elijah in a like simplicity and grave austerity stood up as a prophet of God, and the champion of religion. Some, indeed, mistook him for Elijah risen from the dead, who their traditions affirmed was to come to anoint and inaugurate the Messiah. The almost simultaneous appearance of the Light, and the witness to the Light, without any concert or collusion, was a strong testimony to the divine mission of both. With this argument alone, Jesus silenced on one occasion those who called his claim to be the Messiah in question. "The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or of men? They reasoned among themselves, saying: If we say of heaven, then he will say: Why then did ye not believe him," and of course, believe on him to whom he bare witness? "But if we say of men, the people will stone us, for all counted John as a prophet." It does not appear that John had any particular person in his mind when he commenced his mission, but was merely informed by God who sent him to preach, that the Messiah should be pointed out to him by some miraculous appearance. He had known him before as a person of great piety and excellence, for when he came to him to be baptized, John says to him, "I have

need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But as the Messiah he had no knowledge of him, for he testifies, "I knew him not," that is, as the Messiah, "but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he that shall baptize with the Holy Ghost."

John collected around him a company of disciples whom he instructed in the things of religion, and many of them seem to have remained with him after he was cast into prison, till he was beheaded by Herod.

We have reason to conclude, I think, that his teaching shadowed forth, though imperfectly, the general system of Christianity. Jesus says of him, "that among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist," and they bear a strong resemblance to the opening discourses of Christ. "And the people said unto him; What shall we do then? He answered and said unto them; He that hath two coats, let him impart unto him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." "Then came the tax-gatherers to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them; exact no more than is appointed

you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying: And what shall we do? And he said unto them; Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.”

That John preached the essential doctrines of Christianity would appear from what we read “And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born in Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, whom when Aquilla and Priscilla had heard they took him unto them, and expounded to him the way of the Lord more perfectly.” In the nineteenth chapter; “And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John’s baptism.” Now here are two cases, in which those who had heard nothing but the doctrine of John, are said to

have been Christians, to have been taught the things of the Lord, and to have been disciples. It follows then, of course, that John the Baptist taught the essential truths of Christianity. The object of the gospels being to record the teaching of Jesus, that of John is passed over in a very cursory manner. But that he taught often and much, as well as prophesied the coming of the Messiah, we have every reason to believe. His disciples, however, mingled some of the old forms with their new doctrines, for they fasted often, an observance which Jesus declared agreed no better with the new religion, than a piece of new cloth with an old garment, or new wine with old bottles.

The mind of John Baptist furnishes a remarkable example, which we often meet with, of partial divine illumination, the clearest knowledge on some points, and absolute ignorance on others. By the light of inspiration he shadowed forth in few words the nature of the kingdom of heaven, whose approach he foretold, and showed it to be something entirely different from the expectation of the Jews, handed down from remote ages—yet of its details his ideas seem to have been vague, and he appears to have had no certain knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, though he had baptized him and re-

ceived the heavenly sign of which he had been forewarned.

One truth which he announced bears evident marks of supernatural origin,—since it contradicted the conceptions and prejudices of the age,—that the Messiah and his kingdom were not to be national, not belonging of right and exclusively to the posterity of Abraham alone. There is a maxim, as common as the very letters of the alphabet, in the writings of the Rabbins, that “There is a part for all Israel in the world to come,” that is, in the kingdom of Messiah, merely by virtue of their descent from Abraham. That it was to be a kingdom selected from Israel, and other nations, a new community by no means co-extensive with the seed of Abraham, they had not the slightest idea. That it was to be a moral and a spiritual kingdom was as far from their conceptions. “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance. And say not, we have Abraham for our father, for God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.” Think not that you are to belong to the kingdom of God merely because you are descended from Abraham. God is able to raise up children to Abraham from a source now as improbable to you as the stones beneath your feet, from among

the Gentiles even, whom you are accustomed to call dogs, and count as the offscouring of the earth. A discrimination is about to take place, not between the children of Abraham and other nations, but between the good and the bad even among the Jews themselves. "The axe lieth at the root of all the trees. Every tree therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." He shall raise those who obey him to a higher degree of spiritual knowledge, perfection, and power, and punish those who disobey him with the severest suffering. "Whose winnowing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his grain, and gather the wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." This is the same idea expressed in stronger language, the meaning of which is this, The Messiah's kingdom is not as you Jews expect, to comprehend the good and the bad, merely because they are the descendants of Abraham, but is to embrace the good only, who are to be gathered into a separate community, while the bad are to be abandoned to the destruction which their

own wickèd courses will inevitably bring upon them.

He not only preached the kingdom of God, as a separate society, distinct from the Jewish nation, but he actually began to set it up. The baptism, which he instituted, was no idle, unmeaning form, nor did it signify simply a profession of repentance, but it began and founded a new community. Those who received it professed not only repentance as necessary to prepare them for the kingdom of the Messiah, now shortly expected to appear, but a readiness to believe on and obey him whenever he should evidently make himself known. "The law and the prophets," says Christ, "were until John. Since that the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." The baptism of John and that of Jesus were essentially the same, one into a profession of belief in the Messiah yet to come, and the other into a profession of belief in the Messiah already come.

Thus John's baptism began to do, what his words began to predict, to separate the righteous from the wicked, to prepare the righteous for eternal life, and leave the wicked to the consequences of their sins; began to establish the kingdom of God, whose initiatory rite was baptism, just as circumcision was the initiatory rite of God's ancient

Church. Thus the kingdom of God came not with observation. While men were saying, "Lo here, and lo there," the kingdom of God was in the midst of them. But after all this knowledge of the nature of the kingdom, or Christianity, which was possessed by John the Baptist, and after baptizing Jesus with his own hands, and receiving the Divine testimony of which he had been forewarned, so possessed was he with Jewish prejudices, of the temporal splendor and power of the Messiah, and so discouraged by his long imprisonment, that he sent two of his disciples to enquire if he were actually the Messiah. Jesus sent them back to tell all they saw and heard, and to leave him to form his own judgment, adding what throws light on the reasons of John's doubts: "Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me;" who does not consider the lowliness of my appearance incompatible with the loftiness of my pretensions.

This good and holy man, having lived just long enough to see the rising twilight of the new dispensation for which he was sent to prepare the way, fell a victim to the intrigues and revenge of a wicked woman. Herodias, the wife of one of the sons of Herod the Great, accompanying her husband to Rome, there became acquainted with Herod the tetrarch of Perea, and after her return

to Judea she abandoned her husband, and with her daughter Salome went to live with him, in open defiance of the laws of God and man. John, the intrepid prophet of righteousness, reproved such flagrant iniquity in high places, and said to the royal transgressor; "It is not lawful for thee to have her." For this bold testimony for righteousness he was sent to the castle Machærus, on the confines of Palestine and Arabia. But the sleepless revenge of Herodias followed him even there, and he died, as is well known, a martyr to the truth.

Thus perished John the Baptist, the morning star of Christianity, and his dying eyes caught scarcely a glimpse of the glory that was to be revealed.

There is no subject which literature approaches with such diffidence as the personal character and history of Christ. There is no theme on which language is found so inadequate and imperfect. A person in human form, with every attribute of humanity, except sin, exhibiting perfect goodness in combination with infallible wisdom, clothed with extensive power over physical nature, and a knowledge of futurity at once extensive and circumstantial; the declared end and object of a train of miraculous interpositions running back to the very

foundation of the world, himself the beginning and cause of a new order of things, embracing the whole world and all succeeding times ; his doctrines destined to sway the minds of the millions of the human race, to form their opinions, to mould their characters, to shape their expectations, to reign in their minds and judge their actions, to convict and purify their consciences, to cleanse them from sin, and prepare them for his own society and the presence of God in the spiritual world,—worthily to speak of such a Being is a task before which I confess that my speech falters, and my vocabulary seems meagre and inadequate.

This difficulty remains, whatever view we adopt of his metaphysical rank in the universe. From the hoarse controversy as to the nature of Christ, so early raised and which more than any other cause, has disturbed its harmony, I am most happy to escape. That belongs to the history of opinions, and volumes on volumes would not contain their endless diversity. What men have thought of the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and what he actually was, and did, and taught, and brought to pass, are two things entirely distinct. The former is a matter of mere speculation, the latter embraces all that is necessary.

We read of Jesus, that immediately after his

baptism and inauguration by John, directed by Divine impulse he retired into solitude, where he passed forty days, in preparation, doubtless, for the great work in which he was about to engage. From this solitary sojourn, he returned filled with the spirit, with that measure of wisdom, and knowledge, and power, which was necessary for his mission to mankind. From that forty days' retirement he came back to the world with a scheme of religion entirely new. It differed from every thing that had gone before in being spiritual and universal. Its plan was perfect at first. It was not to grow up, and take such a form as circumstances might dictate ; but with a plastic power, like that of the Divine Mind itself, it was to transform and mould all things according to its unalterable purpose. It is with reference to this fulness of knowledge, by which he was exalted not only above all the prophets which went before him, but all those whom he used as instruments in propagating and establishing his religion, that it is said of him, that "God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The divine plan being thus communicated to the mind of Christ, it was necessary that he should have the power of carrying it into effect. Having received this Di-

vine commission, it was necessary that it should be authenticated. The plan was Divine, but such were the ignorance and blindness of mankind, that it is not at all probable that the world would have recognized and embraced it as Divine, had it not been authenticated by miracles. Mankind, particularly in rude ages, want not only truth but authority; not only truth but the certainty that it is truth; or not being embraced with sufficient confidence, it will do them no good. Jesus returned from his forty days' seclusion, possessed of supernatural wisdom, which guarded him from all mistake, and enabled him in all circumstances to say and to do the thing which his present condition required; he came with miraculous knowledge, of the manner, for instance, and circumstances of his death, the success of his religion, and the spiritual power to which he was to be exalted. He came with supernatural control over the order of nature, such as is most striking to the unsophisticated understandings of mankind, to persuade them of the connexion of its possessor with God. His touch healed the sick, his will changed the elements, his command stilled the tempest, his voice raised the dead. But what was quite as striking to those with whom he associated, he could read men's most secret thoughts, and tell

them the transactions of their past lives, and foresee what they were hereafter to do.

But the system, though perfect in itself, existed nowhere but in his own mind. How was it to be introduced? The human mind was not a blank on which might be written the institutions and principles of the new religion. It was already pre-occupied. What was already there could not be annihilated or effaced. How could the new be made to supersede the old? It could not be done at once. It could only be done by degrees, by engrafting the new upon the old, where it was practicable, and by infusing into the current of language and thought, new principles, which might insensibly color the whole mass, thus superseding rather than destroying what was already in existence.

The Jewish religion was already in being, as the stock upon which to engraft his own. He himself was expected, but in another character from what he could assume. The whole phraseology was in use, which designated what he was to accomplish. What would the highest wisdom have dictated to him to do? What does the man who has a house to build, but has an old one already on the spot? Does he begin by giving it to the flames, or by throwing it all aside? No! He selects from it

whatever is sound and incorporates it with the new building.

This was precisely what Jesus did with regard to the religion of the Jews, and the expectations and phraseology which were then in existence as to the Messiah and the new dispensation. To have rejected them would have made the task of introducing the new religion much more difficult. The only course which wisdom could direct, was, to adopt the existing phraseology, and give it such a sense as would correspond with his real character and office. The Jews were accustomed to call the Messiah the "Son of Man," from the vision of Daniel, in which he saw one like "the Son of Man," invested with great power and dignity. He was likewise called the "Son of God" from the second Psalm. These appellations he assumed, and by assuming them, claimed all that belonged to the Messiah. The Messiah was expected as a king, and the new dispensation as a kingdom. This was not literally a fact, but was spiritually true in a sense transcending the most exalted conceptions of the most bigoted and ambitious Jew. Nor ought it to militate against this view of things, that it may seem to be inconsistent with perfect candor and fair dealing. No language that he could have used would have given them a clear

conception of Christianity, as it actually was to be. Their own phraseology of a kingdom would come as near as any that he could adopt. What it was to be, time only could develop. We, who know what it is, acquiesce in the propriety of his use of the Messianic language, as it then existed, giving it at the same time such an interpretation as made it the symbolic expression of the highest spiritual truth.

To exemplify the principles I have laid down, to show the wisdom, the miraculous knowledge of Jesus, the full understanding that he had of the whole system from the beginning, and the manner in which he insinuated the glorious and eternal truths of Christianity through the Messianic phraseology of that time, I shall proceed to analyze some of his first discourses.

The ministry of Jesus began in Galilee, but at what time of the year we are not informed. Of his first tour through that country, in which he attended the marriage feast at Cana, we have only a general notice. Of his discourses nothing now remains but their commencing sentence: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." Multitudes soon gathered around him, and his fame spread throughout all Syria.

His first recorded discourse is that which he held

with Nicodemus at Jerusalem, at the first passover which occurred after the commencement of his ministry. This conversation introduces us to one of the most interesting scenes of the New Testament. It presents us a practical proof of that miraculous wisdom with which Christ was endowed, which made him equally at home with the learned, acute, and experienced member of the Jewish senate at Jerusalem, and the humble, simple peasants and fishermen of Galilee.

“And it came to pass, when he was in Jerusalem, at the Passover on the feast day, many believed on his name when they saw the miracles that he did.” “Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth whither it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” Spiritual birth, true religion, is not confined, as you Jews suppose, to one tribe or family. It is as free as air, and the kingdom of God, which you expect to be a national thing, will spread over the earth as that does, without any regard to the boundaries of nations and kindreds. Its empire is the soul, every where free, every where capable of receiving it, not more in those whose material bodies have descended from Abraham than those who

have never heard of his name. If you really desire then to enter into the kingdom of God, to be my disciple, come not here by night, go openly and be baptized. Be a Christian, not outwardly alone, but inwardly; hear my doctrines, receive my spirit, and trust no more to your descent from Abraham. In the course of the conversation he glances at two other facts no less offensive to the Jewish prejudices of Nicodemus, the crucifixion of the Messiah, and the extension of his kingdom to the Gentiles. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world," not to destroy the nations, as you Jews suppose, "but that through him the world might be saved."

Such was the transcendent wisdom of the Savior, from the very commencement of his mission. Before the wisdom of this youthful teacher, learning and age and experience were overborn and subdued, and Nicodemus must have retired convinced no less by his discourses than his miracles, that he was a teacher come from God.

Soon after this conversation, Jesus returned into Galilee, and passing through Samaria, held that remarkable discourse with the woman of Samaria

at the well of Jacob, which I have noticed in a former lecture. On his arrival at Nazareth, his previous residence, he attempted to preach in the synagogue where he had been accustomed to worship. The people listened to the first part of his discourse with pleasure and admiration, though, according to a strong propensity of human nature, they were disposed to sneer at him as the son of a carpenter. At the first hint however, of the doctrine that the new dispensation was not to be a national religion, but to be extended to Gentile as well as Jew, they became violently enraged. They might have been led to suspect that he was not altogether sound in the national faith of a Messiah who was to destroy the heathen, from his manner of quoting that striking passage of Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bound, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;"—here he stopped. The rest of the sentence is, "and the day of vengeance of our God." Had he quoted the rest of this passage without explanation, as applicable to himself, they would have understood him to sanction their expectation that he was to destroy

and not to save the other nations of the earth, and cried out perhaps, Hosanna to the son of David. But not only did he pass over this most important part of their Messianic traditions, so comforting to them under their present political oppression, but he went on to intimate that the heathen were not only to be spared, but to be admitted into the kingdom of the Messiah. "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, but unto none of them was Elias sent save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them were cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian." This was too much. A Messiah who could tolerate, or look favorably upon the heathen, was not to be endured. "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way, and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days."

The fame of his miracles and his doctrines went on to increase, till the synagogues became too small to contain the crowds who resorted to hear

him. He began, therefore, to teach them in the open air. Once he preached to them from a ship, while they stood on the shore ; once from a rising ground, that his voice might be better heard by so vast a multitude. His discourse on this occasion is denominated from the place where it was delivered, the Sermon on the Mount. Let us examine its contents, and mark the wonderful wisdom which it displays, wrapping up eternal truths in language precisely adapted to present circumstances ; so that the Jew, when he heard it, was cured of his errors, and the Christian to all time finds himself edified, as if it had been addressed to him alone. In that vast multitude, which was assembled from all parts of Judea, there were, it is probable, men of all the different sentiments which were cherished by the Jewish people at that period, uniting in but one common sentiment, that the Messiah should be a temporal deliverer, should cleanse Jerusalem and the Holy Land of the Roman standards which were perched on every tower, and redeem the people of God from the degrading tribute they were yearly compelled to pay. They were ready to take up arms in the holy cause of patriotism and religion. They wanted but the signal of his hand to take up their line of march to the city of David, and there they supposed that he would stand highest in the

new monarchy, whose sword had drank most freely of the blood of the slain. They collected about him with hearts bursting with national pride and ambition. What must have been their astonishment and disappointment when the first sentence fell from his lips, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of God, which you have been so long expecting, is not an empire of war and conquest, nor is it that of the Jews, to be exercised over foreign nations. It belongs to the humble, the quiet, the contented. It does not come as a cure for outward misfortunes, for political evils, for the relief of proud hearts rankling under oppression, but it speaks comfort to those who are bowed down under the sorrows of life: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." You expect the Messiah to vindicate the weak against the strong, to repel injury, to revenge insult,—that he will set up his empire with the sword and defend it by the sword. "But I say unto you, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The gentle are those who are to flourish in the days of the Messiah. They shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. You come to me expecting a sign from heaven, to be fed with manna from the skies, as your fathers were in the

desert. I can promise you nothing of the kind. The blessings of my kingdom belong to those only who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. You expect under the Messiah a reign of bitterness and vengeance, that he will rule with a rod of iron, and dash his enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. But I come to pronounce blessings on the merciful, for I assure them that they shall find mercy from their eternal Judge. You, who observe the laws of Moses, submit to innumerable ceremonial ablutions, and therefore imagine yourselves pure and prepared for the kingdom of God. I assure you that no such purification will be of any avail in that kingdom; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The remedies which you propose for mortal ills are essentially defective. You imagine that they can be cured by violence and resentment, that evil may be remedied by evil, instead of being overcome with good. But I say unto you, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." They shall share the blessings of the new dispensation, not who are vindictive and resentful, but "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake."

The new religion, which Jesus was sent to teach, was not only to be preached by himself to that

generation, but to be perpetuated to all time. His own ministry he knew was to be short, and to have a tragical end. It could be perpetuated in no other way than by choosing assistants while he lived, and training them to take up the work where he laid it down, to receive the Gospel from his lips, proclaim it to the world, and when their days should be numbered, commit it to others, who should be prepared in their turn, to instruct a new generation, and thus send it down to all future times. Had there been no organization of this kind, had Jesus chosen no Apostles, Christianity would have perished on the very threshold of its existence. Accordingly, not long after the commencement of his mission, after a night of prayer to God, doubtless for Divine guidance and direction, he chose twelve men of his more immediate followers, and ordained them as his assistants and successors in the propagation of the new faith. To them he explained more fully the principles of his religion, which to the multitude, for fear of popular commotion, he veiled under the dress of parable and allegory. He sent them during his own ministry as heralds of his approach, to prepare the minds of the people by their instructions for his own more perfect teaching.

These twelve Apostles were men from the lower

orders of society, of but slender literary and intellectual cultivation, without wealth or influential connexions. They brought no accession of strength or respectability to his cause. It may seem at first sight utterly unaccountable on any principle of human policy, that he should have made such a selection, and quite as unaccountable that he himself should have chosen to pass through his ministry under an exterior so exceedingly humble; that he should, in the language of the Apostle, have made himself of no reputation, and to all external appearances, taken the form of a slave. But when we reflect upon it, we find that it was dictated by the highest wisdom. His external humility only puts in stronger contrast his moral and spiritual glory. He was really so great, that nothing external could add to the grandeur of his character. The fact, that without availing himself of a single external advantage, he established his religion which disappointed the hopes of his own nation and offered no bribe to any of the passions to which the ambitious appeal with so much success,—that he told his followers from the first, that they were to reap no worldly advantage from their connection with him,—that his disciples were utterly destitute of those acquirements by which any cause is usually carried forward,—all these things

throw the philosophical back upon the only sufficient cause of his success, the reality of his mission from God, the moral power which truth always carries with it, and those miraculous attestations which are strongest evidence to the unsophisticated mind of man, of a mission from the Most High.

It may at first sight seem strange, when he might have gone up to Jerusalem and chosen his disciples from the most learned, gifted and accomplished of the Rabbinical schools which were then flourishing there, that he should have made such a choice. Over them he would have manifested the same immeasurable superiority, and might have wielded them to accomplish his purposes as easily as those humbler persons whom he actually chose as his companions. Between him, and the intellectual and cultivated, there would seem to have been a closer sympathy than with those uneducated Galileans, who as far as we at this are able to see, were mere children in his presence. But this arrangement, like every other, was founded in the highest wisdom. The function which they were appointed to fill, did not call either for great talents or for extensive learning. They were to originate nothing, they were to add nothing to what he had taught. Their office was simply that of witnesses of what he had said, and done, and

suffered. "And ye also shall bear witness," said he to his disciples, "because ye have been with me from the beginning." After his resurrection he says to them: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved the Messiah to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

This being the office of the disciples, intellectual cultivation was not a necessary requisite. The qualities most necessary to a witness are, simplicity, integrity and courage. Through them the world has received the Gospel. The more transparent the medium through which we receive it, the less coloring it takes from the minds through which it was transmitted. The consequence is, that we have the most simple and childlike narrative that the world has ever read. We do not see the historians at all. All we see, is Jesus Christ, his doctrine, his character, his life, his miracles. There is no attempt at the introduction of the philosophy or opinions of the times, the exception

of the beginning of the Gospel of John ; and it is unnecessary to say that those lines have created more controversy in the Christian Church than all the rest of the letters. What Jesus wanted of his Apostles was principally to be his witnesses to the world, and to all succeeding ages. On their testimony in fact, the faith of the successive millions of the Christian Church has depended. The Gospels are nothing more nor less than their testimony. Jesus himself left nothing written. All that we know either of him or his doctrines, we receive through them. Without their testimony we should not know that such a person had ever existed. Without their testimony we should not know what he taught, or how he lived. It was on the strength of what they had seen and heard, that they claimed to be the religious teachers of the world. The relation which the Apostles apprehended themselves to sustain to Jesus as witnesses, is fully and clearly brought out in Peter's speech to Cornelius and his friends ; " How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem, whom they

slew and hanged on a tree, him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

When the Savior bowed his head upon the cross and said, "It is finished," the Gospel was complete. He had discharged his office as a teacher. Nothing could be added to it, and nothing could be taken from it. The system was perfect. The duty of the Apostles was to promulgate it to the world. So you will observe, that the promise of divine assistance, so far as doctrines are concerned, goes no further than strengthening their memories; "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost which the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." They were occasionally instructed what to do, but never, that we read of, to preach any new doctrine which had not been taught by Christ himself.

It may seem strange to those who are accustomed to dispute about words and phrases, that Christ should have left nothing written, nothing which we can identify as the very words which he spoke. The stickler for creeds and formulas may lament that all the disputes of after ages were

not anticipated and prevented by a written declaration of the Savior, which would have been so plain that no dullness could have misapprehended, no ingenuity perverted it. We are fully justified, I believe, in asserting that no such precaution would have been effectual. Human language is essentially ambiguous, every word having a variety of significations, any one of which becomes probable only because it better suits the connection, the purpose, or the sentiments of the writer. Language is always addressed to reasonable beings, and it is necessary for them to exercise their reason in order to understand it. It is so with Christ's plainest instructions. We are always obliged to use our reason in order to decide in what sense his words are to be taken. When he tells us "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;"—are we to interpret this literally, and say that no man can be a Christian without hating father and mother, and sisters and brothers? By no means. And why? Because it is not reasonable to believe that such was his meaning. We cannot suppose that Christ intended his followers to prove false to the most important relations we sustain in this life. We conclude, therefore, that he did not

use the word hate in a literal, but a figurative sense, in the sense of loving them less than himself and his cause. So we interpret the precept which commands us to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye. We do not cut off our hands, and pluck out our eyes, not because we are not literally commanded to do so, but because reason teaches us that he did not mean literally to be so taken. So whatever Christ might have left written, there would have remained the same difficulty of interpretation. We should still be obliged to rest on probability, just as we do now. We cannot be infallibly certain that we take a sentence of Scripture in the true sense, without possessing inspiration ourselves. We cannot know that we are inspired, without the power of working miracles, or unless some miracle were wrought for our sakes, for we could not otherwise distinguish those thoughts which were miraculously suggested from those which occurred in the ordinary operations of our minds.

Then, even had the Saviour left the Gospel written with his own hand, we should still have been compelled to rely on human testimony, that the same identical words were preserved. The thing then is evidently better as it is. We should have been compelled at last to rely on human testimony,

as to what Christ did, and taught, and suffered. What more competent witness could we possibly have, than that of those who were with him on terms of the greatest familiarity during his whole ministry? In what better form could we have this witness than in the Gospel according to Matthew, written by one of those who were with him from the beginning, and who was present at his crucifixion, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead, and who spent his life in propagating his religion? What more unobjectionable testimony than that of John, who had been one of the disciples of John Baptist, who saw the inauguration, leaned on his bosom, and shared his most intimate friendship? As collateral proof, what more authentic than the memoirs of Luke and Mark, who were the constant companions of the Apostles, and heard them rehearse over and over the wonderful story of the teaching and miracles of Jesus?

Considered in this light, as human testimony, and it is the only light in which they can be regarded, those who understand the principles of evidence most thoroughly tell us, that their evidence is the more weighty and satisfactory from their slight variations from each other. Those who frequent courts of justice tell us that it is utterly vain to ex-

pect entire consistency in the testimony of a number of witnesses, let them be never so honest and never so competent. Agreement in the main facts is all that is expected, and nothing would sooner produce suspicion of collusion than for two witnesses to make word for word, the same statement. No human being ever told the same story twice in the same words, and in the same order. Nothing can be more evident than that the historians were subjected to the same common laws which govern the operations of the human mind. We have in the letters three different relations of Paul's vision and conversion, twice by himself in public speeches, and one from the letter of Luke, probably from his own lips in private conversation. Yet the three accounts all vary from each other in words and in circumstances. The four Evangelists all give us the inscription upon the cross of Jesus, yet no two agree in the precise form of words which was used. Matthew says, that the accusation was, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." Mark says, that the superscription was, "The king of the Jews." Luke says, it was, "This is the king of the Jews." John says, that the title on his cross was, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." Here then is a variation in the testimony. It is impossible that more than one of these in-

scriptions can be verbally accurate. But it creates no distrust, and not one in a hundred of the Christian church has been aware of its existence. It is an immaterial variation, a discrepancy which must always be allowed in human testimony, and nothing could be more unreasonable or absurd than to allow the least shade of doubt to pass over the mind as to the reality of the inscription, because of this verbal discrepancy.

The first three evangelists have given us Christ's prayer, in his agony, at the garden of Gethsemane, but each of them in different words. Yet no man in his sober senses would think of doubting the actual occurrence of that tremendous scene on that account. If any thing in all the history of the past can be said to bear the native impress of truth, it is this whole transaction.

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