

about the name the Child was to receive. They prayed and sang the greater part of the night, and circumcised the Child at daybreak. Mary was very much troubled, very anxious about It. After the ceremony, the Infant Jesus was swathed in red and white as far as under the little arms, which also were bound and the head wrapped in a cloth. The Child was again laid on the octangular stone, and prayers recited over It. If I remember rightly, the angel had already told Joseph that the Child should be called Jesus, and I have a faint recollection that one of the priests did not at first approve the name, consequently, they still continued in prayer. Then I saw a radiant angel standing in front of the priest and holding before him a tablet like that above the Cross, upon which was inscribed the name of Jesus. I saw the priest writing the name upon a scrap of parchment. I know not whether he or any of the others saw the angel, but deeply moved, he wrote the name under divine inspiration. After that, Joseph received the Child back and handed It to the Blessed Virgin who, with two other women, was standing back in the Crib Cave. Mary took the weeping Child into her arms and quieted It. Some shepherds were standing at the entrance of the cave. Lamps were burning, and the dawn was breaking. There was some more praying and singing and, before the priests departed, they took a little breakfast. I saw that all present at the circumcision were good people. The priests were enlightened and later attained salvation. Alms were distributed the whole morning to many poor people who presented themselves. Afterward followed a crowd of beggars, filthy, black creatures, very repulsive to me. They carried bundles and, coming up from the valley of the shepherds, passed the Crib as if going to Jerusalem for the celebration of a feast. They were very boisterous, cursing and scolding horribly, because they did not receive by way of alms, as much as they wanted. I do not know exactly what was the matter

Life of Jesus Christ

with them. During the ceremony of circumcision, the ass was tied further back than usual; at other times, it stood in the Crib Cave.

During the day, I saw the nurse again with Mary attending to the Child. That night, the Child was very restless from pain. It cried, and Mary and Joseph tried to soothe It by carrying It up and down the cave.

While reflecting upon the mystery of the circumcision, I had a vision. I saw two angels with little tablets in their hands, standing under a palm tree. Upon one tablet were pictured various instruments of martyrdom, of which I remember one, a pillar which stood in the middle. On it was a mortar, which had two rings. On the other tablet were letters denoting the seasons and years of the Church. On the palm tree and as if growing out of it, was kneeling a Virgin, her flowing mantle, or veil, for it was fastened over her head, floating around her. In her hands was a heart upon which I saw a tiny, shining Child. I saw an apparition of God the Father draw near to the palm tree, break off a heavy branch that formed a cross, and lay it on the Child. Then I saw the Child raised, as it were, on the cross, and the Virgin reaching the palm branch with the crucified Child on it to God the Father, the heart alone remaining in her hand.

On the evening of the following day, I saw Elizabeth on an ass and accompanied by an old servant, coming from Jutta to the cave. Joseph received her most cordially. The joy of Mary and Elizabeth was extremely great as they embraced each other. Elizabeth pressed the Child to her heart. She slept in Mary's cave next the place in which Jesus was born. Before the sacred spot stood a stool upon which they often laid the Child.

Mary told Elizabeth all that had happened to her, and when Elizabeth

heard of their difficulty in getting a lodging on their arrival in Bethlehem, she wept heartily. Mary gave her all the details of the

Infant Jesus' birth. I remember hearing her say that she had been in ecstasy ten minutes at the time of the Annunciation, that it appeared to her as if her heart had grown double its size and that she was filled with unspeakable happiness. But at the Child's birth she had experienced an intense longing. She felt while kneeling that she was upheld by angels, and as if her heart was broken asunder and one-half taken from her. She had also been ten minutes in ecstasy at the time of the birth. She had been conscious of an emptiness within her, a longing after something outside of herself. Suddenly a light shone before her, and the figure of the Child seemed to grow before her eyes. Then she saw It moving and heard It crying and, coming to herself, she raised It from the rug to her breast, for at first seeing It environed with glory, she had hesitated to take It up.

Elizabeth said: "Thou hast not given birth in the same way as other mothers. The birth of John was sweet also, but it was not like that of thy Child."

Once I saw Elizabeth with Mary and the Child concealing themselves toward evening in the side cave. They remained there the whole night, for visitors from Bethlehem were approaching by whom they did not want to be seen.

The Jewish women do not leave their children long without other nourishment than the breast; and so the Infant Jesus was fed in those first days on pap made of the sweet, light, nutritious pith of a certain rush-like plant.

As in the Temple at Jerusalem, the holy Feast of the Machabees began at this time, it was also celebrated by Joseph in the Crib Cave. He

fastened three lamps with seven little lights on the walls of the cave and, during a whole week, lighted them morning and evening. Once I saw in the cave one of the priests who had been present at the Child's circumcision. He had a roll of writings from which he prayed with St. Joseph. It seemed to me that he

Life of Jesus Christ

wanted to find out whether Joseph kept that feast or not. I think, too, that he announced to him another, for a fast-day was near at hand. I saw the preparations for it in Jerusalem. Food was prepared the day before the feast, the fire was covered, servile work was put aside, the doors and windows were hung with tapestry.

Anne often sent servants with gifts of provisions and utensils, all of which Mary soon distributed to the poor. Once Anne sent a beautiful little basket of fruit with large, newly-blown roses stuck in among it. The pink roses were paler than ours, almost flesh colored, and there were some yellow, and some white. Mary was very much pleased, and placed it beside her.

And now came Anne herself, accompanied by her second husband and a servant. The Infant Jesus stretched out His little arms to her, and great was her joyful emotion. Mary gave her a full account of all as she had done to Elizabeth. They mingled their tears together, pausing at times to fondle the Infant Jesus.

Anne had brought with her many things for Mary and the Child, coverlets, swathing-bands, etc. Although Mary had already received so many things from her, yet the Crib Cave was still quite poor in appearance, since whatever was at all unnecessary was given away at once. Mary told Anne that the Kings from the East were approaching with rich gifts, and that their coming would attract much attention. Anne, therefore, resolved to go and stay with her sister, who dwelt at some hours' distance, and to return after the departure of the royal visitors. Then I saw Joseph set to work to clear out the Crib Cave as well as those in its vicinity, in order to prepare for the arrival of the Kings whom Mary in spirit had seen coming. He went also to

Bethlehem to make the second payment of taxes and to look around for a dwelling, for he intended to settle in Bethlehem after Mary's Purification.

11. Journey of the Three Kings To Bethlehem

Some days after their departure from home, I saw the caravan of Theokeno come up with those of Mensor and Seir at a ruined city. Rows of tall pillars were still standing here and in many places large beautiful statues. A band of wild robbers had taken up their quarters among the ruins. They were clothed in the skins of beasts and armed with spears; they were of a brownish color, short and stout, but very agile. The three caravans left this city together at daybreak and, after journeying half a day, rested in a very fertile district where there was a spring around which were many roomy sheds. This was an ordinary halting place for caravans. Each of the Kings had in his train, as companions, four nobles of his own race; but he himself was like a patriarch over all. He took care of all, commanded all, dispensed to all. In each caravan were to be found people of different color. Mensor's race was of a pleasing brownish color; Seir's was brown; and Theokeno's of a bright yellow. I saw no shining black, saving the slaves, of whom each king possessed some.

The nobles holding staves in their hands, sat upon their dromedaries high among the piled-up packages, which were covered with hangings. These were followed by other animals almost as large as horses, on which servants and slaves rode among the baggage. On their arrival, they unloaded the animals and watered them at the spring. This spring was surrounded by a little mound upon which was a wall with three open entrances. In this enclosed space was a cistern, somewhat lower than the surrounding surface. It had a pump with three pipes furnished with faucets. Over the cistern was a cover usually kept locked. But a man from the ruined city had accompanied the travelers, and he on payment of a tax, unlocked the reservoir. The travelers had

Life of Jesus Christ

leathern vessels, which could be folded perfectly flat. They were divided into four compartments, which when filled afforded drink to four of the camels at once. These people were extremely careful of the water; not a drop was suffered to go to waste. Then the beasts were put up in an enclosed, but uncovered space close to the spring, the stall of each animal being separated from its neighbor's by a partition. There were some troughs before them, into which was poured the feed which had been brought with them. It consisted of corn, the grains of which were as large as acorns. Among the baggage were bird baskets, high and narrow, which hung on the sides of the animals among the broad packages. In the separate compartments of these baskets, either singly or in pairs, according to their different sizes, were birds like doves or hens. They served for food on the way. In leathern chests, they had loaves, all of the same size, like single plates, closely packed together. Only as many as were needed were taken out at once. They had with them very costly vessels of yellow metal set with precious stones. They were almost exactly of the shape of our sacred vessels, some like chalices, some like little boats and dishes, out of which they drank and upon which they handed around the food. The rims of most of these vessels were set with precious stones.

The three races were somewhat different in costume. Theokeno and his followers, as well as Mensor, wore high caps embroidered in colors, and white bands wound thickly around their heads. Their short coats reached to the calf of the leg, and were very simple with only a few buttons and ornaments on the breast. They were enveloped in light, wide, and very long mantles which trailed behind. Seir and his followers wore caps with little white pads and round cowls embroidered in colors. They had shorter mantles, which were, however, longer behind than in front. Under their mantles were short tunics buttoning

down to the knee and ornamented on the breast with laces, spangles, and innumerable glittering buttons, button on button. On one side of the breast was a little sparkling shield like a star. All had bare feet bound with laces to which soles were fastened. The nobles wore short swords or large knives in their girdles, and they had many bags and boxes hanging about them. Among the kings and their relatives were men about fifty, forty, thirty, and twenty years old. Some wore their beard long, others short. The servants and camel drivers were much more simply clothed; indeed, some had only a strip of stuff or an old garment around them.

When the beasts had been fed, watered, and stalled, and the attendants themselves had drunk, a fire was made in the middle of the enclosure in which they had encamped. The wood used for that purpose consisted of sticks about two and a half feet long which the poor people of the surrounding country had brought hither in well-arranged bundles, as if prepared expressly for travelers. The Kings constructed a three-cornered log pile and laid the sticks around the top, leaving an opening on one side to admit air. The pile was very skillfully put together. But I cannot say for certain how they lit the fire. I saw one of them put one piece of wood into another, as if into a box, swing it round and round a little while, and then draw it forth burning. And so they kindled a fire, and then I saw them killing some birds and roasting them.

The Three Kings and the ancients acted, each one in his own family, like the father of the house, cutting up the food and helping it around. The carved birds and little loaves were laid on small dishes, or plates, which stood upon little feet, and passed around; and in the same way, the cups were filled and handed to each one to drink. The lowest among the servants, of whom some were Moors, reclined on the bare earth.

They appeared to be slaves. The simplicity,

Life of Jesus Christ

the kindness, the good nature of the Kings and nobles, were unspeakably touching. They gave to the people who gathered around them something of all that they had; they even held out to them the golden vessels and let them drink like children.

Mensor, the brownish, was a Chaldean. His city, whose name sounded to me something like Acajaja, was surrounded by a river, and appeared to be built on an island. Mensor spent most of his time in the fields with his herds. After the death of Christ, he was baptized by St. Thomas, and named Leander. Seir, the brown, on that very Christmas night stood prepared at Mensor's for the expedition. He and his race were the only ones so brown, but they had red lips. The other people in the neighborhood were white. Seir had the baptism of desire. He was not living at the time of Jesus' journey to the country of the Kings. Theokeno was from Media, a country more to the north. It lay like a strip of land further toward the interior and between two seas. Theokeno dwelt in his own city; its name I have forgotten. It consisted of tents erected on stone foundations. He was the wealthiest of the three. He might, I think, have taken a more direct route to Bethlehem, but in order to join the others he made a circuitous one. I think that he had even to pass near Babylon in order to come up with them. He also was baptized by St. Thomas and named Leo. The names Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar were given to the kings, because they so well suited them, for Caspar means "He is won by love"; Melchior, "He is so coaxing, so insinuating, he uses so much address, he approaches one so gently"; Balthasar, "With his whole will, he accomplishes the will of God."

From Mensor's city, Seir dwelt at the distance of a three days' journey, each day counting twelve hours; and Theokeno further on, at a distance of five such days. Mensor and Seir were together when they saw in the

stars the vision of the birth of Jesus, and both

set out on the following day with their respective caravans. Theokeno, also, had the same vision in his own home, and he hurried to join the other two. Their journey to Bethlehem was about seven hundred and some odd hours. In the odd number, six occurs. It was a journey of about sixty days, each day twelve hours long; but they accomplished it in thirty-three days, on account of the great speed of their camels, and because they often travelled day and night.

The star that guided them was like a ball from whose lower surface light streamed as from an open mouth. It always appeared to me as if guided by an apparition that held it by a thread of light. By day I saw walking before the caravan a figure more brilliant than the light of the sun. When I reflect upon the length of the journey, the rapidity with which they made it appears to me astonishing. But those beasts have so light and even a step that their march looks to me as orderly and as swift, their movements as uniform, as the flight of birds of passage. The homes of the Three Kings formed a triangle with one another. Mensor and Seir dwelt nearest to each other; Theokeno was the most distant.

When the caravan had rested till evening, the people that had followed helped to load the beasts again, and then carried off home all that the travelers left behind them. When the caravan set out, the star was visible, shining with a reddish light, like the moon in windy weather. Its train of light was pale and long. The Kings and their followers went part of the way on foot beside their animals, praying with heads uncovered. The road here was such as to prevent their travelling quickly; but when it became level, they mounted and pushed on at a swift rate. Sometimes they slackened their pace and all sang together, the sound of their voices on the night air producing a most touching effect. When I gazed upon them riding forward in such order, their hearts filled with joy and

devotion, I could not help thinking: "Ah, if our processions

Life of Jesus Christ

could only pattern after this!" Once I saw them passing the night in a field near a spring. A man from one of the huts in the neighborhood unlocked it for them. They watered their beasts and, without unpacking, refreshed themselves by a short rest.

Again I saw the caravan upon a high plateau. On their right extended a mountain chain, and it seemed to me that they were drawing near to a point in the road where it again made a descent to a thickly settled district whose houses lay among trees and fountains. The inhabitants of this place wove covers out of threads stretched from tree to tree, and adored images of oxen. They bountifully supplied food to the crowd that followed the caravan, but the dishes out of which they ate were used no more. I was surprised at that.

The next day I saw the Kings near a city whose name sounded like Causur, and which was built of tents on stone foundations. They stopped to rest with the king to whom the city belonged, and whose tent palace lay at a little distance. The Three Kings had since their meeting travelled fifty-three or sixty-three hours. They told the king of Causur all that they had seen in the stars. He was very greatly astonished. He looked through a tube at the star that was guiding them, and in it he saw a little Child with a Cross.

He begged them, in consequence, to inform him on their return of all that they discovered, that he might erect altars and offer sacrifice to the Child. On the Kings' departure from Causur, they were joined by a considerable train of nobles, who were going to travel the same way. Later they rested at a spring and made a fire, but they did not unload their camels. When again on their way, I heard them softly and sweetly singing together short strophes, such as: "Over the mountains we shall

go. And before the new King kneel!"

One of them began and the others took up and sang with him the strophes, which they in turn composed

and intoned. In the center of the star was plainly visible a little Child with a Cross.

Mary had a vision of the Kings' approach when they were resting a day in Causur, and she told it to Joseph and Elizabeth.

At last I saw the Kings arrive at the first Jewish city, a small, straggling place where many of the houses were surrounded by high hedges. They were here in a straight line from Bethlehem, notwithstanding which they proceeded along toward the right as the streets ran in that direction. As they entered this place, they sang more sweetly than ever and were full of joy, for the star was here shining upon them with unusual brilliancy, although the moonlight was so bright that one could see shadows distinctly. The inhabitants of the city, however, either did not see the star, or they took no special notice of it. They were exceedingly obliging. When some of the cavalcade dismounted, they assisted them greatly in watering their camels. It reminded me of Abraham's time, for then people were all so good and ready to assist one another. Many of them, bearing branches in their hands, led the caravan through the city and even went a part of the way with them. The star was not constantly shining before them; sometimes it was quite dull. It appeared to shine out more clearly wherever good people lived; and when the travelers beheld it more brilliant than usual, their hearts were filled with emotion thinking that there, perhaps, they would find the Messiah. The Kings were not without apprehension lest their large caravan would create notice and comment.

The next day they went without halting around a dark, foggy city and, at a short distance from it, crossed a river which empties into the Dead Sea. That evening, I saw them enter a city whose name sounded like

Manathea, or Madian. Their caravan was now perhaps two hundred strong, so great was the crowd their generosity drew after them. A street

Life of Jesus Christ

ran through this last place, the inhabitants of which consisted partly of Jews, partly of heathens. The caravan was led into the space between the city and its surrounding wall, and there the Kings pitched their tents. I saw here, as in the former city, how anxious they became when they discovered that no one knew anything of the newborn King, and I heard them telling how long the star had been looked for among them.

12. Genealogy of the Kings

I heard that the Three Kings traced their genealogy back to Job, who had dwelt on the Caucasus and had jurisdiction over other districts far and wide. Long before Balaam, and before Abraham's sojourn in Egypt, they had the prophecy of the star and the hope of its fulfillment. The leaders of a race from the land of Job had upon an expedition to Egypt, in the region of Heliopolis, received from an angel the revelation that from a virgin the Saviour would be born whom their descendants would honor. They were also instructed to go no farther, but to return to their homes and watch the stars. They celebrated festivals in memory of the event, erected altars and triumphal arches which they adorned with flowers, and then turned back home. There may, perhaps, have been three thousand of these people collected together at this time. They were dwellers in Media and star worshippers, of a beautiful, yellowish-brown color and of tall and noble stature. They roamed from place to place with their herds, ruling wherever they pleased by their irresistible power. They had, as the Kings now related, been the first to announce the prophecy to their people, and the first to introduce among them the observation of the stars. When both the prophecy and the study had fallen into general oblivion, they were received first by one of Balaam's scholars, and long after him by three prophetesses, the

daughters of the Three Kings' forefathers. And now at last, five hundred years since the time of those prophetesses, the star had appeared which they were to follow.

Those three prophetesses were contemporary. They were deeply versed in the stars; they had visions and the spirit of prophecy. They foresaw that a star would arise out of Jacob and that an inviolate Virgin would bring forth the Saviour. Clothed in long garments, they went about the country announcing this prophecy, exhorting to good, foretelling the future down to the most remote ages, and promising that messengers from the Saviour would come to their people and lead them to the worship of the true God. The fathers of these virgins built a temple to the promised Mother of God on the spot where their lands joined, and in its vicinity a tower from which to observe the constellations and their various changes. From these three princes, about five hundred years after and through a lineal descent of fifteen generations, sprang the Holy Kings. It was by their intermingling with other races that they became so different in color. For a length of time, some of their ancestors were constantly on the tower observing the stars. What they saw was noted down and taught orally; and, in consequence of these observations, many changes gradually crept into their temple and worship.

All periods remarkable on account of their reference to the coming of the Messiah were pointed out to them by visions in the stars. During the last year since Mary's Conception, these visions were more and more significant, and the coming of salvation more explicitly shown. At the time of the Blessed Virgin's Conception, they saw the Virgin with the scepter and the scales in whose evenly balanced plates lay wheat and grapes. They saw, too, a prefiguration of the bitter Passion itself, for

they beheld the newborn King involved in a war from which He came

Life of Jesus Christ

out victorious over all His enemies.

This observing of the stars was accompanied by religious ceremonies, fasting, prayer, purification, and self-denial. They watched not one star alone, but a whole constellation; by certain coincidences among the different stars as they gazed, were formed the visions and pictures that they saw. The wicked, engaging in this star worship, were affected by evil influences and thrown into convulsions by their demoniacal visions. It was by the agency of such people that the practice arose of sacrificing the aged and little children. But such cruelties gradually fell into disuse. The Kings saw the visions clearly and from them tasted sweet, interior consolation, without feeling the effects of any malign influence. They became, on the contrary, better and more pious. With great simplicity and candor, they described what they saw to their inquisitive auditors; but when they perceived that what their forefathers had so patiently awaited for two thousand years was not received with implicit belief, they became sad. The star was hidden by a cloud; but when it again appeared, looking so large among the drifting clouds and so near to the earth, the Kings arose from their couches, called the people of the city together, and pointed it out to them. The people gazed awestruck; some were deeply impressed, others were vexed at the Kings for disturbing their rest, while the majority sought but to profit by the princely bounty.

I heard the royal travelers saying how far they had journeyed up to this time. They reckoned the day's journey on foot as one of twelve hours. Before reaching their place of meeting, one had made a journey of three such days, the other five of twelve hours. But on their beasts, which were dromedaries, subtracting the night and the hours of rest, they could treble that distance; therefore the three days' journey on foot up to the place of meeting were equivalent to only one, and the five days

counted but for

two. From that place to where they were at present they had made a fifty-six days' journey of twelve hours, or six hundred and seventy-two hours. They had, therefore, from Christ's birth up to the present, counting the days that passed until they met and those devoted to resting, consumed about twenty-five days. At this place also, they took a day to rest.

The people here were singularly importunate and shameless; they pressed around the Kings like swarms of wasps. The royal travelers dealt out to them freely small triangular yellow pieces like tin and also darker grains. They must have possessed unnumbered treasures. When the caravan was departing, it wound around the city, in which I saw idols standing in the temple. On the opposite side they crossed a bridge and went through a little Jewish place that contained a synagogue. And now they were on a good road, hastening toward the Jordan. About one hundred persons had joined their caravan. They had still a journey of about twenty-four hours to Jerusalem. But I saw them passing through no more cities, and they were met but by few people, as it was the Sabbath. The nearer they drew to Jerusalem, the more disheartened they became; for the star no longer shone with its usual brightness and, since their entrance into Judea, they saw it but seldom. They had hoped also to find the people on their route exulting with joy and celebrating with magnificence the birth of the newborn Saviour, to honor whom they themselves had come so far. But beholding no sign of excitement, they grew anxious and perplexed, thinking that, perhaps, after all they had made a mistake.

It may have been midday when they crossed the Jordan. They paid the ferrymen, though only two of them lent a helping hand. They held back¹ and let them attend to their transportation themselves. The Jordan was

not broad at that time and it was full

1. As it was the Sabbath.

of sandbanks. Boards were laid over crossbeams, and the dromedaries stood upon them. The passage across the river was made expeditiously. The Kings first appeared to be going toward Bethlehem, but soon they turned and went on to Jerusalem. I saw the city towering up high against the sky. The Sabbath was over before the caravan arrived outside the city.

13. The Kings Before Herod

The caravan of the Kings took about a quarter of an hour to pass any given point. When it halted before Jerusalem, the star had become invisible; consequently, the travelers were very much troubled. The Kings rode upon dromedaries, and three other dromedaries were laden with the baggage. The rest of the cavalcade were mounted upon nimble animals of a yellowish color with small heads, I know not whether they were horses or asses, but they were very different in appearance from our horses. The animals upon which the nobles rode were very handsomely caparisoned and hung with golden stars and little chains. Some of the followers went to the gate of the city, and returned with officers and soldiers. The arrival of the Kings at that time when no feast was being celebrated, when no special commercial interest seemed to bring them, and also by that particular road, was something remarkable. They explained to the officials why they had come, and spoke of the star and the Child. But their hearers were ignorant on the subject, and so the Kings began again to think that they had surely erred, since they could not find one person who looked as if he knew anything connected with the Redemption of the world. The people gazed at them in wonder, unable to conceive what they wanted. The Kings explained that they were ready to pay for whatever they got from them, and that they wished to confer with their King. And now arose great hurrying to and

fro, the

travelers meantime interchanging questions and answers with the crowd gathered around them. Some had indeed heard of a child that was to be born at Bethlehem; but they were poor, ignorant people, and their words had no weight. Others laughed derisively and the Kings grew troubled and disheartened; and then they perceived by the expressions of the people that Herod knew nothing of what they sought and that he was by no means beloved by his subjects. They became anxious as to how they should address him. They had recourse to prayer, their courage revived, and they said to one another: "He who has brought us so quickly here by means of the star, will also lead us home in safety." They now led the caravan around the city and brought it in at the side nearer Mount Calvary. Not far from the fish market, they and their animals were conducted into a circular court, which was surrounded by halls and dwellings, and before whose gates guards were standing. In the middle of the court was a well, at which they watered the beasts, and all found quarters in the stalls and places under the arches. On one side of the court arose the mountain on which it lay; on the other, it was free and shaded by trees. I saw people coming with torches and examining the baggage.

Herod's palace stood higher up the mountain not far from this court. I saw the road leading to it lighted up by torches and lanterns hung on poles. I saw officials going down from the palace and conducting thither Theokeno, the eldest of the Kings. He was received under an archway and ushered into a hall. There he made known his errand to a courtier, who reported it to Herod. Herod became almost insane at the news, and gave orders for the Kings to present themselves before him on the following morning. He also sent word to them to rest while he made inquiries, and he would inform them of the result.

When Theokeno returned, he and his two royal companions became still more uneasy, and ordered

Life of Jesus Christ

the baggage that had been unpacked to be packed again. They slept none that night. I saw some of them going around the city with guides. It seemed to me that they suspected Herod of knowing all, but of being unwilling to disclose the truth to them. They still sought the star. In Jerusalem itself all was quiet, but there was much running to and fro and questioning among the sentinels at the court.

It may have been about eleven o'clock at night when Theokeno was sent for by Herod. There appeared to be some kind of festivity going on, for the palace was ablaze with lights, and I saw females in it. The news brought by Theokeno threw Herod into the greatest terror. He dispatched servants to the Temple and also into the city, and I saw priests and scribes and aged Jews going to him with rolls of writings under their arms. They wore their priestly garments, also their breastplates, and their girdles on which letters were inscribed. There were about twenty around him, expounding the writings. I saw them also mounting with him to the roof of the palace and gazing at the stars. Herod was very uneasy and perplexed. But the scribes tried to divert him, by endeavoring to prove that there was nothing in the talk of the Kings; that those Eastern people were always superstitiously raving about the stars; and that, if there was any truth in what they said, surely the priests of the Temple and the dwellers in the Holy City would have known it long ago.

Next morning at daybreak, I saw one of the courtiers going down to the caravan and bringing up all three of the Kings to Herod's palace. They were ushered into an apartment around which were pots of foliage and bushes. Refreshments were spread at the entrance. But the Kings declined the proffered food, and remained standing until Herod entered. They approached him with an obeisance, and without preamble put to

him the question as to where they should find the newborn King of the Jews, for they had seen

His star and they were come to do Him homage. Herod was very much troubled, but he concealed his fears. Some of the scribes were still with him. He questioned the Kings closely concerning the star, and told them that of Bethlehem Ephrata ran the Promise. But Mensor related to him the last vision they had seen in the star, whereupon Herod's anxiety became almost too great for concealment. Mensor said that they had seen a Virgin with a Child lying before her. From the right side of the Child issued a branch formed of light, upon which stood a tower with many gates, which tower increased in size until it became a city. The Child appeared standing above it with sword and scepter; and they had seen not only themselves, but all the kings of the earth, coming to bow down before and adore that Child, for Its kingdom was to vanquish all other kingdoms. Herod advised them to go quietly and without delay to Bethlehem, and when they had found the Child to return and inform him that he too might go and adore Him. I saw the Kings going down from the palace, and leaving Jerusalem at once. The day was dawning, and the lights on the way leading up to the palace were still burning. The crowd that had followed the royal caravan had passed the night in the city.

Herod who, about the time of Christ's birth, had gone to his palace at Jericho, had been even before the coming of the Kings very restless and uneasy. Two of his illegitimate sons had been raised by him to high positions in the Temple. They were Sadducees, and by them he was kept informed of all that transpired, as well as of all who were opposed to his designs. Among these he was told of one, a man good and upright, a distinguished functionary of the Temple. Herod sent him a courteous and friendly invitation to come to him in Jericho. When the good man was on his way to comply with the invitation, Herod's creatures fell upon him and murdered him in the desert, making it appear as if robbers had perpetrated

Life of Jesus Christ

the awful deed. Some days later, Herod returned to Jerusalem, in order to take part in the Feast of the Consecration of the Temple. Then he thought he would, in his own way, give pleasure to the Jews and show them honor. He caused to be made a golden figure something like a lamb, though still more like a goat, for it had horns. This figure was to be erected above the gate leading from the outer court of the women into the court of sacrifice. Herod insisted upon this and, moreover, expected to be thanked for what he had done. But the priests resisted. Herod threatened them with a fine. They replied that the fine indeed they would pay; but that the figure, according to their Law, they could never accept. Herod fell into a rage, and ordered it to be set up secretly. Thereupon, one of the officers of the Temple, fired with zeal, seized it as it was being brought in, cleft it in twain, and hurled it to the ground. This gave rise to a tumult, and Herod ordered the offender to be imprisoned. Herod was, on account of this affair, extremely displeased, and regretted having come to the feast; but his courtiers sought by all kinds of diversions to remove the impression from his mind.

There was among some pious people in Judea the expectation of the near advent of the Messiah, and the circumstances attendant on the birth of Jesus had been noised abroad by the shepherds. Herod had heard all and had at Bethlehem made secret inquiries into it. His spies, however, having found only poor Joseph, and having besides orders not to attract attention, reported that it was nothing, that they had found only a poor family buried in a cave, and the whole affair not worth talking about. But now, all of a sudden, appeared the great caravan of the Kings. Their questioning after the King of Judah was marked by such confidence and precision, they spoke with such certainty of the star, that Herod could scarcely hide his anxious perplexity. He hoped to learn the particulars

of the affair from the Kings themselves, and then take measures accordingly. But when the Kings, warned by God, did not return, he explained their flight as a consequence of their falsehood and disappointment; they were, he thought, ashamed to come back and be looked upon as fools. He therefore caused to be proclaimed in Bethlehem and in a general way, that the people should have nothing to do with the strangers. When he thought to make away with Jesus, he found that He was no longer in Nazareth. He caused search to be made after Him for a long time. When he had to give up all hope of finding Him and his anxiety was, in consequence, so much the more increased, he took the desperate resolution to murder all the children. He was so cautious in executing his measures that he transported his troops beforehand, in order to avoid any insurrection.

14. The Kings Arrive at Bethlehem

I saw the Kings leaving Jerusalem in the same order in which they had come. They left by a gate to the south: first, Mensor, the youngest; then Seir, and lastly, Theokeno. They were followed by a crowd as far as a brook outside the city, and here the rabble left them and turned back home. On the opposite side of the brook, the Kings halted and looked for their star. To their great joy, they saw it, and on again they went, singing sweetly. But what I wondered at was, that the star did not guide them by a direct route from Jerusalem to Bethlehem; they went more to the west and passed a little city that is well known to me. Beyond the same, I saw them halting at a beautiful place to pray. A well sprang up before them; they dismounted and dug a basin for the water, surrounding it with sand and sods. They remained here several hours and watered their beasts; for in Jerusalem, on account of their anxiety and trouble, they had had no rest.

Life of Jesus Christ

The star, which by night looked like a globe of light, now had the appearance of the moon when seen by day; but still it did not appear exactly round, but somewhat pointed. I saw that it was often hidden behind the clouds.

The highroad between Bethlehem and Jerusalem swarmed with people, travelers with their baggage on asses. They were, perhaps, on account of the census, returning from Bethlehem to distant homes, or going up to Jerusalem to the Temple or the markets. But on the route taken by the Kings, it was very quiet. Perhaps the star guided them that way, that they might escape notice, and arrive in Bethlehem in the evening.

It was twilight when the caravan drew up before Bethlehem at the same gate at which Mary and Joseph had stopped. When the star had disappeared, the Kings went to the house, the former abode of Joseph's parents, and in which Joseph and Mary had recently been inscribed. Here they thought they were to find the newborn King. It was a spacious mansion with numerous small buildings around it, an enclosed courtyard in front, and stretching beyond that a lawn with trees and a fountain. I saw on the lawn Roman soldiers, because of the tax offices in the house. Crowds of people thronged around the newcomers whose beasts were being watered under the trees near the fountain. The Kings and their followers dismounted. The people showed them every mark of respect; they were not rude to them as they had been to Joseph. They presented green branches, and supplied them with food and drink; but I could see that that was principally in consideration of the gold pieces which the Kings were freely disbursing.

I saw the travelers tarrying long in doubt and anxiety. At last, I saw a light rising in the heavens on the opposite side of Bethlehem over the

region of the Crib. The light was like that of the rising moon. I saw the caravan again set out and wind around

the south side of Bethlehem toward the east, thus bringing on one hand the field in which Christ's birth had been announced to the shepherds. They had to go around a ditch and some ruined walls. They had made choice of this route, because they had while in Bethlehem been directed to the valley of the shepherds as a good place for encamping. Some of the Bethlehemites followed the cavalcade, but the Kings said nothing to them of the object of their search.

St. Joseph appeared to know of their arrival. Whether he had learned it through someone from Jerusalem, or in vision, I know not; but I saw him during the day bringing all kinds of things from Bethlehem, fruit, honey, and vegetables. I saw him also clearing out the cave, making more room, taking away the partitions that cut off his own little sleeping place from the passage, and stowing away the wood and the cooking utensils under the shed before the door. When the caravan had filed down into the valley of the Crib Cave, all dismounted and began to set up their tents while the people that had crowded after them from Bethlehem returned to the city. The encampment was partly pitched when over the cave shone out the star and in it a Child plainly visible. It stood directly above the Crib, its stream of light falling straight down upon it. The Kings and their followers uncovered their heads and watched it sinking lower and lower, increasing in size as it approached the earth. It looked to me as large as a sheet, I think. All were at first amazed. It was already dark; no dwelling was to be seen around, only the hill of the Crib Cave, looking like a rampart on the plain. But soon their amazement turned to joy, and they sought the entrance of the cave. Mensor pushed back the door and there, in the upper end of the cave, which was resplendent with light, he beheld Mary sitting with the Child, and looking just like the Virgin they had so often seen in the star pictures. Mensor stepped back and told his companions

Life of Jesus Christ

what he had seen, then all three entered the passage. I saw Joseph coming out to them with an old shepherd, and speaking to them in quite a friendly way. The Kings told him in a few words that they had come to adore the newborn King of the Jews whose star they had seen, and bring Him gifts. Joseph humbly bade them welcome, and they went back to their tents, in order to prepare themselves for the ceremony of their presentation. The old shepherd accompanied the Kings' servants to the little valley behind the hill, where there were sheds and shepherd stalls, in order to care for the beasts. The caravan filled the whole of the little valley.

And now I saw the Kings taking down from the camels and putting on their wide, flowing mantles of yellow silk. They fastened around their girdles with little chains, bags, and golden boxes with knobs, that looked to me like sugar bowls. They, along with the flowing mantles, made them look quite broad. They took also a little table with low feet that could be opened and folded at pleasure. It served as a salver. A cloth with tasseled fringe was thrown over it, and on it placed the boxes and dishes containing the gifts.

Each King was accompanied by his four relatives. All followed St. Joseph with some of their servants to the shed before the entrance to the cave. Here they spread the cloth over the table and stood on it several of the boxes they had hanging at their girdles, to be presented as their gifts in common. Then two youths of Mensor's train went in at the door, laid down strips of carpet all the way up to the Crib, and withdrew to a distance. And now Mensor and his four companions entered, having previously laid aside their sandals. Two servants bore the table with the gifts through the passage up to the Crib Cave; but at the entrance, Mensor took it from them, carried it in himself, and on bended knee

placed it at Mary's feet. The other Kings and their companions

remained standing at the entrance.

I saw the cave filled with supernatural light. Opposite the entrance and on the spot where Jesus was born, was Mary leaning on one arm in a posture more reclining than sitting; by her side was Joseph, and on her right, in a raised trough with a cover thrown over it, lay the Infant Jesus. At Mensor's entrance, Mary rose to a sitting posture, drew her veil around her, and took the Child, which she enveloped in its folds, upon her lap. But she drew the veil aside sufficiently to allow the Child to be seen as far as below the little arms. She held It upright leaning against her breast, Its little head supported by her hand. The Infant folded Its little hands upon Its breast as if in prayer. It was shining with light, was very gracious, and at times extended Its little hands, as if grasping something. Mensor fell on his knees before Mary, bowed his head, crossed his hands on his breast, and offered the gifts with some reverent words. Then he took from the bag at his girdle a handful of little metal bars, about a finger in length, thick and heavy. They were pointed at the upper end, granular in the middle, and shone like gold. He laid them humbly on Mary's lap by the Child, as his gift to her. Mary accepted them graciously and humbly, and covered them with the end of her mantle. Mensor's companions stood behind him with heads lowly bowed. Mensor gave gold, because he was full of love and confidence, and had always with unshaken devotion and untiring efforts, sought after salvation.

When Mensor and his companions withdrew, Seir with his four relatives entered and knelt. He carried in his hand a golden censer, in shape like a boat, filled with small, greenish grains like resin. He gave incense, for he was the one that clung to God, voluntarily, reverently, and lovingly following His Will. He placed his gift upon the little table,

and knelt long in adoration.

Life of Jesus Christ

After Seir, came Theokeno, the eldest of the Kings. He could not kneel, because he was too old and stout. He stood bowing low, and laid upon the table a little golden ship in which was a fine, green herb. It was fresh and living, stood erect like a delicate green bush, and had small white flowers. Theokeno offered myrrh, for myrrh is typical of mortification and vanquished passions. This good man had had to struggle against severe temptations to idolatry and polygamy. He remained very long before the Infant Jesus, so long that I felt anxious for the good people, the Kings' followers, who at the entrance were so patiently awaiting their turn to see the Child.

The words of the Kings and their followers were extraordinarily simple and childlike; they were as if inebriated with love. They always began: "We have seen His star and that He is King over all kings. We have come to adore Him and to bring Him gifts." With the tenderest tears and most fervent prayers, they commended to the Child Jesus themselves, their goods, and property, all that they valued on earth. They begged Him to take their hearts, their souls, their actions, their thoughts; they entreated Him to enlighten them, to bestow upon them all the virtues, and to the whole earth to grant peace, happiness, and love. They were glowing with love. No words could depict their ardor and humility, nor the tears of joy that bathed their cheeks and flowed down the beard of the eldest. They were perfectly happy; they believed that, at last, they had entered into the star after which their forefathers had so long legitimately sighed, and at which they themselves had so longingly gazed. All the joy of the promise of many hundreds of years now fulfilled, welled up in their hearts.

Joseph and Mary also wept. I never before had seen them so full of joy. The honor paid their Child and Saviour and the recognition of Him by

the Kings, of that Child for whom their poverty could afford so poor a couch, of that Child the knowledge of whose

high dignity lay hidden in the silent humility of their own hearts—all that comforted them immeasurably. They saw brought to Him from so great a distance by God's almighty power, and in spite of the machinations of man, what they themselves could not procure for Him, viz., the adoration of the great, and magnificent gifts offered with holy profusion. Ah! They adored with those great ones, and the honor their Child received inundated their heart with exceedingly great joy.

The Mother of God accepted everything most humbly and thankfully. She spoke not, but the movement of her veiled head told all. The Infant Jesus lay on her mantle and covered by her veil, through which His little form shone brightly. It was only at the close of their visit that the Blessed Virgin addressed some kind words to each, throwing her veil back a little as she spoke.

The Kings now returned to their tents, which were lighted up and looked very beautiful.

At last, the good servants arrived at the Crib. During the adoration of the Kings, they had with Joseph's help erected a white tent on the hill toward the shepherd field to the left of the Crib Cave. They had brought with them on their beasts of burden the tent with all its covers and poles, the latter of which fitted into one another. At first I thought that Joseph had put it up, and I began to wonder where he had got it so quickly and opportunely; but when the caravan was about to leave, I saw that tent taken down and packed up with the rest. There was a kind of shed of straw matting put up in it, under which the chests were placed. After the servants had pitched the tent and arranged all things in it, they took their stand at the door of the Crib Cave, humbly awaiting admittance.

And now they began to enter, five at a time, accompanied by one of the nobles to whom they belonged. They knelt before Mary, and silently adored the Child.

Life of Jesus Christ

Lastly, came the boys in their little mantles, and then there may have been in all about thirty persons present.

When all had withdrawn, the Kings again came in together. They had changed their mantles for others of raw silk, white and flowing, and they carried censers and incense. Two servants had previously laid down over the floor of the cave, a carpet of a deep red color, on which Mary sat with the Child while the Kings offered incense. This carpet Mary kept ever afterward. She walked on it, and took it with her on the ass to Jerusalem when she went there for her Purification. The Kings incensed the Child, Mary, Joseph, and the whole cave. This was with them a ceremony expressive of veneration.

I saw the Kings afterward in the tent reclining on a carpet around a little low table. Joseph brought in little plates of fruit, rolls, honeycomb, and small dishes of vegetables. Then he sat down and ate with them. He was so delighted, and not at all shamefaced; he wept for joy almost the whole time. When I saw that, I thought of my own father, and how, at my profession in the convent, he had to sit among so many fine people. In his humility and simplicity, he had indeed felt intimidated, but it did not prevent his giving vent to his feelings in tears of joy.

When Joseph returned to the Crib Cave, he removed all the rich gifts to a recess at the right of the Crib, where he had screened a little corner from sight. Anne's maid who had remained to wait upon Mary, retired to the little cellar like cave on the left of the Crib Cave, and did not come forth until all the visitors had departed. She was a quiet, modest person. I saw neither Mary nor Joseph nor the maid examining the gifts or showing any worldly pleasure on their account. They were accepted with thanks, and with liberality were again distributed to the needy.

That maid was a relative of Anne, and a robust and very serious person.

On this evening and during the night, I saw in Bethlehem only at Joseph's paternal house a noisy bustling to and fro and, when the Kings entered the city, there was some little excitement; around the Crib Cave all was, at first, very quiet. After awhile, I saw here and there in the distance Jews lurking and whispering together, and giving notice in the city of what they saw. I saw also in Jerusalem on this day many old Jews and priests hurrying to and fro with writings to Herod, and then all became quiet as if they wished the subject dropped.

At last, the Kings with their people held, under the cedar over the Suckling Cave, a religious service. The singing was most touching, the boys' sweet voices mingling with those of the elders. After the service, the Kings went with a part of their followers to a large inn at Bethlehem. The others slept in the tents between the Crib and the Suckling Cave, which latter they had also taken possession of for the storing of part of their treasures. The white tent before the Crib was occupied by some of the most distinguished of the nobles.

15. The Second Day of the Kings At the Crib. Their Departure

On the next day, the Kings again visited the Crib Cave separately. During the whole day, I saw much given away by them, especially to the shepherds out in the field where the beasts had been sheltered. I saw poor old women bent with age going around with mantles over their shoulders given them by the Kings' generosity. I saw crowds of Jews from Bethlehem thronging around the good people, trying by every means in their power to extort presents from them, and looking through all that they had with a design to cheat. I saw the Kings freeing several of their people who wanted to remain among the shepherds. They gave them some of the beasts of burden with

Life of Jesus Christ

all kinds of covers and vessels packed on them, also golden grains, or gold dust, and they parted from them most cordially. I know not why their number was so diminished; perhaps many went away, or were sent home the preceding night.

There was also a quantity of bread given away. I do not know where they got so much, but true it is that they had it. They were accustomed to bake wherever they encamped. I think they must already have received a warning to diminish their luggage as much as possible on their return journey.

That evening I saw the Kings in the Crib Cave, taking leave. Mensor entered first alone, and the Blessed Virgin gave him the Child in his arms. He shed abundant tears, and his face was beaming with joy. Then followed the others and took leave with many tears. They again offered numerous gifts: a great roll of precious stuff; pieces of silk, some whitish, others red; also flowered stuffs, and many very fine covers. They left their large mantles also with the Holy Family. They were fine wool of a pale delicate color, and so light that they floated on the breeze. They brought also numerous dishes piled one above the other, boxes of grain, and a basket full of pots containing delicate green plants bearing tiny leaves and white blossoms. About three of these small pots stood in the middle of a larger one; still another could have found room between them and the rim of the large pot. They were arranged in the basket, one above the other. There were also long, narrow baskets containing birds, such as I had seen hanging on the dromedaries, and which they used for food. They all wept much when parting from the Child and Mary. I saw the Blessed Virgin standing by them when they took their leave. The Kings' gifts were received by Mary and Joseph with touching humility and sincere thanks to the donors, but without any manifestations of

pleasure. During the whole of this wonderful visit, I never saw in Mary the least

shadow of self-interest. In her love for the Child Jesus and compassion for St. Joseph, she thought that the possession of these treasures would, perhaps, prevent their being treated in Bethlehem with such contempt as had been shown them upon their arrival, for Joseph's trouble and mortification on that account had been to her a source of suffering.

Lamps were already lighted in the Crib Cave, when the Kings took leave. They went out behind the hill toward the east, to the field in which were their people and beasts. In it stood a high tree whose spreading boughs shaded a wide circumference. The tree was very old and had a legend of its own, for Abraham and Melchisedech had met under its branches. The shepherds and the people around regarded it as sacred. A spring gushed up before it, the waters of which the shepherds used at certain seasons on account of their healing qualities. There was near the tree a furnace which could be covered, and at both sides huts affording shelter at night. A hedge surrounded the whole tract. Thither went the Kings, and found all the followers still remaining to them gathered together. A light was suspended from the tree, and under it they prayed, and sang with indescribable sweetness.

Joseph entertained the Kings again in the tent by the Crib, and then they and their nobles returned to their inn at Bethlehem. Meanwhile, the governor of the city, (acting on a secret order from Herod or moved by a spirit of officiousness, I know not) had resolved to arrest the Kings then in Bethlehem, and accuse them to Herod as disturbers of the peace. I know not when he was going to execute his resolve, but to the Kings that night in Bethlehem and to their followers in their tents near the Crib, an angel appeared in sleep, warning them to depart forthwith and to hasten home by another way. Those in the tents immediately awakened Joseph, and told him the order just received. While they

proceeded to

Life of Jesus Christ

arouse the whole encampment and order the tents to be taken down, which was done with incredible speed, Joseph hurried off to Bethlehem to announce it to the Kings. But they, leaving most of their baggage behind them, had already started from the city. Joseph met them on the way and told them his errand. They informed him that they, too, had received similar instructions from an angel. Their hurried departure was unnoticed in Bethlehem. Issuing forth quietly and without their baggage, an observer might have concluded that they were going to their people, perhaps for prayer. While they were still in the Cave, weeping and taking leave, their followers were already starting in separate bands in order to be able to travel more quickly, and were hurrying to the south, by a route different from that by which they had come, through the desert of Engaddi along the Dead Sea.

The Kings implored the Holy Family to flee with them. On their refusal, they begged Mary at least to conceal herself with Jesus in the Suckling Cave, that she might not on their account be molested.

They left many things to St. Joseph to give away. The Blessed Virgin, taking the veil from her head, bestowed it upon them. She had been accustomed to envelope the Infant Jesus in its folds when holding Him in her arms. The Kings still held the Child in their arms. They were shedding tears and uttering most touching words. At last they gave their light silk mantles to Mary, mounted their dromedaries, and hurried away. I saw the angel by them in the field, pointing out the way they should take. The caravan was now much smaller, and the beasts but lightly burdened. Each King rode at about a quarter of an hour's distance from the others. They seemed to have vanished all on a sudden. They met again in a little city, and then rode forward less rapidly than they had done on leaving Bethlehem. I always saw the angel going on

before them, and sometimes speaking with them.

Mary, wrapping the Child Jesus in her mantle, at once withdrew to the Suckling Cave. The gifts of the Kings and all that they had left, were also taken thither by the shepherds who had tarried around the encampment in the valley. The Kings' people who had preferred to remain behind their masters lent a helping hand.

The three oldest of the shepherds, who had been the first to do homage to Jesus, received very rich presents from the Kings. When it was discovered in Bethlehem that the caravan had departed, the travelers were already near Engaddi, and the valley in which they had encamped was, with the exception of some tent poles left standing and the footprints in the grass, lonely and still as before.

The appearance of the royal caravan had caused great excitement in Bethlehem. Many now regretted that they had refused lodgings to Joseph; some spoke of the Kings and their followers as of a swarm of adventurers, while others connected their advent with the accounts they had heard of the wonderful apparitions to the shepherds. I saw from the city hall a proclamation made to the assembled citizens; viz., that they should beware of all preposterous opinions and superstitious reports, and go no more to the abode of those people outside the city.

When the crowd had dispersed, I saw Joseph at two different times conducted to the city hall. The second time, he took with him some of the gifts of the Kings, which he presented to the old Jews who had taken him to task, and he was set at liberty. There was another way leading from the city to the neighborhood of the Crib Cave, not by the city gate, but from that place where Mary, on the evening of her arrival with Joseph in Bethlehem, had rested under the tree while waiting for Joseph to find a lodging. This point of egress I saw the Jews blocking

up with a fallen tree. They also erected a watch house with a bell from which was a rope stretched

Life of Jesus Christ

across the road. Thus anyone trying to go that way would soon be discovered.

I saw also about sixteen soldiers with Joseph at the Crib Cave. But when they found besides himself only Mary and the Child, they returned to the city to report.

Joseph had carefully concealed the royal gifts. There were other caves in the hill under that of the Crib. No one knew of them but Joseph, who had discovered them long ago in his boyhood. They had existed from the time of Jacob who, when Bethlehem counted only a couple of huts, had there a tent with his followers.

The gifts of the Kings, the woven stuffs, the mantles, the golden vessels—all after the Resurrection were consecrated to religious uses. Each King had three light mantles and one, thick and heavy, for bad weather. The thin ones were of very fine wool, yellow and red mixed, and so light that they floated on the breeze as the wearers moved along. On festive occasions, they were exchanged for mantles of silk; they were not dyed, but of the original, lustrous shade. The train was embroidered around the edge with gold, and it was so long that it had to be carried. I had also a vision of the raising of silkworms. In a region between the country of Seir and Theokeno, I saw trees full of silkworms. Every tree was surrounded by a little ditch of water, in order to prevent the worms from crawling away. Fodder was scattered under the trees, and from their branches hung little boxes. Out of these boxes the weavers took chrysalides, about a finger in length, from which they wound off a web like that of a spider. They fastened a number of these chrysalides before the breast, and spun from them a fine thread which they rolled on a piece of wood provided with a hook. I saw the silk

weavers among the trees at their looms, which were very simple. The strips of stuff woven were as wide, perhaps, as my bed.

16. The Return of St. Anne

After the departure of the Kings, the Holy Family went over into the other cave, and I saw the Crib Cave quite empty, the ass alone still standing there. Everything, even the hearth, had been cleared away. I saw Mary peaceful and happy in her new abode which had been arranged somewhat comfortably. Her couch was near the wall and by her rested the Child Jesus in an oval basket made of broad strips of bark. The upper end of the basket, where the head of the Infant Jesus lay, was arched over with a cover. The basket itself stood on a woven partition, before which Mary sometimes sat with the Child beside her. Joseph had a separate space at a little distance. Above the movable partition, there projected from the wall a pole to which a lamp was suspended. I saw Joseph bringing in a pitcher of water and something in a dish. But he did not go any more to Bethlehem for necessaries; the shepherds brought him all that he needed.

And now I saw Zachary coming for the first time from Hebron to visit the Holy Family. He wept for joy as he held the Child in his arms, and recited, with some little changes, the canticle of thanksgiving that he had uttered at John's circumcision. He spent the following day with Joseph, and then took his departure.

Many persons going up to Bethlehem for the Sabbath called also at the Crib Cave; but when they no longer found Mary there, they went on to the city.

Anne now came back to the Mother of God. She had been eight days with her youngest sister, who had married into the tribe of Benjamin. She lived about three hour's distance from Bethlehem, and had several

sons who later became disciples of Jesus; among them was the bridegroom of Cana. Anne's eldest daughter was with her. She was taller than Anne and looked almost as old. Anne's second husband

Life of Jesus Christ

also was with her. He was older and taller than Joachim, was named Eliud, and was engaged at the Temple where he had something to do with the cattle intended for sacrifice. Anne had a daughter by this marriage, and she, too, was called Mary. At the time of Christ's birth, the child may have been from six to eight years old. By her third husband, Anne had a son, who was known as the brother of Christ. There is a mystery connected with Anne's repeated marriages. She entered into them in obedience to the divine command. The grace by which she had become fruitful with Mary had not yet been exhausted. It was as if a blessing had to be consumed.

Mary told Anne all about the Kings, and she was very much touched at God's bringing those men so far to adore the Child. She was filled with emotion on seeing their gifts, upon which she looked as expressions of their adoration. She helped to arrange and pack them, and she also gave many of them away. Anne's maid was still with Mary. When in the Crib Cave, she stayed in the little cellar-like cave to the left, and now she slept under a shed that Joseph had put up for her just in front of their present abode. Anne and her daughters slept in the Crib Cave. I saw that Mary let Anne take care of the Child Jesus, a favor she had not granted to anyone else. I saw something that very much affected me. The hair of the Infant Jesus, which was yellow and crisp, ended in very fine rays of light which glistened and sparkled through one another. I think they curled the Child's hair, for they twisted it over the little head when they washed it. Then they put a little cloak around Him. I always saw Mary, Joseph, and Anne full of devout emotion for the Child Jesus; but their expression of it was quite unaffected and simple, as is always the case among holy, chosen souls. The Child displayed a love in turning toward Its Mother such as is by no means usual in young children. Anne was so happy when she was nursing

the Child. Mary always laid It in her arms.

The King's gifts were now hidden in the cave in which Mary had taken up her abode. They were in a wicker chest placed in a recess of the wall and perfectly concealed from sight.

Anne's husband with her daughters and maid soon returned home, taking with them many of the royal gifts. Anne was now all alone with Mary and Joseph, and she remained until Eliud and the maid came back. I saw her and Mary weaving or embroidering covers. She slept in the cave with Mary, but separate.

There were again in Bethlehem, soldiers seeking in many houses after the king's son newly-born. They especially importuned with their questions a noble Jewish lady who was in childbed, but they went no more to the Crib Cave. It was now reported that only a poor, Jewish family had been there, but of them nothing more could be learned. Two of the old shepherds went to Joseph (two of those that had first gone to the Crib) and warned him of what was going on in Bethlehem. Then I saw Joseph, Mary, and Anne with the Child Jesus making their way from the cave to the tomb under that large cedar tree beneath which I had heard the Kings singing one evening. It was distant from the cave about seven and a half minutes. The tree stood upon a hill at the foot of which was an obliquely lying door opening into a passage that led to a perpendicular door which closed the entrance to the tomb. The shepherds often stayed in the forepart of it. In front of the tomb was a spring. The tomb cave itself was not square, but rather rounded in form. At the upper end, which was somewhat broader, something like a scalloped stone coffin stood on heavy supports upon a foundation of stone; one could see between it and the coffin. The interior of the cave

was of soft, white stone. I saw the Holy Family entering it by night with a covered light. In the cave that they had vacated nothing now

Life of Jesus Christ

was to be seen which could attract notice. The beds had been rolled up and taken away, as well as all their household effects. It looked like an abandoned dwelling place. Anne carried the Child in her arms, Joseph and Mary at her side, while the shepherds led the way as guides. And now I had a vision, but I do not know whether it was seen by the Holy Family or not. I saw around the Child Jesus in the arms of Anne a glory made up of seven angelic figures entwined together and leaning one upon the other. There were, besides, many other figures in this aureola, and on either side of Anne, of Joseph, and of Mary, I saw figures of light supported by them, held up, as it were, under the arms.¹ Passing through the first entrance, they shut it and went on into the interior of the tomb cave.

A couple of days before Anne's return home, I saw some shepherds entering the tomb cave and speaking to Mary; they told her that government officials were coming to seek her Child. Joseph hurried off with the Child Jesus wrapped in his mantle, and I saw Mary, for half a day perhaps, sitting in the cave very anxious and without the Child.

When Eliud with Anne's maid came again from Nazareth to take Anne home, I saw a very beautiful ceremony celebrated in the Crib Cave. Joseph had taken advantage of Mary's withdrawal to the tomb cave, and with the help of the shepherds had adorned the whole interior of the Crib Cave. It was festooned with flower garlands, both walls and roof, and in the center stood a table. All the beautiful carpets and stuffs of the Kings that had not yet been removed, were spread over the floor and hung in festoons from the walls. A cover was spread on the table, and on it was placed a pyramid of flowers and foliage that reached to the opening in the roof. On top of the pyramid hovered a dove. The whole cave was full

1. This signifies the numerous disciples that proceeded from Anne.

of light and splendor. The Child Jesus in His little basket cradle was placed upon a stool on the table. He sat upright as He had done on the lap of His Mother at the adoration of the Kings. Joseph and Mary were standing on either side of Him. They were adorned with wreaths, and they drank something out of a glass. I saw choirs of angels in the cave. All were very happy and full of emotion. It was the anniversary of Joseph and Mary's espousals.

When the celebration was over, I saw Anne and Eliud going away and taking with them on two asses what still remained of the Kings' gifts.

The Holy Family immediately set about preparing for their own departure. Their household effects had steadily diminished. The portable partitions and other pieces of furniture made by Joseph were now bestowed upon the shepherds, who removed them at once.

I saw the Blessed Virgin going twice by night to the Crib Cave with the Child Jesus, and laying It on a carpet on the spot upon which It was born. Then she knelt down at Its side and prayed. I saw the whole cave filled with light as at the moment of the Birth. It was now entirely cleared out, for Anne on reaching home had dispatched two of her servants to get whatever the Holy Family would not need on their journey. I saw them returning with the two asses on which they rode laden with goods. The cave to which the Holy Family had removed, as well as the Crib Cave, were now quite empty; they had also been swept out, for Joseph wanted to leave everything perfectly clean.

On the night preceding their departure for the Temple, I saw Mary and Joseph taking formal leave of the Crib Cave. They spread the deep red cover of the Kings first over that spot upon which the Child Jesus was

born, laid the Child on it, and kneeling beside It prayed. Then they laid the Child in the Crib and again prayed beside It; and, lastly, on the

Life of Jesus Christ

place where It had been circumcised where, too, they knelt in prayer. Joseph had caused the young she ass to be pawned among his relatives, for he was still resolved to return to Bethlehem and build himself a house in the valley of the shepherds. He had mentioned his intention to the shepherds, saying that he would take Mary for awhile to her mother, that she might recover from the hardships undergone in her late abode. He left all kinds of things with them.

17. Mary's Purification

Before the break of day, Mary seated herself on the ass, the Child Jesus on her lap. She had only a couple of covers and one bundle. She sat upon a side seat that had a little footboard. They started to the left around the Crib hill and off by the east side of Bethlehem unperceived by anyone.

I saw them at midday resting at a spring that was roofed in and surrounded by seats. A couple of women came out here to Mary, bringing to her little mugs and rolls.

The offering that the Holy Family had with them was hanging in a basket on the ass. The basket had three compartments; two contained fruit, and in the third, which was of open wickerwork, were doves. Toward evening, when about a quarter of an hour's distance from Jerusalem, they turned and entered a small house that lay next a large inn. The owners were a married couple without children, and by them the holy travelers were welcomed with extraordinary joy. The house lay between the brook Cedron and the city. I saw Anne's man servant and the maid stopping with these people on their journey home, at which time also they engaged quarters for the Holy Family. The husband was

a gardener; he clipped the hedges and kept the road in order. The wife was a relative of Johanna Chusa. They appeared to me to be Essenians.

Mary's Purification

281

The whole of the next day, I still saw the Holy Family with the old people outside Jerusalem. The Blessed Virgin was almost all the time alone in her room with the Child which lay upon a low, covered projection of the wall. She was always in prayer, and appeared to be preparing herself for the sacrifice. I received at that moment an interior instruction as to how we should prepare for the Holy Sacrifice. I saw in her room myriads of angels adoring the Child Jesus. Mary was wholly absorbed in her own interior. The old people did out of pure love all they could for the Mother of God. They must have had some presentiment of the Child's holiness.

I had a vision also of the priest Simeon. He was a very aged, emaciated man with a short beard. He had a wife and three grown sons, the youngest of whom was already twenty years old. Simeon dwelt at the Temple. I saw him going through a narrow, dark passage in the wall of the Temple to a little cell which was built in the thick walls. It had only one opening, from which he could look down into the Temple. Here I saw the old man kneeling and praying in ecstasy. The apparition of an angel appeared before him, telling him to notice particularly the first Child that would, early the next morning, be brought for presentation, for that It was the Messiah whom he had now awaited so long. The angel added that, after seeing the Child, he would die. Oh, what a beautiful sight that was to me! The little cell was so bright, and the old man radiant with joy! He went home full of gladness, announced to his wife the good tidings of the angel, and then returned to his prayer. I have seen that the pious priests and Israelites of those times did not sway to and fro so much when at prayer as the Jews of our days; but I saw them scourging themselves. Anna in her Temple cell was also rapt in prayer; and she, too, had a vision.

Early in the morning while it was still quite dark,

Life of Jesus Christ

I saw the Holy Family accompanied by the two old people going into the city and to the Temple. The ass was laden as if for a journey, and they had with them the basket of offerings. They first entered a court that was surrounded by a wall, and there the ass was tied under a shed. The Blessed Virgin and Child were received by an old woman and conducted along a covered walk up to the Temple. The old woman carried a light, for it was still dark. Here in this passage came Simeon full of expectation to meet Mary. He spoke a few joyous words with her, took the Child Jesus, pressed Him to his heart, and then hurried to another side of the Temple. Since the preceding evening, when he had received the announcement of the angel, he had been consumed by desire. He had taken his stand in the women's passage to the Temple, hardly able to await the coming of Mary and her Child.

Mary was now led by the woman to a porch in that part of the Temple in which the ceremony of presentation was to take place. Anna and another woman (Noemi, Mary's former directress) received her. Simeon came out to the porch and conducted Mary with the Child in her arms into the hall to the right of the women's porch. It was in this porch that the treasure box stood by which Jesus was sitting when the widow cast in her mite. Old Anna, to whom Joseph had handed over the basket of fruit and doves, followed with Noemi, and Joseph retired to the standing place of the men.

It was understood at the Temple that several women were coming today to offer sacrifice, and preparations had been made accordingly. Numerous pyramidal lamps were burning round the walls, the little flames rising out of a disk supported upon an arm in the form of an arch, which shone almost as brightly as the light itself. On the disk hung extinguishers which, when struck together above the flame, put it out.

Before the altar, from whose corners

projected horns, was placed a chest, the doors of which opened outward and afforded supports for a tolerably large slab, the whole forming a table. This surface was covered first with a red cloth and over that a white transparent one, both of which fell to the floor. On the four corners burned lamps with several branches; in the center of the table was a cradle-shaped basket, and near it two oval dishes and two small baskets. All these objects, as also the priests' vestments, which were lying on the horned altar, were kept in the chest whose open doors formed the table. A railing enclosed the whole. On both sides of this hall were rows of seats in tiers where priests were sitting in prayer.

Simeon conducted Mary through the altar rail and up to the table of sacrifice. The Infant Jesus, wrapped in His sky-blue dress, was laid in the basket cradle. Mary wore a sky-blue dress, a white veil, and a long, yellowish mantle. When the Child had been placed in the cradle, Simeon led Mary out again to the standing place of the women. He then proceeded to the altar proper, whereon lay the priestly vestments and at which, besides himself, three other priests were vesting. And now one of them went behind, one before, and two on either side of the table, and prayed over the Child, while Anna approached Mary, gave her the doves and fruit in two little baskets, one on top of the other, and went with her to the altar rail. Anna remained there while Mary, led again by Simeon, passed on through the railing and up to the altar. There upon one of the dishes she deposited the fruit, and into the other laid some coins; the doves she placed upon the table in the basket. Simeon stood before the table near Mary while the priest behind it took the Child from the cradle, raised It on high and toward the different parts of the Temple, praying all the while. Simeon next received the Child from him, laid It in Mary's arms, and, from a roll of parchment that lay near him on a desk, prayed over

Life of Jesus Christ

her and the Child.

After that Simeon again led Mary to the railing, whence Anna accompanied her to the place set apart for the women. In the meantime, about twenty mothers with their firstborn had arrived. Joseph and several others were standing back in the place assigned to the men.

Then two priests at the altar proper began a religious service accompanied by incense and prayers, while those in the rows of seats swayed to and fro a little, but not like the Jews of the present day.

When these ceremonies were ended, Simeon went to where Mary was standing, took the Child into his arms and, entranced with joy, spoke long and loud. When he ceased, Anna also filled with the Spirit, spoke a long time. I saw that the people around heard them indeed, but it caused no interruption to the other ceremonies. Such praying aloud appeared not to be unusual. But all were deeply impressed, and regarded Mary and the Child with great reverence. Mary shone like a rose. Her public offerings were indeed the poorest; but Joseph in private gave to Simeon and to Anna many little, yellow, triangular pieces to be employed for the use of the Temple, and chiefly for the maidens belonging to it who were too poor to meet their own expenses. It was not everyone that could have his children reared in the Temple. Once I saw a boy in Anna's care. I think he was the son of a prince, or king, but I have forgotten his name.

I did not witness the purification ceremonies of the other mothers; but I had an interior conviction that all the children offered on that day would receive special grace, and that some of the martyred innocents were among them. When the Most Holy Child Jesus was laid upon the altar

in the basket cradle, an indescribable light filled the Temple. I saw that God was in that light, and I saw the heavens open up as far as the Most Holy Trinity.

Mary was now led back into the court by Anna and Noemi. Here she took leave of them, and was joined by Joseph and the old people with whom she and Joseph had lodged. They went with the ass straight out of Jerusalem, and the good, old people accompanied them a part of the way. They reached Bethoron the same day, and stayed overnight in the house which had been Mary's last stopping place on her journey to the Temple thirteen years before. Here some of Anne's people were waiting to conduct them home.

18. Feast Picture

I saw the festival of the Purification celebrated also in the spiritual church. It was filled with angelic choirs and in the center above them, I saw the Most Holy Trinity and in It something like a void. In the middle of the church stood an altar and on it a tree with broad, pendent leaves, similar to the trees in Paradise by which Adam fell.

I saw the Blessed Virgin with the Child Jesus in her arms floating up from the earth to the altar, while the tree on the same inclined low before her and began to wither. A magnificent angel in priestly garments, a halo round his head, approached Mary. She gave him the Child, and he laid It upon the altar. At that instant I saw the Most Holy Trinity as ever before in Its fullness. I saw the angel give to Mary a little shining ball whereon was the figure of a swathed Child, and I saw her with this gift hovering over the altar. From all sides, I saw crowds of poor people approaching Mary with lights. She reached those lights to the Child on the ball into which they seemed to pass, and then to reappear. I saw that all these lights united into one, which spread over Mary and the Child, and illumined all things. Mary had extended her wide mantle over the whole earth. And now there was a festival.

Life of Jesus Christ

I think that the withering of the Tree of Knowledge at Mary's appearance and the offering of the Child to the Most Holy Trinity signified the reuniting of the human race with God, and through Mary those scattered lights became one light in the light of Jesus, and illumined all things.

19. Death of Holy Simeon

I saw that Simeon, after prophesying in the Temple, returned home and fell sick. I saw him on his couch giving his last advice to his wife and sons, and imparting to them his joy. Then I saw him die. There were several old Jews and priests praying around him.

When he had breathed his last, they carried the body into another room where, without stripping it, it was washed. The body was laid on a board pierced with holes, under which was a copper basin to receive the water as it fell. A large sheet was thrown over the corpse, and under that the washing was performed. Green leaves and herbs were then strewn plentifully over it and a wide cloth bound firmly around it, as is done in the swathing of a child. The corpse was so stiff and straight that I was tempted to think it was bound to a board. The burial took place in the evening. Six men with lights carried the corpse on a board with low, curved sides to the sepulcher hewn in a hill not far from the Temple. It was entered through an oblique door; the interior walls were ornamented with stars and various figures like the Blessed Virgin's cell at the Temple. I noticed the same kind of ornamentation in St. Benedict's first cloister. The corpse was deposited in the center of the little cave, the passage around it being left free; then some religious rites were solemnized. They laid all kinds of things around the corpse: coins and little stones and leaves, I think. I do not now remember all

distinctly. Simeon was related to Veronica

and, through his father, with Zachary also. His sons served in the Temple, and were always, though in secret, on terms of friendship with Jesus and His relatives. Some of them before and some after the Ascension of Our Lord, joined the disciples. At the time of the first persecution they did much for the Community.¹

20. Return of the Holy Family to Nazareth

I saw the Holy Family returning to Nazareth by a much more direct route than that by which they had gone to Bethlehem. On their first journey, they had shunned the inhabited districts and seldom put up at an inn; but now they took the straight route, which was much shorter.

Joseph had in his cloak pocket some little rolls of thin, yellow, shining leaves on which were letters. He had received them from the Holy Kings. The shekels of Judas were thicker, and in the form of a tongue.

I saw the Holy Family arrive at Anne's, in Nazareth. The eldest sister of Mary, Mary Heli, with her daughter Mary Cleophas, a woman from Elizabeth's place, and that one of Anne's maids who had been with Mary in Bethlehem were there. A feast was held such as had been celebrated at the departure of the child Mary for the Temple. Lamps burned above the table, and there were some old priests present. Things went on quietly. Though there was great joy over the Child Jesus, yet it was a calm, inward joy. I have never seen much excitement among those holy souls. They partook of a slight repast, the women as usual eating apart from the men. I can remember no more of this vision, although I must have been present in a very real way, for I had to accomplish in it a work of prayer.

1. The early Christians.

Life of Jesus Christ

In Anne's garden, notwithstanding the season, I saw numbers of pears, plums, and other fruits still on the trees, although the leaves had already fallen.

I have always forgotten to say a word about the weather in Palestine during the winter season, because being so accustomed to it myself, I think that everyone else knows it, too. I often see rain and fog, and sometimes snow, but it soon melts away, and I see many trees upon which fruit is still hanging. There are in the year several harvests, the first in what corresponds to our spring. In the present season, winter, I see the people on the roads wrapped up in mantles which are thrown over the head also. On the sacred night of Christmas, I always see everything green, blossoming, and full of flowers, the animals frolicsome, the vineyards laden with luscious grapes, and I hear the sweet caroling of birds; but immediately after, it is again quiet and just as it usually is there at this season. The tree outside of Bethlehem and under which Mary stood while Joseph was seeking an inn was, as long as she remained under it, quite green. It afforded ample shelter. But when she left it, it resumed its wintry nakedness. This was perhaps only a mark of reverence; but the Blessed Virgin was fully conscious of it. The shepherd field was, however, already green at this season, for they watered it.

The road from Anne's house to Joseph's in Nazareth was about one half-hour's distance, and ran between gardens and hills. I saw Joseph at Anne's loading two asses with many different things, and going on before with Anne's maid to Nazareth. Mary followed with Anne, who carried the Child Jesus.

Mary and Joseph had no care of the housekeeping. They were provided

with all things by Anne, who often went to see them. I saw her maid carrying provisions to them in two baskets, one on her head, the other in her hand.

I saw the Blessed Virgin knitting, or crocheting

little robes. To her right side was fastened a ball of wool and she had in her hands two short needles of bone, I think, with little hooks at the end; one was about half an ell long, the other shorter. The stitches were arranged on the needles above the hooks, over which in doing the work the thread was thrown, and the stitch thus formed. The finished web hung between the two needles. I saw Mary thus working, either standing or sitting by the Child Jesus, who lay in His little basket cradle.

I saw St. Joseph, out of long strips of bark—yellow, brown, and green—plating screens, large surfaces, and covers for ceilings. He had a stock of this woven board-like work piled under a shed near the house. He wove into them all kinds of patterns, stars, hearts, etc. I thought as I looked at them that he had no idea how soon he would have to leave all.

I saw the Holy Family while at Nazareth visited also by Mary Heli. She came with St. Anne, bringing with her her grandson, a boy of about four years, the child of her daughter Mary Cleophas. I saw the holy women sitting together, caressing the Child Jesus, and laying It in the little boy's arms; they acted just as people do nowadays. Mary Heli lived in a little town about three hours east of Nazareth. She had a house almost as large as her mother's. It had a courtyard surrounded by a wall, and in it a well with a pump. On pressing with the foot at the base of the pump, the water flowed out into a stone basin before it. Mary Heli's husband was named Cleophas. Their daughter Mary Cleophas, who had married Alpheus, lived at the other end of the town.

That evening I saw the holy women praying together. They were standing in front of a little table, which was fastened to the wall and covered with red and white. On it lay a roll which Mary unfolded and hung up on the wall. A figure was embroidered on it in pale colors; it

was like a corpse entirely enveloped in a long, white mantle. It had something in its arms.

Life of Jesus Christ

I saw a picture like it at Anne's during the festival before Mary's departure for her Presentation in the Temple. A lamp was burning during their prayer. Mary stood a little in front of the table with Anne and Mary Heli on either side. At certain times, they crossed their hands upon their breast, folded them together, or stretched them forth. Mary read out of a roll that lay before her. They prayed in measured and steady tones; it reminded me of choir chanting.

21. The Flight into Egypt

When Herod saw that the Kings did not return, he thought they had failed to find Jesus, and the whole affair seemed to be dying out. But after Mary's return to Nazareth, Herod heard of Simeon's and Anna's prophecies at the Presentation of the Child in the Temple, and his fears were reawakened. I saw him in as great disquietude as at the time of the Kings' stay in Jerusalem. He was conferring with some aged Jews who read to him from long rolls of writings mounted on rods. He had given orders for a number of men to be gathered together in a large court, and there provided with weapons and uniforms. Things went on as they do with us when soldiers are recruited. I saw that he sent these troops to various places around Jerusalem, from which the mothers were to be summoned to the Holy City. He caused their numbers to be everywhere ascertained. He took these precautions in order to prevent the tumult that would necessarily follow if the news of the projected slaughter of the children was spread. I saw those soldiers in three different places, in Bethlehem, in Gilgal, and in Hebron. The inhabitants were in great consternation, because not able to divine why a garrison was placed in their towns. The soldiers remained about nine months in those places, and the murder of the little ones began when John was about two years old.

Anne and Mary Heli were still at the home of the Holy Family in Nazareth. Mary, with her Child, slept in the apartment to the right behind the fireplace; Anne, to the left; and between hers and that of St. Joseph, Mary Heli. These rooms were not so high as the house itself, and were cut off from one another only by wicker partitions. The ceiling also was of wickerwork. Mary's couch was surrounded by a curtain, or screen. At her feet, in His own little bed, lay the Infant Jesus within Mary's reach when she sat upright. I saw a radiant youth standing at the side of Joseph's couch and speaking to him. Joseph sat up, but overcome by sleep, again lay down. Then the youth caught him by the hand and raised him up. Joseph, now thoroughly aroused, stood up and the youth vanished. Then I saw Joseph going to the lamp that burned in the center of the house, and getting a light. He proceeded to Mary's chamber, knocked, and asked permission to enter. I saw him going in and speaking to Mary who, however, did not open her screen. After this he went out to the stable for the ass, and returning, went into a room wherein were stored all kinds of household goods. He was getting things ready for a journey. Mary arose, quickly clothed herself for travelling, and went to arouse Anne, who got up at once along with Mary Heli and the little boy. I cannot express how touching was the trouble of Anne and the sister. Anne embraced Mary over and over again with many tears, clasping her to her heart as if she were never again to see her. The sister threw herself flat on the floor, and wept. Only just before setting out, did they take the Infant Jesus from His little bed. They all pressed the Child to their heart, and It was given to the little boy to embrace. Mary then took the Child upon her breast, resting It in a strip of stuff that fastened over her shoulders. A long mantle enveloped both Mother and Child, and Mary wore over her head a large veil, which hung down on both sides

Life of Jesus Christ

of her face. She made but few preparations for the journey, and all she did was done quietly and quickly. I did not see her even swathing the Child afresh. The holy travelers took only a few things with them, far fewer than they had brought from Bethlehem, only a little bundle and some coverings. Joseph had a leathern bottle filled with water and a basket with compartments in it, in which were loaves, little jugs, and live birds. There was a cross seat for Mary and the Child on the ass, also a little footboard. They went forward a short distance with Anne, for they took the road in the direction to her house, only somewhat more to the left. When Joseph approached with the ass, Anne again embraced and blessed Mary, who then mounted and rode off. It was not yet midnight when they left the house. The Child Jesus was twelve weeks old. I had seen three times four weeks.

I saw Mary Heli going to her mother's house in order to send Eliud with a servant to Nazareth, after which she returned with the boy to her own home. I next saw Anne in Joseph's house packing everything up for Eliud and the servant to remove to her own house.

The Holy Family passed by many places that night, and not till morning did I see them resting under a shed and taking a little refreshment.

I saw them taking their first night's lodgings in the little village of Nazara, between Legio and Massaloth. The poor, oppressed people of this place who lodged the Holy Family were not, properly speaking, Jews. They had to go far over a mountainous road to Samaria to worship, for their temple was on Mt. Garizim, and they always had to work like slaves on the Temple of Jerusalem and other public buildings. The Holy Family could go no further. They were well received by these outcasts with whom they remained the whole of the following day. On

their return from Egypt, they again visited those poor people. They did the same both going and returning from the Temple

the first time that the Child Jesus made the journey to it. The whole family at a later period was baptized by John, and they afterward joined the disciples of Jesus.

The Holy Family on their flight met only three inns at which to spend the night: here, at Nazara; again at Anim, or Engannim, among the camel dealers; and lastly, among the robbers. At other times, they rested during their tiresome wanderings in valleys and caves and the most out-of-the-way places. Further on from Nazara, I saw them hidden under the great pine tree near which Mary, on her journey to Bethlehem, had been so cold. The persecution of Herod was known in these parts and it was, consequently, unsafe for them. The Ark of the Covenant had once rested under this tree, when Joshua assembled the people and made them renounce their idols.

Later, I saw the Holy Family by a well and balsam bush resting and refreshing themselves. The branches of the bush were notched, and out of them oozed the balsam in drops. The Child Jesus lay on Mary's lap, His little feet bare. To the left behind them, lay Jerusalem far up above the level of the country in which they then were.

When the Holy Family had passed the walls of Gaza, I saw them in the wilderness. No words can depict the difficulties of this journey. They always travelled a mile eastward of the ordinary highway and, as they shunned the public inns, they suffered the want of all necessaries. I saw them quite exhausted with not a drop of water (the little jug was empty) drawing near to a low bush some distance from the road. The Blessed Virgin alighted from the ass and sat down upon the dry grass. Suddenly there jetted high before them a spring of water, which spread over the plain. I witnessed their joy. Joseph dug a hole at a little distance, and

led the ass to it. The poor beast gladly drank from it as it filled. Mary bathed the Child in the spring, and

Life of Jesus Christ

refreshed herself. The sun shone out beautifully for a short time, and the weary travelers were strengthened and full of grateful emotion. They tarried here for two or three hours. On the sixth night, I saw them in a cave near the mount and city of Ephraim. The cave was in a wild ravine, about one hour's distance from the grove of Mambre. I saw the Holy Family arrive, worn-out and dejected. Mary was very sad; she wept, for they were in want of everything. They rested here a whole day and many wonders were vouchsafed them for their refreshment. A spring gushed forth in the cave, a wild goat came running to them and allowed itself to be milked, and they were visibly consoled by an angel. One of the Prophets had often prayed in this cave. Samuel had once sojourned in it, David had guarded his father's sheep around it, and to it had often retired to pray. He had in this cave, received through angels, the divine commands, among them that to slay Goliath.

The last stopping place of the Holy Family in Herod's dominion was near its confines. The innkeepers appeared to be camel dealers, for I saw a number of camels in an enclosed pasture ground. The people were rude and wild, and they enriched themselves by thieving; still they received the Holy Family most graciously. This place was distant a couple of hours from the Dead Sea.

Once I saw Mary sending a messenger to Elizabeth, who then brought her child to a very concealed place in the desert. Zachary accompanied her only a part of the way. When they reached a certain body of water, Elizabeth and the child crossed over on a raft, while Zachary went on to Nazareth by the same route taken by Mary on her visit to Elizabeth. I saw him on his journey. Perhaps he was going to make some inquiries, for there were some friends at Nazareth distressed at Mary's departure.

On a starry night, I saw the Holy Family going through a sandy wilderness covered with low thickets.

The scene was as vivid before me, as if I were really crossing the desert with them. Here and there under the copse wood, venomous snakes lay coiled. With loud hissing, they approached the path and darted their heads angrily toward the Holy Family. But they, shielded by the light that environed them, stepped securely along. I saw other animals with immense fins like wings on their blackish body, with short feet, and a head like that of a fish. They darted along, flying over the ground. At last, the Holy Family came behind the bushes to a deep fissure in the ground, like the walls of a narrow defile, and here they rested.

The last place in Judea by which they passed, had a name that sounded like Mara. I thought of Anne's ancestral place, but it was not it. The people were very rude and uncivilized, and the Holy Family could get nothing from them by way of refreshment.

Leaving this last place and scarcely knowing how to proceed, they pressed on through a desolate region. They could find no road, and a dark, pathless mountain-height stretched out before them. Mary was exhausted and very sad. She knelt with Joseph, the Child in her arms, and cried to God. And behold! Several large, wild beasts, like lions, came running around them, exhibiting friendly dispositions. I understood that they had been sent to show the way. They looked toward the mountain, ran thither and then turned back again, just like a dog that wants someone to follow it. At last the Holy Family followed them and, after crossing the mountain, arrived at a very dismal region.

22. The Holy Family Among Robbers

At some distance from the road by which they were travelling, a light glimmered through the darkness. It proceeded from a hut belonging to a gang of robbers, who had hung a light on a neighboring tree, thus to allure travelers. The road too, here and there, was broken by pits over which cords with little bells were stretched. The ringing of these bells gave notice to the robbers of the presence of luckless wayfarers. All on a sudden, I saw a man with about five comrades surrounding the Holy Family. All were actuated by wicked intentions. But when they looked at the Child, I saw a glittering ray like an arrow penetrating the heart of the leader, who straightaway commanded his comrades to offer no injury to the strangers. Mary also saw the ray. The robber now took the Holy Family to his home, and told his wife how strangely his heart had been moved. The people were at first shy and shamefaced, something very unusual for them; still they approached, little by little, and gathered around the Holy Family, who had seated themselves in a corner on the ground. Some of the men went in and out, while the woman brought to Mary little rolls, fruits, honeycomb, and cups containing something to drink. The ass also was placed under shelter. The woman cleared out a small room for Mary and brought her a little tub of water in which to bathe the Child. She also dried the swathing bands for her at the fire. The husband was deeply impressed by the demeanor of the Holy Family, and especially the appearance of the Child. He said to his wife, "This Hebrew Child is no ordinary child. Beg the Lady to allow us to wash our leprous child in His bathing water. It may, perhaps, do it some good." The wife went to request the favor of the Blessed Virgin; but before she had time to speak, Mary bade her take the water she had used for Jesus' bath, wash the sick child in it,

and it would become cleaner than it was before attacked by the disease. The boy was about three years old and stiff from leprosy. His mother carried him in and put him into the bath. Wherever the water touched him, the leprosy fell like scales to the bottom of the tub; the boy became clean and well. The mother was out of herself with joy; she wanted to embrace Mary and the Child Jesus. But Mary, stretching out her hand, warded her off; she would allow neither the Child nor herself to be touched by her. She told her to dig a hole deep down to a rock, and pour the water just used into it, that she might always have it for similar purposes. Mary spoke with her long, and exacted from her a promise to embrace the first opportunity of escape from her present abode. The people were all delighted; they stood around the Holy Family gazing at them in wonder. During the night, other members of their band came to the hut, and to them the boy's cure was related. The robbers' reverential bearing toward the Holy Family was so much the more remarkable, since I saw that night many travelers, attracted to their hut by the light, immediately taken prisoner and carried deep into the forest to an immense cave that served for their special storehouse. It lay under a thicket, the entrance closely concealed. In it were clothes, carpets, meat, goats, sheep, and innumerable other stolen things, all in profusion. I saw also boys about seven or eight years old whom the robbers had kidnapped. They were cared for by an old woman who lived in the cave.

Mary slept none that night; she sat upon her couch on the floor perfectly still. At early dawn the Holy Family started again on their journey in spite of the robber and his wife, who wanted them to stay longer. They took with them a supply of provisions put up by their grateful host and hostess who also accompanied them a part of the way, that they might escape the snares.

Life of Jesus Christ

The robber and his wife took leave of the Holy Family with expressions of deep feeling, uttering these remarkable words: "Remember us wherever you go!" Upon hearing them, I had a vision in which I saw that the cured boy afterward turned out to be the Good Thief who on the cross said to Jesus: "Remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." The robber's wife, after some time, joined those that dwelt around the balsam garden.

The Holy Family went from here further on into the desert. When they had again lost all trace of anything like a path, they were a second time surrounded by all kinds of animals, among them huge winged lizards and even serpents, which pointed out the way to them.

At a later period, when unable to advance through the sandy plain in which they were, I saw a very lovely miracle. On either side of the road sprouted up the plant Rose of Jericho, with its crisped branches, its tiny flowers in the center, and its straight root. On they went now right joyously, watching as far as the eye could see these plants springing up, and so across the whole plain. I saw that it was revealed to the Blessed Virgin that, at some future day the people of the country would gather these roses and sell them to travelers in exchange for bread. The name of this region sounded like Gaza, or Goze.

I saw the Holy Family arrive at a town and district called Lepe or Lape, in which were numerous canals and ditches with high dams. I saw them crossing the water on a raft. Mary sat on a log, and the ass was standing in something like a trough, or tub. Two ugly, brown-complexioned, half-naked men with flat noses and protruding lips, ferried them over. Our holy travelers came now to the house on the outskirts of the town; but the occupants were so rough and pitiless that, without saying a word,

Mary and Joseph moved further on. I think this was the first pagan Egyptian city they had yet reached. They had

made, up to this time, ten days' journey in the Jewish country and then in the wilderness.

I next saw the Holy Family on Egyptian territory, in a level, green country full of pasture grounds. In the trees were stationed idols like swathed dolls, or like fishes wrapped in broad bands upon which were figures or letters. Occasionally, I saw people fat, but short in stature, approaching these idols and venerating them. The Holy Family sought a little rest under the cattle shed, the cattle going out of their own accord to make room for them. They were in want of food, having neither bread nor water. Mary no longer had nourishment for her Child, and no one gave them anything. Every species of human misery was experienced by them during this flight.

At last, some shepherds drew near to water their cattle. They, too, would have gone away without giving them anything, had not Joseph's entreaties moved them to unlock the well and allow them to have a little water.

Again, I saw the Holy Family weary and exhausted in a forest, at whose egress stood a slender date tree, the fruit all clustered on top. Mary approached the tree, the Child Jesus on her arm, prayed and raised the Child up to it. Instantly the tree bowed down its top as if kneeling, so that Mary could gather all its fruit. It afterward remained in that position. I saw Mary dividing a quantity of the fruit among the naked children who had run after them from the last village.

At a quarter of an hour's distance from this tree, stood another unusually large one of the same kind, very high, and hollow like an old oak. In it the Holy Family lay concealed from the people that followed them.

That evening I saw them taking shelter within the walls of a ruined place, where they stayed overnight.

23. The Balsam Garden

On the next day, the Holy Family continued their journey through a sandy, desolate wilderness. Famishing for water and exhausted by weariness, they sat down on one of the sand hills, and the Blessed Virgin sent up a cry to God. Suddenly, a stream of pure water gushed forth at her side. Joseph removed the sand hill that was over it, and a clear, beautiful, little fountain jetted up. He made a channel for it, and it flowed over quite a large space, disappearing again near its source. Here they refreshed themselves, and Mary bathed the Child Jesus, while Joseph gave drink to the ass and filled the water bottles. I saw all kinds of animals like turtles drinking at the gushing waters. They did not appear at all afraid of the Holy Family.

The soil over which the water had flowed soon began to clothe itself with verdure, and numbers of balsam trees afterward grew there. When the Holy Family returned from Egypt, those trees were large enough to furnish balsam for their refreshment. The place soon grew into a little settlement. Wherever the heathens planted these trees they withered. They thrived only when the Jews whom the Holy Family had known in this country went to live there. I think the wife of that robber whose boy had been cured of leprosy by the bath of the Child Jesus went there, too, for she soon escaped from the robbers. Her boy, however, remained with them some time longer.

A balsam hedge surrounded the garden, and in its center were several large fruit trees. At a subsequent period, another large well was dug, out of which quantities of water were raised by means of a wheel turned by oxen. This water mingled with that of Mary's spring and watered the whole garden; unmixed, it would have proved injurious. I have seen

that the oxen employed in turning the wheel could

Heliopolis

301

not by any means be forced to work from Saturday noon till early on Monday morning.¹

24. The Holy Family Reach Heliopolis

I saw the Holy Family on their way to Heliopolis. From their last night lodgings they were accompanied thither by a good man who, I think, was one of the workmen on that canal over which they had been ferried. They now crossed a long and very high bridge over a wide river (the Nile), which appeared to have several branches, and came to a place before the city gate which was surrounded by a kind of promenade. Here on a tapering pedestal, stood a great idol with the head of an ox, and in its arms something like the figure of a swathed child. The idol was encompassed by a circle of benches, or tables of stone upon which the worshippers laid their sacrifices. Not far off was a very large tree, under which the Holy Family sat down to rest.

They had scarcely seated themselves when the earth began to quake, the idol tottered, and tilted over. A hue and cry instantly arose from the people, and many of the workmen on the canal in the neighborhood came rushing up. But the good man who had accompanied the Holy Family started with them for the city. They were already at the opposite side of the idol place when the terrified crowd, with menacing and abusive words, angrily surrounded them. Suddenly the earth heaved, the huge tree fell, its roots breaking up out of the ground, and there arose a lake of muddy water into which the idol splashed. It sank so deep that one could scarcely see its horns, and some of the most wicked of the bystanders sank with it. The Holy Family now entered the city unmolested, and put up near an idolatrous temple, a large stone building

containing many rooms. Some

1. Compare Catholic Missions, an account of the Balsam Garden, by an eyewitness. 1883, p. 234, etc.

Life of Jesus Christ

of the idols in the temples of the city were likewise overturned.

Heliopolis is also called On. Aseneth, wife of the Egyptian Joseph, resided here with the pagan priest Putiphar, and here also Dionysius the Areopagite studied. The city extends to a great distance around the many-branched river. One sees it from afar lying high above the general level. The river flows through it under the arches that support some of the buildings. Great logs lie in some parts of the river branches, placed there to enable the inhabitants to cross. I saw the ruins of enormous buildings, huge masses of heavy masonry, towers half standing, and even temples almost entire. I saw, too, pillars like towers, around the outside of which one could mount to the top.

The Holy Family dwelt under a low colonnade, in which there were other dwellings besides their own. The supporting pillars were rather low, some round, some square, and above ran a highway for the accommodation of vehicles and pedestrians. Opposite this colonnade was a pagan temple with two courts. Joseph put up before their little abode a screen of light woodwork. There was room for the ass, also. The screen, or light wall that Joseph put up, was of the same kind as he was accustomed to make. I remarked behind a similar screen and set up against the wall, an altar consisting of a small table covered with red and over that a white, transparent cloth; on it stood a lamp.

I saw St. Joseph working at home, and often also abroad. He made long rods with round knobs at the ends, little three-legged stools with a handle by which to grasp them, and a certain kind of basket. He made, also, a great many light, wicker partitions, and little, light towers, some hexagonal, others octagonal. They were formed of long, thin boards, tapering toward the top and ending in a knob. They had an entrance,

and were large enough to allow a man to sit inside as in a sentry box;
they had steps outside,

up which one could mount. I saw little towers like these standing here and there before the pagan temples, also on the flat roofs of the houses. People used to sit in them; perhaps they were watch houses, or maybe they were intended as screens from the sun.

I saw the Blessed Virgin weaving tapestry and doing another kind of work. For the latter she used a staff on the top of which a knot was fastened. I cannot say whether she was spinning or not. I often saw people visiting her and the little Infant Jesus. The Child lay on the ground by Mary's side, in a kind of cradle like a little boat. Sometimes I saw it raised on a frame like a sawing-jack. There were not many Jews in Heliopolis, and I saw them going about with a downcast look as if they had no right to live there.

North of Heliopolis, between it and the Nile, which there divides into several branches, lay the little territory of Goshen, and in it a little place cut up by canals, among which dwelt numbers of Jews whose religious ideas were very much confused. Several of them became acquainted with the Holy Family, and Mary did all kinds of feminine work for them, receiving as payment bread and other provisions. The Jews in the Land of Goshen had a temple, which they compared with the Temple of Solomon; but it was very different.

Not far from his dwelling, Joseph built an oratory where the resident Jews, who possessed no such place of their own, used to assemble with the Holy Family for prayer. It was surmounted by a light cupola which could be thrown open, thus enabling the worshippers to stand under the open sky. In the center of the hall stood an altar, or table of sacrifice, covered, as usual, with red and white; on it lay rolls of parchment. The priest, or teacher, was a very old man. The men and women were not so

separated from one another at prayer as in Palestine; the men stood on one side, the women on the other.

Life of Jesus Christ

The Holy Family dwelt a little more than a year at Heliopolis. They had much to suffer from the Egyptians who hated and persecuted them, on account of their overturned idols; and as the houses were all solidly built, Joseph could not find work at his trade. They left Heliopolis, therefore, but not before they had learned from an angel of the slaughter of the Bethlehemite babes. Both Mary and Joseph were deeply grieved, and the Child Jesus, who was now able to walk, being a year-and-a-half old, shed tears the whole day.

25. The Murder of The Innocent Children

I saw the mothers with their boys, from infants in the arms up to the age of two years, going to Jerusalem. They were from those different places around the Holy City, in which Herod had placed garrisons and in which, by means of officials, he had issued a proclamation to that effect; viz. from Bethlehem, Gilgal, and Hebron. I saw many women even from the Arabian frontiers taking their children to Jerusalem, and these had more than a day's journey to make. The mothers went in bands, some with two children and riding on asses. On their arrival in the city, they were all conducted to a large building, and the husbands who accompanied some of them dismissed. The mandate was joyously obeyed, for the poor people imagined they were going to receive a reward.

The building into which the mothers and their children were ushered, was not far from the house occupied by Pilate at a later period. It stood alone, and so encompassed by walls that no one outside could hear anything going on within. A gateway through double walls led into a large court enclosed on all sides by buildings. Those to the right and left were of one story; that in the middle, which looked

like an old, deserted synagogue, was two stories in height. From all three, doors opened into the court. The middle building was a hall of justice, for I saw in the court before it a stone block, pillars with chains, and such trees as could be bound together by their branches and then suddenly snapped asunder, in order to tear people to pieces.

The mothers were led through the court and into the two side buildings, where they were shut up. It looked to me at first as if they were in a sort of hospital, or lazar house. When they saw themselves thus unexpectedly deprived of liberty, they began to fear, to cry, and to lament.

The lower story of the court of justice was a great hall like a prison, or guardroom; the upper one was also a large hall from which windows opened upon the court. The officers of justice were assembled in the latter, rolls of writing lying before them on tables. Herod himself was there. He wore his crown and a purple mantle bordered with black and lined with white fur. He stood at the windows with many others, looking down upon the slaughter of the Innocents.

The mothers, one by one, with their boys, were summoned from the side buildings into the great hall under the judgment hall. On their entrance, the children were taken from them by the soldiers and carried out into the court where about twenty others were actively at work with swords and lances, piercing the little creatures through throat and heart. Some of the children were still in swaddling clothes, infants in the mother's arms; while others, able to run around, wore little woven dresses. The soldiers did not remove the children's clothing but, having pierced them through the heart and throat, they grasped them by one arm or leg and slung them together in a heap. It was a terrible sight!

The mothers were, one after another, pushed back into the large hall by the soldiers. When the fate of

Life of Jesus Christ

their little ones dawned upon them, they raised a frightful cry, tore their hair, and clung to one another. There were so many of them and, toward the last, they were so crowded together that they could scarcely stir. I think the slaughter lasted till near evening. The bodies of the murdered children were buried together in a great pit in the court. I saw the mothers that night fettered, and taken back to their homes by the soldiers. Similar scenes were enacted in other places, for the massacre was carried on during several days.

The number of the Holy Innocents was indicated to me by another number which sounded like *ducen*, and which I had to repeat until, I think, the whole amounted to seven hundred and seven, or seven hundred and seventeen.

The place of the children's massacre in Jerusalem was the subsequent hall of justice, and not far from that of Pilate; but it was at his time very greatly changed. At Christ's death, I saw the pit in which the murdered children were buried, fall in. Their souls appeared and left the place.

Elizabeth had fled with John into the desert. After a long search, she found a cave, and there she remained with him for forty days. After that, I saw that an Essenian belonging to the community on Mount Horeb and a relative of Anna the Prophetess, brought food to John, at first every eight, afterward every fourteen days, and otherwise provided for him. Before Herod's persecution, John could have been hidden in the neighborhood of his parents' house; but he had made his escape into the desert impelled by divine inspiration. He was destined to grow up in solitude, apart from intercourse with his fellow beings, and destitute of the customary nourishment of man. I saw that that wilderness produced certain fruits, berries, and herbs.

26. The Holy Family Go to Matarea

The Holy Family left Heliopolis on account of the persecution they there endured and because Joseph could not obtain work. They took byroads and went still further into the country, journeying southward toward Memphis. Passing through a little town not far from Heliopolis, they halted in the forecourt of an open, pagan temple, and sat down to rest; when, all on a sudden, down tumbled the idol and fell to pieces. It had the head of an ox with triple horns, and several cavities in the body to receive the sacrifices that were to be consumed. At once arose a tumult among the pagan priests; they seized the Holy Family and threatened them with punishment. But one of them represented to his companions, as they were consulting what measures to take, that the best thing for them to do would be to commend themselves to the God of these strangers; for he remembered, he said, what plagues had come upon their forefathers when they had persecuted those people, and that upon the night of their departure from Egypt the firstborn in every house had died. These words were effectual, and the Holy Family was left in peace. The pagan priest who had spoken for them went soon after to Matarea with several of his people, and there joined the Holy Family and the Jewish community.

Mary and Joseph next went to Troja, a place on the eastern side of the Nile, opposite Memphis. It was large and very dirty. They had some idea of remaining there, but they were not well received; indeed, they could get not even a drink of water, much less a few dates for which they begged. Memphis lay west of the Nile, which was at that point very broad and contained some islands. A part of the city lay also on this side of the river and, in Pharaoh's time, a large palace with gardens and high towers, from which Pharaoh's daughter often looked

Life of Jesus Christ

out on the country around. I saw the spot upon which, among the tall bulrushes, the child Moses was found. Memphis was like three cities in one, for it was built on both sides of the Nile, and appeared also to be connected with Babylon, a city lying eastward of the river and nearer to its mouth. In Pharaoh's time, the country in general around the Nile between Heliopolis, Babylon, and Memphis, was so covered with high stone dams and buildings, and so linked together by canals, that those three cities presented the appearance of one large city. But at the time of the Holy Family, all were separate, immense wastes intervening between them.

The holy travelers proceeded northward from Troja along the river toward Babylon, a dirty, low lying city. Between the Nile and Babylon, they took the route by which they had come and returned a distance of about two hours. Buildings in ruins were scattered here and there along the whole road. After crossing a small branch of the river, or a canal, they reached Matarea, which was built upon a tongue of land jutting out into the Nile. The river bathed the city on two sides. It was, in general, a wretched enough place, built only of date-wood and solid mud covered with rushes. Joseph found plenty of work here. He built more substantial houses of wickerwork with galleries around them, to which the occupants could go for air and recreation.

Here the Holy Family dwelt in a dark, vaulted cave that lay in a retired spot on the land side, not far from the gate by which they had entered. Joseph, as at Heliopolis, built a light screen before it. One of the idols in a little temple fell at their arrival and later all the others did the same. The people were in consternation, but one of the priests quieted them by recalling to their remembrance the plagues of Egypt. After some time, as a little community of Jews and converted pagans gathered around the

Holy Family, the priests gave over to

them the little temple whose idol had fallen at their coming, and Joseph turned it into a synagogue. Joseph was like the patriarch of the community. He taught them how to sing the Psalms correctly, for Judaism in those parts had greatly deteriorated.

Only the poorest Jews dwelt here in Babylon, and that in the most wretched dens and caves. But in the Jewish settlement between On and the Nile, they were numerous and better off. They had a regular temple, for they had lapsed into frightful idolatry. They had a golden calf, a figure with an ox's head, around which were ranged other representations of animals like polecats, or ferrets. These last mentioned animals defend people against the crocodile. (*Ichneumon*). They had, too, an imitation of the Ark of the Covenant and horrible things in it. The idolatry they practiced was of the most shameful kind and, in a subterranean hall, they carried on the most infamous wickedness, deluded by the hope that from it their messiah should come forth. They were exceedingly stiff-necked, and would not be converted. Later on, however, many of them left that settlement and went to Babylon, about two hours distant. In doing so, they could not, on account of the numerous dykes and canals, travel by a straight road; they had to make a detour around On.

These Jews of the Land of Goshen had already made the acquaintance of the Holy Family, while the latter abode in On. Mary while there had done various kinds of work for them, such as knitting and embroidering covers and bands. She would never undertake works for vanity or extravagance, but only useful things and religious vestments. I saw women bringing work to her, which they wanted done in accordance with the requirements of vanity and fashion, and Mary returning it although so much in need of the pay she would have received for it. The

women mocked and scornfully derided her.

The Holy Family at first suffered greatly from

Life of Jesus Christ

want. Good water could not be had and wood failed; the inhabitants used only dried grass and reeds for their cooking. The Holy Family generally ate cold food. Joseph had plenty to do. He improved the poor huts for the people; but they treated him almost like a slave, giving him for his labor only what they themselves thought proper. Sometimes he brought home something as a remuneration for his work, and sometimes he brought nothing. The people were very unskillful in building their huts. They had no wood, excepting here and there a log or two; and even if they had had wood, they had no tools to shape it, for they had only knives of bone or stone. Joseph had brought the most necessary tools with him.

The Holy Family were soon settled somewhat comfortably. They had little stools and tables, wicker screens, and a well-ordered fireplace also. The Egyptians ate sitting flat on the ground. In the wall of Mary's sleeping place I saw a recess that Joseph had hollowed out, and in it was Jesus' little bed. Mary's couch was beside it, and I have often seen her by night kneeling in prayer to God before that little bed. Joseph slept in another enclosed corner.

The oratory of the Holy Family was in a passage outside. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin had separate places in it and Jesus, too, had His little corner, where He prayed sitting, standing, or kneeling. There was a kind of little altar before the Blessed Virgin's place, a small table covered with red and white. This table was like a leaf on hinges that could be let down from or put up against the wall. When let down, it disclosed a shelf in the wall itself and on the shelf were various objects, among them something that was held as sacred. I saw little bushes in pots formed like chalices; a withered, though still whole branch, on top of which was the lily that had blossomed in Joseph's hand when he had

been chosen by lot in the Temple for Mary's spouse; and

something like fine, thin, white sticks that were placed crosswise in the rounded part of the recess. The blossoming lily branch was the top of Joseph's staff; it was stuck in a box about one-and-a-half inches in diameter. The little sticks that were arranged crosswise, were also in a box, a transparent one. There were about five of those little white sticks of the thickness of a coarse straw. They were crossed and bound in the middle to a kind of little sheaf. But one pays very little attention to such things when in vision; one's thoughts are chiefly intent upon the holy personages there presented.

I saw that the Holy Family had to subsist on fruits and bad water. They had been so long without good water that Joseph resolved to saddle the ass, take his leathern bottle, and start for the balsam spring in the desert in order to get some. But the Blessed Virgin was told in prayer by an angelic apparition that she should seek and find a spring at the back of their present abode. I saw her going over the hill in which they dwelt, to a deep vacant lot that lay at some distance between ruined walls. A large, old tree stood on that ground. Mary had in her hand a rod provided with a little scoop, such as the people of that country commonly carry on journeys. She stuck it into the ground near the tree, and a beautiful, clear stream of water instantly gushed forth. She hurried back joyfully to call Joseph, who soon removed the upper crust of earth and disclosed a well which had long ago been dug out and lined with masonry, but which for some time had been choked up and dry. He soon restored it and paved it around very beautifully with stones. At the side of the well toward which Mary had approached, lay a great stone almost like an altar. I think it was used for that purpose in former times.

The Blessed Virgin after that often washed Jesus' clothes and bands here, and dried them in the sun. The well remained unknown and was

used only by

Life of Jesus Christ

the Holy Family until Jesus had grown large enough to go on little errands and even to bring water for His Mother. Once I saw Him taking other children to the well and giving them a drink of the water which He scooped up in a hollow, crooked leaf. The little ones told this to their parents, and so the well became known. Others now began to go to it, though it remained principally in the use of the Jews. Even in the time of the Holy Family, it possessed healing properties for the leprous. Later, when a little chapel had been built over the dwelling of the Holy Family, there was near the high altar a flight of steps leading down to their first abode. There I saw the spring. It was surrounded by dwellings, and its waters used for the cure of leprosy and similar diseases. Even the Turks kept a light burning in the little chapel, and dreaded being overtaken by some misfortune if they neglected it. But the last I saw of the spring, it was lying solitary, surrounded only by trees.

I saw the Boy Jesus bringing water from the well for His Mother for the first time. Mary was in prayer when the Boy slipped to the well with a bottle, and brought it back full of water. Mary was unspeakably affected when she saw Him coming back with the water. She knelt down and implored Him never to do that again, for He might fall into the well. But Jesus replied that He would take care, and that He wanted to render her that service whenever she needed it. If Joseph happened to be working at a little distance from home, and did he leave a tool lying behind him, I used to see the Boy Jesus running after it and bringing it to him. The Boy noticed everything. I think the joy that Mary and Joseph experienced on His account, must have outweighed all their sufferings. Though perfectly childlike, He was very wise, skilled in everything; He knew and understood everything. I often saw Mary and Joseph filled with unspeakable admiration.

When the Boy Jesus took to their owners the covers embroidered or woven by His Mother, who hoped to receive bread in return for her work, I often saw Him teased at first, and consequently sad. But after awhile, the Holy Family was very much loved by the people. I saw other children giving Jesus figs and dates, while many of their elders sought the Holy Family for help and consolation. All in trouble said, "Let us go to the Jewish Child." I saw the Boy going on all kinds of errands, even to a Jewish town a mile distant, to get bread in exchange for His Mother's work. The wild animals, numerous on His route, did Him no harm; on the contrary, they and even the serpents showed Him affection. Once I saw Him going with other children to the Jewish town; He was weeping bitterly over the degradation of the Jews.

When He went for the first time alone to that Jewish town, He wore, also for the first time, the brown robe woven by Mary. It was trimmed around the border with yellowish flowers. I saw Him kneeling and praying on the way. Two angels appeared to Him and spoke of Herod's death, but He said nothing of it to His parents.

27. The Return of the Holy Family from Egypt

I saw the Holy Family's departure from Egypt. Herod was long since dead, but danger still threatened and they could not return. I saw St. Joseph, who was always busy at his trade, very much troubled one evening. The people for whom he had been working had given him nothing; consequently, he had nothing to take home where there was so much need. He knelt down in the open air and prayed. He was greatly afflicted; his sojourn among these people was becoming intolerable. They practiced infamous idolatry, even sacrificing deformed children.

Life of Jesus Christ

The parent that sacrificed a healthy, well-formed child, was thought to be very pious. They had, besides, still more shameful rites that they carried on in secret. Even the Jews in the Jewish towns were to Joseph objects of horror.

While in his trouble he prayed to God for help, I saw an angel appear to him. He bade him arise, and on the following morning depart from Egypt by the public high road. He told him also not to fear, for that he would accompany him. I saw Joseph hastening with the news to the Blessed Virgin and Jesus, and all setting to work to get their few movables packed together on the ass.

Next morning their intention to depart having become known, crowds of sorrowing neighbors came to them, bringing with them all kinds of gifts in little vessels of bark. Several mothers brought their children. There was among them a noble lady with a little boy of several years. She called him Mary's son, because having long abandoned the hope of having a boy, this child had been vouchsafed to her at Mary's prayer. She gave to the Boy Jesus triangular coins, yellow, white, and brown. Jesus first looked at them and then at His Mother. This lady's little son was later on admitted by Jesus into the number of His disciples, and was named Deodatus. The mother's name was Mira.

The people of the place, of whom there were more pagans than Jews, were sincerely grieved at the Holy Family's departure, though a few were glad. These last looked upon them as sorcerers who obtained all they desired through the help of Lucifer, the prince of devils. The Jews could no longer be recognized as Jews, so deeply were they sunk in idolatry.

The Holy Family started, accompanied by all their friends. They took the direction between On and the Jewish town, turning away from On a little to the south, in order to reach the balsam garden. They

wanted to rest there awhile and replenish their water supply. The garden was already flourishing. The balsam trees were as tall as moderately large grapevines and in four rows surrounded the garden, which had an entrance. There were sycamores and all kinds of fruit trees, some like dates. The spring sent a stream around the whole garden. The friends that had accompanied them here took leave, but the Holy Family remained for some hours. Joseph had made some little vessels out of bark; they were covered with pitch, very smooth and nice. He snapped from the reddish balsam twigs the clover-like leaves, and hung the flasks underneath, in order to gather the balsam drops for the journey. When they stopped to rest, he often made, for their ordinary use, vessels and flasks of that kind out of bark. The Blessed Virgin washed and dried some things here. After having rested and refreshed themselves, they proceeded on their way by the common high road.

I had many visions of their journey, which was made without any special danger to them. Mary was often very much distressed, because walking through the hot sand was so painful for the Boy Jesus. Joseph had made for Him, out of bark, shoes that reached above the ankle where they were firmly fastened; still I saw the holy travelers frequently pausing while Mary shook the sand out of the Child's shoes. She herself wore only sandals. Jesus was dressed in His little brown robe, and they often had to seat Him on the ass. For protection against the scorching rays of the sun, all three wore very broad hats made of bark and fastened under the chin with a string.

I saw them passing by many cities, but I now recall only the name Ramses. At last, I saw them in Gaza, where they stopped for three months. There were many pagans in that city. Joseph did not want to return to Nazareth, but to go to Bethlehem; still he was undecided,

because he heard that Archelaus

Life of Jesus Christ

was now reigning over Judea, and he, too, was very cruel. But an angel appeared and put an end to his doubts by telling him that he should return to Nazareth. Anne was still living. She and some of her relatives were the only ones that knew where the Holy Family were during all those years.

I had a glimpse of the Boy Jesus, now seven years old, as He walked between Mary and Joseph on their journey back to Judea from Egypt. I did not see the ass with them then, and they were carrying their bundles themselves. Joseph was about thirty years older than Mary. I saw them on a road in the desert, about two hours' distance from John's cave. The Boy Jesus, as He walked, gazed in that direction, and I saw that His soul was turning to John. At the same time, I saw John at prayer in his cave. An angel in the form of a boy appeared to him, telling him that the Saviour was passing by. John ran out of the cave and, with outstretched arms, flew toward the point that his Saviour was passing. He hopped about and danced with joy. This vision was most touching. John's cave lay deeply buried in a hill. It was not much wider than his own little bed, though it extended some distance in length. The entrance was only a little opening, through which he used to swing himself out. In the top was an oblique aperture that admitted light. I saw in it a reed stand, upon which lay some honeycomb and dried locusts. The latter were yellow and speckled, as large, perhaps, as crabs. The desert in which Jesus fasted is four hours' distance from here. John was clothed in his camel's skin. The angel that appeared to him was like a boy of his own age. I saw him at different periods, small at first and then larger, just as if he were growing up with John. He was not always with him; he used to appear and disappear.

28. John as a Child Growing Up In the Desert

John had already been long in the desert before the Holy Family's return from Egypt. That he had retired there at so young an age was due principally to divine inspiration and partly to his own inclinations, for he was of a meditative nature and loved solitude. He was never in a school; the Holy Ghost Himself taught him in the desert. He was much talked of even from his childhood, for the wonders attendant on his birth were known and a light was often seen around the child. Herod soon laid snares for him, and even before the children's massacre, Elizabeth was obliged to flee with him into the desert. He could walk and help himself at the time. He took refuge not far from the first cave of Magdalen, and Elizabeth visited him sometimes.

When in his sixth or seventh year, I saw him again led into the desert by his mother. When Elizabeth left the house with the boy, Zachary was not home. He loved John so much and his grief at losing him was so great that he was obliged to absent himself in order not to witness his departure. He had, however, given him his blessing; for he was in the habit of blessing both mother and child whenever he left home. John wore a garment of skin. It passed from left to right over the shoulder and breast, was fastened under the right arm, and hung down behind. This was his only garment. His hair was brownish and darker than that of Jesus. He bore in his hand a white staff which he had brought with him from home, and which he always kept in the desert.

I saw him as just described hastening across the country by the hand of his mother. Elizabeth was a tall, active, old woman with a small, delicate face, and she was completely enveloped in a large mantle. John often ran on before her, hopping and jumping,

Life of Jesus Christ

perfectly unrestrained and childlike in action, though not distracted in soul. I saw them crossing a river. There was no bridge at that point, and so they crossed on a raft that was floating on the water. Elizabeth was a very resolute person, no difficulty daunted her; she herself rowed the raft across, using for that purpose the branch of a tree. They now turned eastward and entered a ravine, rocky and desolate above, but lower down covered with bushes and overgrown with strawberries. John now and then ate one. After going some distance into the ravine, Elizabeth took leave of John. She blessed him, pressed him to her heart, kissed him on the cheeks and forehead, and turned away, looking back at him as she retraced her steps, weeping. But the boy appeared wholly unconcerned, and quietly walked on deeper into the ravine. I followed the child with a feeling of uneasiness at his going so far from his mother, and fearing that he would not be able to find his way home again. But just then, a voice said to me, "Be not uneasy. The child knows well what he is about." I went with him and, in several visions, saw his whole after life in the desert. He often told me himself how he denied himself in every way and mortified his senses, his understanding becoming clearer and clearer, learning in an unexplainable way something from everything around him. I saw him when a child playing with flowers and animals. The birds were particularly familiar with him. They lighted upon his head when he was walking or praying, and perched upon his staff when he laid it across the branches. There they sat in numbers, while he watched them and played with them. I saw him also going after other animals, following them into their dens, feeding them, playing with them, or earnestly watching them.

At the opposite extremity of this rocky ravine, the country was somewhat more open, and John pressed on until he reached a little lake with a low shore

covered with white sand. I saw him there wading far out into the water. The fish swam up and gathered around him; he seemed quite at home with them. He lived in this region a long time, and I saw that he wove for himself out of branches a sleeping hut among the bushes. It was very low and only large enough to allow him to lie in it.

Both here and afterward in other places, I often saw by him radiant figures, angels, with whom he treated fearlessly and confidently, though most reverently. They appeared to be teaching him, directing his attention to different things. He had fastened a piece of wood to his staff, thus giving it the form of a cross, also a strip of broad grass, or bark, or leaves like a little flag. He often played with it, waving it here and there. While he lived in this part of the desert, I saw his mother visiting him twice, but they did not meet at this spot. He must have known when she was coming, for he always went some distance to meet her. Elizabeth brought him a tablet with a slender reed for writing.

After his father's death, John went secretly to Juttah, to console Elizabeth. He remained concealed with her for some time. She told him many things of Jesus and the Holy Family, some of which he noted down with strokes on his tablet. Elizabeth wanted him to go with her to Nazareth, but he would not. He returned again to the desert.

Once when Zachary had gone with a herd to the Temple, he was set upon by Herod's soldiers and rudely maltreated in a narrow pass on the side of Jerusalem nearest to Bethlehem, at a spot whence the city could not be seen. The soldiers dragged him into a prison on that side of Mount Zion by which, at a later period, the disciples used to ascend. Zachary was frightfully maltreated, tortured, and at last pierced with a sword, because he would not disclose John's retreat. Elizabeth was at

the time in the desert with John. When she returned to Juttah, he

Life of Jesus Christ

accompanied her part of the way, and then went back to the desert. On reaching Juttah, Elizabeth learned of the murder of her husband and great were her lamentations.

Zachary was buried by his friends in the vicinity of the Temple. He is not that Zachary who was slain between the altar and the Temple and whom I saw at the time of the Crucifixion with the other risen dead. He issued from that part of the wall in which the aged Simeon once had his cell for prayer, and walked about the Temple. The last Zachary was murdered in a struggle that had taken place among many at the Temple, concerning the genealogy of the Messiah and certain privileges and places of individual families.

Elizabeth's sorrow was so great that she could no longer bear to remain in Juttah, without John; consequently, she returned to him in the desert. She soon after died there and was buried by an Essenian, a relative of Anna the Prophetess. The house in Juttah, a very handsomely ordered one, was occupied by her sister's daughter. John secretly returned to it once after his mother's death, after which he buried himself still deeper in the desert and thenceforth was altogether alone. I saw him journeying to the south around the Dead Sea, then up the eastern side of the Jordan, from wilderness to wilderness toward Kedar and even toward Gessur. When he passed from one wilderness to another, I saw him running through broad fields by night. He went to that region where long after I saw John the Evangelist sitting and writing under the high trees. Under those trees grew bushes with berries, of which he sometimes ate. I saw him also eating a certain herb that bears a white flower and has five round leaves like clover. We have at home herbs like them, only smaller. They grow under the hedges, and the leaves have a sourish taste. When I was a child I used to love to chew them while minding the cattle off in

the solitary fields, because I had seen John eating them. I also saw him drawing forth from holes in the trees and picking out of moss on the ground lumps of some brownish-looking stuff, which he ate. I think it was wild honey, for it was very plentiful there. The skin that he had brought with him from home, he now wore around his loins, and over his shoulders hung a brown, shaggy cover which he had woven himself. There were in the desert wool-bearing animals which ran tamely around John, and camels with long hair on their neck. They stood most patiently and allowed him to pull it out. I saw him twisting the hair into cords and weaving from them that covering which he wore hanging around him when he appeared among men and baptized.

I saw him in continual and familiar communication with angels, by whom he was instructed. He slept upon the hard rock and under the open sky, ran over rough stones through thorns and briars, disciplined himself with thistles, wore himself out working on trees and stones, and lay prostrate in prayer and contemplation. He leveled roads, made little bridges, and changed the course of well springs. I often saw him writing in the sand with a reed, kneeling and standing motionless in ecstasy, or praying with outstretched arms. His penance and mortification became more and more severe, his prayer longer and more fervent. He saw the Saviour only three times face to face with his bodily eyes. But Jesus was with him in spirit; and John, who was constantly in the prophetic state, saw in spirit the actions of Jesus.

I saw John when full grown. He was a powerful, earnest man. He was standing by a dry well in the desert, and appeared to be in prayer. A light hovered over him like a cloud, and it seemed to me as if it came from on high, from the water above the earth. Then a light, shining stream fell over him into the basin below. While gazing on this torrent,

Life of Jesus Christ

I saw John no longer at the edge of the basin; he was in it, the shining water flowing over him, and the basin filled by the sparkling stream. Then again, I saw him, as at first, standing on the basin's edge; but I did not see him out of it, nor coming out. I think that the whole was perhaps a vision which John himself had had, and by which he was instructed to begin to baptize; or it may have been a spiritual baptism bestowed upon him in vision.

29. Feast Picture of John the Baptist

I saw in the desert in which John dwelt a spiritual church rising up out of the waters that flowed in streams from on high, from Paradise, that floated in clouds, and welled up in fountains. The church was immeasurably vast; it seemed to be symbolical of Baptism, and it grew with the baptized. It was perfectly transparent like crystal. An octagonal tower arose from the interior and reached up far out of sight. Under it was a great fountain like the baptism fountain of John which he had formed in the desert after a model shown him in vision. In the tower grew a genealogical tree upon which appeared John and his ancestors. There was also an altar, and a wonderful representation of John's conception, birth, circumcision, and life in the desert, of the baptism of Jesus and John's beheading. Far up in the tower, as if on a ladder reaching to Heaven, were seen in admirable order the whole host of Saints, the entire history of the Promise and the Redemption, and the abodes of the Blessed, endless in number. High above all the rest hovered the Blessed Virgin in a mantle so wide as to cover all. All these representations were white and transparent. And now came immense crowds from all sides, kings and peoples in all kinds of costumes; they looked like nations that were migrating. Many passed by the

baptism church and went into the desert, where there is no water of life. Many others entered the church and knelt down by the baptism fountain, by the side of which stood John under the appearance that he presented as a child in the desert. He struck the water with his little staff and sprinkled it over them. And, no matter how tall they were on entering the church, all that were thus sprinkled became small. But many only passed in and out of the church. They who had become little ones, like unto those that enter the Heavenly Kingdom, ascended the high, wonderful tower on the ladder that reached to Heaven. There were at the baptism holy godparents. The whole church, which appeared to be a building and still was formed of water, floated on high as if supported by a cord let down from Heaven.

30. The Holy Family at Nazareth. Jesus at the Age of Twelve in The Temple of Jerusalem

There were three separate rooms in the house at Nazareth, that of the Mother of God being the largest and most pleasant; in it Jesus, Mary, and Joseph met to pray. I very seldom saw them together at other times. They stood at prayer, their hands crossed upon their breast, and they appeared to speak aloud. I often saw them praying by a light. They stood under a lamp that had several wicks, or near a kind of branched candlestick fastened to the wall, and upon which the flame burned. They were most of the time alone in their respective rooms, Joseph working in his. I saw him cutting sticks and laths, planing wood, and carrying up a beam, Jesus helping him. Mary was generally engaged sewing or knitting with little needles, at which she sat on the ground, her feet crossed under her, and a little basket at her side. They slept alone, each in a separate room. The bed consisted of a cover which in the

Life of Jesus Christ

morning was rolled up.

I saw Jesus assisting His parents in every possible way, and also on the street and wherever opportunity offered, cheerfully, eagerly, and obligingly helping everyone. He assisted His foster-father in his trade, or devoted Himself to prayer and contemplation. He was a model for all the children of Nazareth; they loved Him and feared to displease Him. When they were naughty and committed faults, their parents used to say to them: "What will Joseph's Son say when I tell Him this? How sorry He will be!" Sometimes they gently complained to Him before the little ones, saying; "Tell them not to do such or such a thing anymore." And Jesus took it playfully and like a little child. He would beg the children affectionately to do so and so, would pray with them to His Heavenly Father for strength to become better, and would persuade them to acknowledge their faults and ask pardon on the spot.

About an hour's journey from Nazareth toward Sephoris, is a little place called Ophna. There, during the boyhood of Jesus, dwelt the parents of James the Greater and of John. In those early years, they associated with Jesus, until their parents removed to Bethsaida and they themselves went to the fishery.

There lived in Nazareth an Essenian family related to Joachim. They had four sons, a few years older or younger than Jesus, named respectively, Cleophas, James, Judas, and Japhet. They, too, were playmates of Jesus, and with their parents were in the habit of making the journey to the Temple along with the Holy Family. These four brothers became, at the time of Jesus' baptism, disciples of John, and after his murder, disciples of Jesus. When Andrew and Saturnin crossed the Jordan to Jesus, they followed them and spent the whole day with

Him. They were among those disciples of John whom Jesus took with Him to the marriage feast at Cana. Cleophas is the

same to whom, in company with Luke, Jesus appeared at Emmaus. He was married and dwelt at Emmaus. His wife afterward joined the women of the Community.

Jesus was tall and slender with a delicate face and a beaming countenance and though pale, He was healthy-looking. His perfectly straight, golden hair was parted over His high, open forehead and fell upon His shoulders. He wore a long, light-brownish gray tunic, which reached to His feet, the sleeves rather wide around the hand.

At the age of eight years, Jesus went for the first time with His parents to Jerusalem for the Pasch, and every succeeding year He did the same.

In those first visits, Jesus had already excited attention in Jerusalem among the friends with whom He and His parents stayed, also among the priests and doctors. They spoke of the pious, intelligent Child, of Joseph's extraordinary Son, just as amongst us one might, at the annual pilgrimages, notice in particular this or that modest, holy-looking person, this or that clever peasant child, and recognize him again the next year. So Jesus had already some acquaintances in the city when, in His twelfth year, with their friends and their sons, He accompanied His parents to Jerusalem. His parents were accustomed to walk with the people from their own part of the country, and they knew that Jesus, who now made the journey for the fifth time, always went with the other youths from Nazareth.

But this time Jesus had, on the return journey not far from the Mount of Olives, separated from His companions, who all thought that He had joined His parents who were following. Jesus had, however, gone to that side of Jerusalem nearest to Bethlehem, to the inn at which the

Holy Family before Mary's Purification had put up. Mary and Joseph thought Him on ahead with the other Nazarenes, while these latter thought that He was following with His parents.

Life of Jesus Christ

When at last they all met at Gophna, the anxiety of Mary and Joseph at His absence was very great. They returned at once to Jerusalem, making inquiries after Him on the way and everywhere in the city itself. But they could not find Him, since He had not been where they usually stayed. Jesus had slept at the inn before the Bethlehem gate, where the people knew Him and His parents.

There He had joined several youths and gone with them to two schools of the city, the first day to one, the second to another. On the morning of the third day, He had gone to a third school at the Temple, and in the afternoon into the Temple itself where His parents found Him. These schools were all different, and not all exactly schools of the Law. Other branches were taught in them. The last mentioned was in the neighborhood of the Temple and from it the Levites and priests were chosen.

Jesus by His questions and answers so astonished and embarrassed the doctors and rabbis of all these schools that they resolved, on the afternoon of the third day, in the public lecture hall of the Temple and in presence of the rabbis most deeply versed in the various sciences "to humble the Boy Jesus." The scribes and doctors had concerted the plan together; for, although pleased at first, they had in the end become vexed at Him. They met in the public lecture hall in the middle of the Temple porch in front of the Sanctuary, in the round place where later Jesus also taught. There I saw Jesus sitting in a large chair which He did not, by a great deal, fill. Around Him was a crowd of aged Jews in priestly robes. They were listening attentively, and appeared to be perfectly furious. I feared they would lay hands upon Him. On the top of the chair in which Jesus was sitting, were brown heads like those of dogs. They were greenish brown, the upper parts glistening and

sparkling with a yellow light. There were similar heads and figures upon several long tables,

or benches, that stood in the Temple sideways from this place, covered with offerings. The place was very large and so crowded that one could scarcely imagine himself in a church.

As Jesus had in the schools illustrated His answers and explanations by all kinds of examples from nature, art, and science, the scribes and doctors had diligently gathered together masters in all these branches. They now began, one by one, to dispute with Him. He remarked that although, properly speaking, such subjects did not appear appropriate to the Temple, yet He would discuss them since such was His Father's will. But they understood not that He referred to His Heavenly Father; they imagined that Joseph had commanded Him to show off His learning.

Jesus now answered and taught upon medicine. He described the whole human body in a way far beyond the reach of even the most learned. He discoursed with the same facility upon astronomy, architecture, agriculture, geometry, arithmetic, jurisprudence and, in fine, upon every subject proposed to Him. He applied all so skillfully to the Law and the Promise, to the Prophecies, to the Temple, to the mysteries of worship and sacrifice that His hearers, surprised and confounded, passed successively from astonishment and admiration to fury and shame. They were enraged at hearing some things that they never before knew, and at hearing others that they had never before understood.

Jesus had been teaching two hours, when Joseph and Mary entered the Temple. They inquired after their Child of the Levites whom they knew, and received for answer that He was with the doctors in the lecture hall. But as they were not at liberty to enter that hall, they sent one of the Levites in to call Jesus. Jesus sent them word that He must first finish what He was then about. Mary was very much troubled at His not

obeying at once, for this was the

Life of Jesus Christ

first time He had given His parents to understand that He had other commands than theirs to fulfill. He continued to teach for another hour, and then He left the hall and joined His parents in the porch of Israel, the women's porch, leaving His hearers confounded, confused, and enraged. Joseph was quite awed and astonished, but he kept a humble silence. Mary, however, drawing near to Jesus, said, "Child, why hast Thou done this to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing!" But Jesus answered gravely, "Why have you sought Me? Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand. They at once began with Him their journey home. The bystanders gazed at them in astonishment, and I was in dread lest they should lay hands upon the Boy, for I saw that some of them were full of rage. I wondered at their allowing the Holy Family to depart so peaceably. Although the crowd was dense, yet a wide path was made to permit the Holy Family to pass. I saw all the details and heard almost the whole of Jesus' teaching, but I cannot remember all. It made a great impression upon the scribes. Some recorded the affair as a notable event, while here and there it was whispered around, giving rise to all kinds of remarks and false reports. But the true statement, the scribes kept to themselves. They spoke of Jesus as of a very forward boy, possessed indeed of fine talents, but said those talents required to be cultivated.

I saw the Holy Family again leaving the city, outside of which they joined a party of about three men, two women, and some children. I did not know them, but they appeared to be from Nazareth. They went together to different places around Jerusalem, also to Mount Olivet. They wandered around the beautiful pleasure grounds there found, occasionally standing to pray, their hands crossed on their breast. I saw them also going over a bridge that spanned a brook. This walking around and praying of the little

party reminded me forcibly of a pilgrimage.

When Jesus had returned to Nazareth, I saw a feast in Anne's house, at which were gathered all the youths and maidens among their friends and relatives. I know not whether it was a feast of rejoicing at Jesus' having been found, a feast solemnized upon the return from the Paschal journey, or a feast customary upon the completion of a son's twelfth year. Whatever it may have been, Jesus appeared to be the object of it.

Beautiful bowers were erected over the table, from which hung garlands of vine leaves and ears of corn. The children were served with grapes and little rolls. There were present at this feast thirty-three boys, all future disciples of Jesus, and I received an instruction upon the years of Jesus' life. During the whole feast, Jesus instructed the other boys, and explained to them a very wonderful parable which, however, was only imperfectly understood. It was of a marriage feast at which water could be turned into wine and the lukewarm guests into zealous friends; and again, of a marriage feast where the wine could be changed into Blood and the bread into Flesh, which Blood and Flesh would abide with the guests until the end of the world as strength and consolation, as a living bond of union. He said also to one of the youths, a relative of His own named Nathanael: "I shall be present at thy marriage."

From His twelfth year, Jesus was always like a teacher among His companions. He often sat among them instructing them or walked about the country with them.

31. Death of St. Joseph. Jesus and Mary in Capharnaum

As the time drew near for Jesus to begin His mission of teaching, I saw Him ever more solitary and meditative; and toward the same time, the thirtieth year of Jesus, Joseph began to decline. I saw Jesus and Mary often with him. Mary sometimes sat on the ground by his couch, or upon a low, round three legged stool, which served also for a table. I seldom saw them eating; but when they did, or brought some refreshment to Joseph's bedside, it consisted of three, white, rather long, four-cornered pieces, about two fingers in breadth, that lay side by side on a little plate, and I saw also some little fruits in a dish. They gave him something to drink out of a mug.

When Joseph was dying, Mary sat at the head of his bed, holding him in her arms. Jesus stood just below her near Joseph's breast. The whole room was brilliant with light and full of angels. After his death, his hands were crossed on his breast, he was wrapped from head to foot in a white winding sheet, laid in a narrow casket, and placed in a very beautiful tomb, the gift of a good man. Only a few men followed the coffin with Jesus and Mary; but I saw it accompanied by angels and environed with light. Joseph's remains were afterward removed by the Christians to Bethlehem, and interred. I think I can still see him lying there incorrupt.

Joseph had of necessity to die before the Lord, for he could not have endured His Crucifixion; he was too gentle, too loving. He had already suffered much from the persecution Jesus had had to support from the malice of the Jews from His twentieth to His thirtieth year; for they could not bear the sight of Him. Their jealousy often made them exclaim that the carpenter's Son thought He knew everything better than

others, that He was frequently at variance with the teachings of the Pharisees, and that He

always had around Him a crowd of young followers.

Mary never ceased to suffer from these persecutions. Such pains always seem to me sharper than those of martyrdom. Unspeakable was the love with which Jesus in His youth bore the jealous persecution of the Jews.

After Joseph's death, Jesus and Mary removed to a little village of only a few houses between Capharnaum and Bethsaida. A man named Levi, who was very much attached to the Holy Family, had given Jesus a house there in which to dwell. It stood alone surrounded by a ditch of standing water. A couple of Levi's people also were in the house in the capacity of servants, and Levi himself supplied all necessaries from Capharnaum. It was to this little place that Peter's father retired when he gave over to him the fishery at Bethsaida.

Jesus had already many followers among the young people of Nazareth, but they were not faithful to Him. He walked with them in the country around the lake and went up to Jerusalem with them for the feasts. The Lazarus family in Bethania were already acquainted with the Holy Family. The Pharisees of Nazareth were against Jesus; they called Him a vagrant. Levi gave Him that house that He might, without fear of disturbance, live in it and gather His followers around Him.

There was on the lake around Capharnaum, a region of extraordinarily fertile and charming valleys. There were several harvests during the year, and uncommonly beautiful leaves, blossoms, and fruits—all at the same time. Many distinguished Jews had gardens and castles there, Herod among the number. The Jews of Jesus' time were no longer like their fathers; through commerce and their intercourse with heathens, they had become very corrupt. One never saw the women in public nor

at work in the fields, excepting the very poorest gleaning some ears of corn. They were to be seen only on pilgrimages to

Life of Jesus Christ

Jerusalem and other holy places. Husbandry and all kinds of traffic were carried on mostly through slaves. I have seen all the cities of Galilee. Where now scarcely three villages are in existence, there were then almost a hundred and an innumerable crowd of people.

Mary Cleophas, who with her third husband, the father of Simeon of Jerusalem, dwelt in Anne's house near Nazareth, afterward removed with her boy Simeon to Mary's in Nazareth. The rest of her family and her servants remained at Anne's.

When Jesus, a short time after, went from Capharnaum by way of Nazareth to the region of Hebron, He was accompanied by Mary as far as Nazareth, where she awaited His return. She was always so solicitous about Him. There came also to comfort the Holy Family on the death of St. Joseph and to see Jesus again, Joses Barsabas, the son of Mary Cleophas by her second marriage with Sabas, and the three sons of her first marriage with Alpheus: Simon, James the Less, and Thaddeus, all three of whom already carried on business away from home. They had had no close communication with Jesus since His childhood. They knew in general of Simeon's and Anne's prophecies on the occasion of His Presentation in the Temple, but they attached no importance to them. They preferred to follow John the Baptist, who soon after passed through these parts.

JESUS BEGINS HIS PUBLIC TEACHING

1. Jesus on His Way to Hebron

Jesus went through Nazareth in going from Capharnaum to Hebron, passing through the indescribably beautiful country of Genesareth and by the hot baths of Emmaus. These baths were on the declivity of a mountain, about an hour's distance further on from Magdalum in the direction of Tiberias.

The meadows were covered with very high, thick grass, and on the declivity stood the houses and tents between rows of fig trees, date palms, and orange trees. The road was crowded, for a kind of national feast was going on. Men and women in separate groups were playing for wagers, the prize consisting of fruit. There Jesus saw Nathanael, called also Chased, standing among the men under a fig tree. Just at the moment when Nathanael was struggling against a sensual temptation that had seized him and was glancing over at the women's game, Jesus passed and cast upon him a warning look. Without knowing Jesus, Nathanael was deeply moved by His glance, and thought: "That man has a sharp eye." He felt that Jesus was more than an ordinary man. He became conscious of his guilt, entered into himself, overcame the temptation, and from that time kept a stricter guard over his senses. I think I saw there, also, Nephtali, known as Bartholomew, and that a glance from Jesus touched him also.

Life of Jesus Christ

Jesus journeyed with two of His young friends to Hebron in Judea. They did not remain faithful to Him. They separated from Him, but after His Resurrection, converted by His apparition on Mount Thebez in Galilee, they once again joined His followers.

In Bethania Jesus visited Lazarus, who looked much older than Jesus; he appeared to me to be fully eight years his senior. Lazarus had large possessions, landed property, gardens, and many servants. Martha had her own house, and another sister named Mary, who lived entirely alone, had also her separate dwelling. Magdalen lived in her castle at Magdalum. Lazarus was already long acquainted with the Holy Family. He had at an early period aided Joseph and Mary with large alms and, from first to last, did much for the Community. The purse that Judas carried and all the early expenses, he supplied out of his own wealth.

From Bethania Jesus went to the Temple in Jerusalem.

2. The Family of Lazarus

The father of Lazarus was named Zarah, or Zerah, and was of very noble Egyptian descent. He had dwelt in Syria, on the confines of Arabia, where he held a position under the Syrian king; but for services rendered in war, he received from the Roman emperor property near Jerusalem and in Galilee. He was like a prince, and was very rich. He had acquired still greater wealth by his wife Jezabel, a Jewess of the sect of the Pharisees. He became a Jew, and was pious and strict according to the Pharisaical laws. He owned part of the city on Mount Zion, on the side upon which the brook near the height on which the Temple stands, flows through the ravine. But the greater part of this property, he had bequeathed to the Temple, retaining, however, in his

family some ancient privilege on its account. This property was

on the road by which the Apostles went up to the Cenacle, but the Cenacle itself formed no longer a part of it. Zarah's castle in Bethania was very large. It had numerous gardens, terraces, and fountains, and was surrounded by double ditches. The prophecies of Anna and Simeon were known to the family of Zarah, who were waiting for the Messiah. Even in Jesus' youth, they were acquainted with the Holy Family, just as pious, noble people are wont to be with their humble, devout neighbors.

The parents of Lazarus had in all fifteen children, of whom six died young. Of the nine that survived, only four were living at the time of Christ's teaching. These four were: Lazarus; Martha, about two years younger; Mary, looked upon as a simpleton, two years younger than Martha; and Mary Magdalen, five years younger than the simpleton. The simpleton is not named in Scripture, not reckoned among the Lazarus family; but she is known to God. She was always put aside in her family, and lived altogether unknown.

Magdalen, the youngest child, was very beautiful and, even in her early years, tall and well-developed like a girl of more advanced age. She was full of frivolity and seductive art. Her parents died when she was only seven years old. She had no great love for them even from her earliest age, on account of their severe fasts. Even as a child, she was vain beyond expression, given to petty thefts, proud, self-willed, and a lover of pleasure. She was never faithful, but clung to whatever flattered her the most. She was, therefore, extravagant in her pity when her sensitive compassion was aroused, and kind and condescending to all that appealed to her senses by some external show. Her mother had had some share in Magdalen's faulty education, and that sympathetic softness the child had inherited from her.

Magdalen was spoiled by her mother and her nurse. They showed her off everywhere, caused her cleverness

Life of Jesus Christ

and pretty little ways to be admired, and sat much with her dressed up at the window. That window-sitting was the chief cause of her ruin. I saw her at the window and on the terraces of the house upon a magnificent seat of carpets and cushions, where she could be seen in all her splendor from the street. She used to steal sweetmeats, and take them to other children in the garden of the castle. Even in her ninth year she was engaged in love affairs.

With her developing talents and beauty, increased also the talk and admiration they excited. She had crowds of companions. She was taught, and she wrote love verses on little rolls of parchment. I saw her while so engaged counting on her fingers. She sent these verses around, and exchanged them with her lovers. Her fame spread on all sides, and she was exceedingly admired.

But I never saw that she either really loved or was loved. It was all, on her part at least, vanity, frivolity, self-adoration, and confidence in her own beauty. I saw her a scandal to her brother and sisters whom she despised and of whom she was ashamed on account of their simple life.

When the patrimony was divided, the castle of Magdalum fell by lot to Magdalen. It was a very beautiful building. Magdalen had often gone there with her family when she was a very young child, and she had always entertained a special preference for it. She was only about eleven years old when, with a large household of servants, men and maids, she retired thither and set up a splendid establishment for herself.

Magdalum was a fortified place, consisting of several castles, public buildings, and large squares of groves and gardens. It was eight hours east of Nazareth, about three from Capharnaum, one and a half from

Bethsaida toward the south, and about a mile from the Lake of Genesareth. It was built on a slope of the mountain and extended down into the

valley which stretches off toward the lake and around its shores. One of those castles belonged to Herod. He possessed a still larger one in the fertile region of Genesareth. Some of his soldiers were stationed in Magdalum, and they contributed their share to the general demoralization. The officers were on intimate terms with Magdalen. There were, besides the troops, about two hundred people in Magdalum, chiefly officials, master builders, and servants. There was no synagogue in the place; the people went to the one at Bethsaida.

The castle of Magdalum was the highest and most magnificent of all; from its roof one could see across the Sea of Galilee to the opposite shore. Five roads led to Magdalum, and on everyone at one half-hour's distance from the well-fortified place, stood a tower built over an arch. It was like a watchtower whence could be seen far into the distance. These towers had no connection with one another; they rose out of a country covered with gardens, fields, and meadows. Magdalen had men servants and maids, fields and herds, but a very disorderly household; all went to rack and ruin.

Through the wild ravine at the head of which Magdalum lay far up on the height, flowed a little stream to the lake. Around its banks was a quantity of game, for from the three deserts contiguous to the valley the wild beasts came down to drink. Herod used to hunt here. He had also near his castle in the country of Genesareth a park filled with game.

The country of Genesareth began between Tiberias and Tarichea, about four hours' distance from Capharnaum; it extended from the sea three hours inland and to the south around Tarichea to the mouth of the Jordan. The rising valley with the baths near Bethulia, artificially formed from a brook nearby, lay contiguous to this region, and was

watered by streams flowing to the sea. This brook formed in its course several artificial lakes and waterfalls in different

Life of Jesus Christ

parts of the beautiful district which consisted entirely of gardens, villas, castles, parks, walks, orchards, and vineyards. The whole year round found it teeming with blossoms and fruits. The rich ones of the land, and especially of Jerusalem, had here their villas and gardens. Every portion was under cultivation, or laid off in pleasure grounds, groves, and verdant labyrinths, and adorned with walks winding around pyramidal hillocks. There were no large villages in this part of the country. The permanent residents were mostly gardeners and custodians of the property, also shepherds whose herds consisted of fine sheep and goats. There were besides all kinds of rare animals and birds under their care. No street ran through Magdalum, but two roads from the sea and from the Jordan met here.

3. Jesus in Hebron, Dothain, and Nazareth

When Jesus arrived at Hebron, He left there His companions, saying that He was desirous of visiting a friend. Zachary and Elizabeth were no more. Jesus then went to the wilderness which lay to the south of Hebron, between it and the Dead Sea, whither Elizabeth had taken the boy John. To reach it, one had to climb a mountain covered with white pebbles, and then cross a lovely valley of palm trees. I saw Jesus entering the wilderness, and going into the cave to which John was first taken by Elizabeth. Then He crossed a little brook over which John also had passed. I saw Him alone and in prayer, as if preparing for His teaching mission. When He left the desert, He went again to Hebron. I saw Him as He journeyed lending a helping hand everywhere along the road. At the Dead Sea, He helped some people who were on a kind of raft formed of beams and covered by an awning. On it were men, cattle, and merchandise. Jesus called to them and shoved

a plank out to them from the shore. He helped them to land, and stood by while they repaired their raft. They were at a loss as to who He was; for though there was nothing remarkable in His dress, yet His charming graciousness and dignity of bearing greatly impressed them. At first they thought it must be John the Baptist, who had already made his appearance at the Jordan; but they soon discovered their mistake, for John's complexion was brown, much darker than that of Jesus, and his whole appearance rough. Jesus celebrated the Sabbath in Hebron, and there dismissed His travelling companions. He visited the sick in their homes, consoling and assisting them in every way. He raised them in His arms, carried them, and made their beds; but I did not see Him curing anyone. To all He appeared to be a benevolent, a wonderful person. He visited the possessed and they grew calm in His presence, though as yet He drove no devil out. Wherever He went, He rendered aid when aid was needed. He raised the fallen, He refreshed the thirsty, He guided the traveler, over bridge and brook—and all looked in astonishment upon the kind-hearted wayfarer. From Hebron He went to the spot where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. Here He crossed the river in a boat, and journeyed along its eastern bank to Galilee. I saw Him travelling on between Pella and the country of Gergesa, making short journeys and helping all in need. He went to all the sick, even to the lepers, consoling them, raising them in His arms, making their beds, exhorting them to prayer, and pointing out, to the admiration of all, what treatment was necessary, what remedies to use in the different cases. At one place, some people knew of the prophecies of Simeon and Anna and they questioned Him as to whether He was the one to whom they referred. It was a common thing for people to follow Him from one place to another out of the love He inspired. The possessed were calm when near Him.

Life of Jesus Christ

He went also to the rapid little stream that flows into the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee (the Hieromax), not far from that steep mountain from which He subsequently cast the swine into the sea. Near the river stood a row of little mud huts like shepherds' huts, which were occupied by the men who were at that moment on the shore laboring at their barks. They could not succeed in their work. I saw Jesus go up to them, make some suggestions in a friendly way, drag a beam to the spot, and put His hand to the work. He pointed out various expedients and, as He worked, exhorted them to patience and charity.

After that I saw Jesus in Dothain, a scattered little place northeast of Sephoris, and in which there was a synagogue. The inhabitants were not bad, though very much neglected. Abraham had once owned fields there for his cattle intended for offerings. Joseph and his brethren used to guard their flocks in this same region, and it was here that the former was sold. Dothain, at the time of Our Lord, was but a sparsely settled place, but its soil was good and its meadows extended down to the Sea of Galilee. It contained a large building like a madhouse, in which many possessed lived. On Jesus' arrival, they became perfectly furious and dashed themselves almost to death. The keepers could not bind them. Jesus entered and spoke to them, and they became quite calm. He addressed to them a few more words, after which they quietly left the house and repaired to their several homes. The people were amazed at what they saw. They were unwilling for Jesus to depart, and one of them invited Him to a marriage feast. I saw all the wedding ceremonies as at Cana. Jesus was like an honored stranger at the feast. He spoke wisely and graciously, giving the bride and groom good advice. They afterward joined the disciples when Jesus appeared upon Thebez.

When Jesus returned to Nazareth, He went around among His parents'

acquaintances, but He was everywhere

Hebron, Dothain, Nazareth

341

coldly received. When He sought to enter the synagogue in order to teach, they turned Him away. Then He repaired to the public marketplace and spoke of the Messiah to the crowd, of whom some were Sadducees, others Pharisees. He told them that the Messiah would be different from what each one's ideas pictured. John the Baptist, He called "The voice in the wilderness." Two youths, clothed in long garments and wearing girdles like priests, had followed Jesus from the country of Hebron; but they went not always with Him. Jesus kept the Sabbath in Nazareth.

After that I saw Jesus and Mary, Mary Cleophas, the parents of Parmenas, in all about twenty persons, leave Nazareth and go to Capharnaum. They had with them asses laden with baggage. The house in Nazareth had been cleaned and adorned. It was so well arranged that, with its rich hangings, it reminded me of a church. It was left unoccupied. The third husband of Mary Cleophas and some of her sons still carried on business in Anne's abode, and they took care of that house of the Holy Family. Mary Cleophas with her youngest sons, Joses Barsabas and Simeon, dwelt at this time quite near to the small house not far from Capharnaum which Levi had fitted up for the Lord, and the parents of Parmenas lived at no great distance.

Jesus journeyed again from place to place, and appeared chiefly where John had been when he left the desert. He entered the synagogue and instructed, He consoled and relieved the sick. When He taught in the synagogue of a certain little town and spoke of John's baptism, of the coming of the Messiah, and of penance, the people murmured. They mocked Him, and I heard some of them say: "Three months ago, His father, the carpenter, was still alive. Then He worked with him. Now He

has travelled a little and back He comes to impart to us His wisdom."

Jesus went also to Cana and taught. He had relatives there whom He visited. At this time He was not

Life of Jesus Christ

yet accompanied by any of His future disciples. It looked as if He were studying men, and building up upon the foundation that John had laid. Sometimes a good man accompanied Him from place to place.

Once I saw four men, among them some of His future disciples, on the high road between Samaria and Nazareth. They were in a shady place waiting for Jesus who, with one companion, was coming that way. When He arrived in sight, they set forward to meet Him. They told Him that they had been baptized by John, and that he had spoken of the near coming of the Messiah. They told Him also of John's severe language toward the soldiers, only a few of whom he had baptized. Among other things, he had said that it would be better to take the stones out of the Jordan and baptize them rather than such as they. I saw these disciples of John walking on with Jesus.

Jesus then went along the Sea of Galilee toward the north. He spoke very plainly of the Messiah. In many places, the possessed cried after Him. Out of one man He drove a devil, and He taught in the schools.

Six men who were coming from the baptism of John met Jesus. Among them were Levi, known later as Matthew, and two sons of the widowed relatives of Elizabeth. They all knew Jesus, some through relationship, others by hearsay; and they strongly suspected, though they had had no assurance of it, that He was the One of whom John had spoken. They spoke of John, of Lazarus and his sisters, especially of Magdalen. They supposed she had a devil, for she was already living apart from her family in the castle of Magdalum. These men accompanied Jesus, and were filled with astonishment at His discourse. The aspirants to baptism going from Galilee to John used to tell him all that they knew and heard of Jesus, while they that came from Aïnon, where John baptized, used

to tell Jesus all they knew of John.

Jesus went alone to the sea, passing through a

fence into an enclosed fishery where lay five ships. On the shore were several huts for the accommodation of the fishermen. Peter, the owner of this fishery, was in one of the huts with Andrew. John and James, with their father Zebedee and several others, were on the boats. In the middle one was Peter's father-in-law with his three sons. I once knew all their names, but now I have forgotten them. The father was surnamed Zelotes, because he had gained his point in a dispute with the Romans concerning the right of navigation on the lake. There were about thirty men on the boats.

Jesus went along the shore by the fenced-off way between the huts and the boats, speaking with Andrew and the others. I know not whether he spoke to Peter. They did not know Him as yet. He spoke of John and of the near coming of the Messiah. Andrew was already a baptized disciple of John. Jesus told them that He would come to them again.

4. Jesus Journeys Over Libanus To Sidon and Sarepta

Jesus turned off from the lake, and went further on toward Libanus. This He was led to do chiefly by the numerous reports current throughout the country and the great excitement to which they gave rise. Many looked upon John as the Messiah, but others spoke of another whom John's words seemed to designate.

The companions of Jesus on this journey numbered from six to twelve. Some turned off at different points on the road, while others joined Him. His instructions pleased them, and they began to think that He must be the One of whom John spoke. Jesus attached Himself particularly to none. He was properly speaking alone, but He was sowing and preparing. In all that He did I saw many relations to the actions of the

Prophets and to their fulfillment, especially to those of Elias.

Life of Jesus Christ

Jesus went with His companions over a spur of Libanus toward the great city Sidon lying along the sea. From the mountain height, the view was indescribably beautiful. The city was apparently quite close to the sea; but viewed from its own plane, one could see that it was fully forty-five minutes distant from the shore. It was a large, busy place. Gazing down upon it from on high, one might fancy that he was looking upon an innumerable fleet of ships; for from the numerous flat roofs arose a forest of high poles and flagstuffs, with long streamers of red and other colors, while white canvas was stretched from pole to pole, or floated in the breeze. These booths were swarming with people at their different avocations. Between the houses, I saw all kinds of shining vessels being prepared. The country around was dotted with exceedingly fertile spots, all teeming with fruit. In and around these gardens were numbers of immense trees, some surrounded by seats. Steps led up into others, so that quite a company could sit in their branches as in a summer house. The plain in which the city lay between the mountain and the sea was not very broad.

There were both Jews and pagans in the city. They carried on business with one another, and idolatry was general. The Lord on His way taught and preached in the shady places under the great trees, speaking of John, of his baptism, and of penance.

Jesus was well received in the city. He had been there once before. In the school He taught of the coming of the Messiah and of the downfall of idolatry. Queen Jezabel who so persecuted Elias was from this city.

Jesus left His companions in Sidon, and went to a little place more to the south and away from the sea. He wanted to be alone to pray. On one side it was entirely flanked by a wood. It had thick walls, and was

surrounded by vineyards. It was Sarepta, the place in which Elias was fed by the widow. The

Jews, as also the pagans, had a superstition connected with that fact. They always allowed pious widows to live in the city walls. They thought by so doing they secured themselves from every danger, and could practice every species of vice in the city. Old men dwelt in the walls at the time of which I am now speaking.

Jesus lodged with an old man in the city wall, in the house once occupied by that widow who fed Elias. The old men who then dwelt in the walls were something like hermits. They lived there in accordance with an ancient custom honoring Elias, meditating and explaining the Prophecies, and chiefly engaged in prayer for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus taught them concerning the Messiah and the baptism of John. They were pious, but entertained many erroneous ideas, of which one was that the Messiah was to come in worldly splendor. Jesus often retired to the wood near Sarepta and there prayed alone. He taught in the synagogue, and occupied Himself also in instructing the children. In the villages around, in which there were numbers of heathens, He exhorted the people not to mix with them. There were some good people here, and some very bad ones. Jesus had no companions, excepting occasionally some resident of the place. I saw Him teaching men and women in the open air, often on hillocks and under trees.

The climate here is such that it always seems to me we are in May, because in Palestine the grain for the second harvest is as far advanced as it is with us in that month. They do not cut the grain so close to the ground as we do. They grasp the stalk below the ear, and cut it off about an ell long. They do not thrash it. They stand the little sheaves upright and pass over them a roller fastened between two oxen. The grain is much drier than ours, and falls out readily. They separate it in the open air, or in a kind of circular barn with a thatched roof, but open on all

sides.

Life of Jesus Christ

From Sarepta Jesus went to a place lying to the northeast, not far from the plain upon which Ezechiel, caught up in spirit, had the vision of the dry bones coming together. Sinews and flesh took possession of them, the winds passed over them, spirit and life entered into them. I was told that the coming together of the bones and their clothing with flesh were fulfilled by the teaching and baptism of John. But the spirit and life breathed into them was accomplished by Jesus through Redemption and by the descent of the Holy Ghost. Jesus consoled the people, who were very poor and oppressed, and explained to them the vision of Ezechiel.

When He left this place, He went northward to the country which John had first visited on leaving the desert. It was a little sheep rearing place. Noemi and her daughter Ruth dwelt there a long time. Noemi had so good a name among the people that she is still spoken of in those parts. Later she removed to Bethlehem. The Lord taught very zealously here. The time approached for Him to retrace His steps southward and thence to Samaria for His baptism. Jacob also owned fields up here. Through this place ran a little river, back of which far up in the desert lay John's spring. From this spring the road became very steep, reminding me of that which Adam and Eve took when driven from Paradise. It led down to the battlefield of Ezechiel. On Adam and Eve's route, the trees became smaller and smaller and quite misshapen until at last they reached a desolate region where grew some miserable bushes. Paradise was as high above the earth as is the sun. After the Fall it disappeared behind a mountain which seemed to rise before it.

The Saviour, on His return from the shepherds' country to Sarepta, followed the route trodden by the Prophet Elias when going from the brook Carith to Sarepta. Jesus taught here and there as He journeyed on, passing by Sidon. From Sarepta He was soon to go southward for His

baptism. He kept the Sabbath in Sarepta.

After the Sabbath Jesus started for Nazareth, teaching at various points on the road. He was sometimes attended by companions, and sometimes alone. He went barefoot, putting His sandals on only when about to enter any town or village. He passed through the valleys toward Mount Carmel, and once He was near the road leading down into Egypt, but He turned off to the east.

The Mother of God, Mary Cleophas, the mother of Parmenas, and two other women, I saw going to Nazareth, while Seraphia (afterward *Veronica*), Johanna Chusa, and the son of Veronica, who later on joined the disciples, were on their way to the same place from Jerusalem. They were going to visit Mary, with whom they had become acquainted on their yearly journeys to the Holy City.

Mary and Joseph, as also other pious families, were in the habit of visiting through devotion three places during the year; viz., the Temple of Jerusalem, the pine tree near Bethlehem, and Mount Carmel. Anne's family and other pious people usually went to the last named place in May when returning from Jerusalem. There were on the mountain a well and a cave of Elias, the latter like a chapel. Devout Jews were constantly visiting these hallowed places. They came, not at fixed times; but whenever it best suited them, and prayed for the coming of the Messiah. Jewish hermits dwelt on the mountain, and later on Christian cenobites had there their cells.

In a little town on the west side of Mount Tabor, Jesus taught in the school, and spoke of John's baptism. There were five followers around Him, among them some future disciples. The Sanhedrin of Jerusalem dispatched couriers with letters to all the principal places of Palestine in which were Jewish schools and rabbis, telling them to be on their guard

against a certain Man, of whom the Baptist said that He was the One that was to come and that He would soon present Himself for baptism. They should have

Life of Jesus Christ

an eye upon the Man and give information of His actions; for if He were indeed the Messiah, He needed not the baptism of John. The members of the Sanhedrin also were very much annoyed when they learned that Jesus was He who as a Boy had taught in the Temple. The couriers went likewise to a city on the road near Hebron, four hours from the sea, in that country wherein the spies of Aaron and Moses found the huge bunches of grapes. The city is called Gaza. There was a very long row of tents reaching from the city to the sea, and under them different kinds of woolen and silk stuffs exposed for sale.

Jesus with five followers taught, here and there, down to the country around Jacob's Well, where He celebrated the Sabbath. When He and His companions were returning to Nazareth, the Blessed Virgin went out to meet her Son. But when she saw that He was not alone, she paused at a distance and went back without saluting Him. I wondered at her self denial. Jesus taught in the school at Nazareth, the holy women being present.

The next day, when Jesus taught in the synagogue before a large audience, the holy women were not present. He was attended by five disciples and about twenty of the young Nazarenes, companions of His boyhood. His hearers murmured at His teaching. They whispered among themselves that He would now, perhaps, take possession of the place of baptism that John had abandoned and there baptizing give Himself out for one like unto John. But, they continued, He was very different from John. John had dwelt in the desert preparing for his mission, but this Jesus they knew well, and they declared that they would not allow Him to deceive them.

5. Jesus in Bethsaida and Capharnaum

Jesus left Nazareth to go to Bethsaida where He aimed at rousing some of the people by His teaching.

The Blessed Virgin and His followers remained behind. During His stay in Nazareth, Jesus had stopped with His friends in His Mother's house. But so much discontent and murmuring arose in the little town on His account that He resolved to go to Bethsaida for awhile, and return to Nazareth at some future time. He was accompanied by Amendor, the son of Veronica; a son of one of the three widowed relatives of Jesus, whose name sounds like Sirach; and one of Peter's relatives known later as one of the disciples.

At Bethsaida, Jesus taught very forcibly in the synagogue on the Sabbath. He told His hearers that they should now enter into themselves, repair to the baptism of John, and purify themselves by penance; otherwise a time would come when they would cry *woe! woe!* There were many people in the synagogue, but none of the future Apostles, excepting, I think, Philip. The others, belonging to Bethsaida and the country around, were celebrating the Sabbath elsewhere. They were in a house near the fishery in the neighborhood of Capharnaum. During this preaching of Jesus, I prayed that the people would go to the baptism of John and be truly converted. Thereupon I had a vision in which I saw that John was the *preparer*, who washed from the people their rawness, their coarseness. I saw him working so actively, so vigorously, preaching so vehemently that his camel skin slipped from shoulder to shoulder. This, I think, was merely symbolical, for at the same time I saw something like scales falling from some of the newly baptized, black vapors issuing from others, and light, shining clouds descending upon others.

In Capharnaum also Jesus taught in the school. Crowds came from all sides to hear Him, among them Peter, Andrew, and many others who had already been baptized by John.

When Jesus left Capharnaum, I saw Him teaching two hours distant from the city toward the south.

Life of Jesus Christ

His hearers were numerous. He had with Him only the three disciples, for the future Apostles who had heard Him in Capharnaum had, without exchanging words with Him, gone again to the sea. Jesus spoke here also of John's baptism and the fulfilled Promise. He then went on toward the south, teaching here and there, down to Lower Galilee in the direction of Samaria, and kept the Sabbath in a school between Nazareth and Sephoris. The holy women from Nazareth were present, also Peter's wife and the wives of some others of the future Apostles.

The place consisted of only a few houses and a school. It was separated from Anne's former residence by a field. Of the future Apostles, Peter, Andrew, James the Less, and Philip, all disciples of John, came to hear Jesus. Philip belonged to Bethsaida; he was tolerably well educated, and was much engaged in writing. Jesus did not tarry long here. He took no meal, but only taught. The Apostles had, probably, celebrated the Sabbath in the neighborhood, for the Jews often visited other places on the Sabbath. Being informed of Jesus' presence, they had come to hear Him. He had not yet spoken to any of them in particular.

6. Jesus in Sephoris, Bethulia, Cedus, and Jezrael

From the last place, Jesus crossed a mountain with the three disciples and went to Sephoris, four hours' distance from Nazareth. He stopped at His great aunt's. She was Anne's youngest sister Maraha, and the mother of a daughter and two sons. These sons were habited in long, white garments. They were named respectively Arastaria and Cocharia, and later on they joined the disciples.

The Blessed Virgin, Mary Cleophas, and other women had also come hither. The feet of Jesus were washed, and a repast prepared in His

honor. He

passed the night in Maraha's house, which had been the home of Anne's parents. Sephoris was a large city, and in it were three different sects: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenians, each with its own school. This city often suffered severely from war. At the present day, it is scarcely in existence.

Jesus stayed some days here, preaching and exhorting His hearers to go to the baptism of John. He taught in two synagogues on the same day, in a large, high one, and in a small one. The large one belonged to the Pharisees. They listened indignantly to His words, and murmured against Him. The women were present at this instruction; but in the other synagogue, the small one that belonged to the Essenians, there was no place for women. Jesus was kindly received by the Essenians.

As Jesus was teaching in the school of the Sadducees, something very wonderful took place. There were in Sephoris numbers of demoniacs, simpletons, lunatics and possessed. They were instructed in a school near the synagogue, which latter place they were obliged to attend when prayer and teaching were going on. They had a hall in the rear reserved for themselves, and they were made to listen attentively. Custodians armed with whips stood among them, each with few or more under his charge, according as they were more or less troublesome. Before Jesus entered, I saw these poor creatures during the teaching of the Sadducees distorting their countenance and falling into convulsions. Their keepers had to bring them to order with the lash. When Jesus made His appearance, they were at first quite still; but after a little while one began and then another to cry out: "That is Jesus of Nazareth, born in Bethlehem, and visited by Wise Men from the East. His Mother is now with Maraha. He is preaching new doctrine, which we must not tolerate." And so they went on recounting aloud the whole life of Jesus

and all that had happened to Him up to the present time.

Life of Jesus Christ

Now this one began, then that one took it up. The lashes of the custodians availed naught, for soon all began to cry out together and the confusion became general. Then Jesus commanded them to be brought to Him outside the synagogue, and He sent two disciples to collect all the other insane from the different quarters of the city and bring them also. Soon there was a crowd, fully fifty such unfortunates around Him, and multitudes of others, all eager to see what would happen. The insane kept up their cries. Then Jesus spoke, saying: "The spirit that speaks through these, is from below. Let it again go below!" And at the same instant, all became quiet. They were cured, and I saw several fall to the ground.

And now a great tumult, excited by the cure, broke out in the city, and Jesus and His followers were in great danger. The excitement became so great that Jesus escaped into a house and left the city that night. The Blessed Virgin, the three disciples, with Cocharia and Arastaria, the sons of Anne's sister, left the city also. The Mother of Jesus was in great trouble and anxiety, for this was the first time she had seen her Son so violently persecuted. Jesus had appointed some trees outside the city as a meeting place, and from there all went on together to Bethulia.

The majority of those cured by Jesus in Sephoris, went to John's baptism. Later on they were the principal ones of the city who followed Jesus.

Bethulia is that city at whose siege Judith slew Holofernes. It was built on a mountain southeast of Sephoris. The view from it extended far around into the distance. Magdalen's castle in Magdalum was not far off, and Magdalen herself was at this time at the height of her glory. Bethulia, too, possessed a castle and the place was rich in springs.

Jesus and His disciples entered an inn outside Bethulia, and thither came Mary and the holy women again to meet Him. I heard Mary talking to Him, begging Him not to teach here again, for she was

afraid there might be another insurrection. But Jesus replied that He knew what He had to accomplish. Mary asked: "Shall we not now go to John's baptism?" To which Jesus answered gravely: "Why shall we now go to John's baptism? Have we need of it? I shall journey and reap still a while longer, and I shall say when it is time to go to the baptism." As afterward at Cana, Mary kept silence. I have seen that the holy women received baptism not till after Pentecost, and then in the Pool of Bethsaida. The holy women went on into the city. Jesus taught on the Sabbath in the synagogue, and many from the country around came to hear Him. Here in Bethulia, also, I saw numbers of insane and possessed on the highroad outside the city and, here and there, on the streets through which Jesus passed. They were quieted and freed from their paroxysms. The people said among themselves: "This man must possess a power like unto that of the ancient prophets, since those unfortunates grow calm on His appearance." They felt benefitted by His presence, even though apparently He did nothing special for them; and so they sought Him in the inn to thank Him. He taught and exhorted to John's baptism, and spoke with as much vehemence as did John himself.

The people of Bethulia gave to Jesus and His followers a most honorable reception. They would not allow Him to put up at the inn outside the city, but strove among themselves as to who should have the honor of entertaining Him in their houses. They that had not Jesus, at least wanted one of the five disciples who were with Him. But they, the disciples, would not leave their Master. At last, Jesus promised to make the inn and the houses of the good people His headquarters alternately. Their great enthusiasm and love for Him were not altogether disinterested, and Jesus charged them with it during His instruction in the synagogue. They had a secondary design. They wanted, by entertaining the new Prophet, to attract

Life of Jesus Christ

to their city that esteem which they had lost by their trade and intercourse with heathens. They were also destitute of a pure love of truth.

When Jesus left Bethulia, I saw Him in a valley teaching under the trees. Besides the five disciples, there were now about twenty others following Him. The holy women had already returned to Nazareth. Jesus had left Bethulia because He was so much besieged by the people. Numbers of sick and possessed from the country around had gathered in the city, hoping to be cured; but Jesus did not as yet wish to heal so openly. As He journeyed away from Bethulia, He left the Sea of Galilee behind. The place in which He next taught was an old place of instruction formerly used by the Essenians, or Prophets. It consisted of an elevated, grassy mound, surrounded by little parapets against which the audience could rest comfortably. There were about thirty people around Jesus in this place.

That evening I saw Him with His followers arrive at the little village with its synagogue, about one hour's distance from Nazareth, whence not long before He had set out to go to Sephoris. The inhabitants received Him with every mark of kindness. They conducted Him to a large house in front of which was a courtyard, washed His feet, as also those of the disciples, cleaned and brushed His travelling garments, and prepared for Him and His followers a repast. Jesus taught here in the synagogue. The holy women were in Nazareth.

Next day He went about two miles further on toward the Levitical city, Cedes, or Cesion. He was followed by about seven possessed, who still more plainly than those of Sephoris, proclaimed His mission and history. Aged priests and youths in long, white garments came forth

from the city to meet Him, for some of His followers had already gone before Him into the city.

Jesus did not free the possessed here. They were

confined in a house by the priests, that they might not create disorder. But He freed them later after His baptism. He was quite well received and entertained in this place, but when He proposed to teach, they questioned Him: What call had He? What mission? Was He merely Joseph and Mary's Son? Jesus answered evasively that He who had sent Him and to whom He belonged, would make all that known at His baptism. He taught many other things on this point and also of the baptism of John. His instructions were given on a hill in the center of the place where, as at Thebez, a stand had been prepared for the purpose, not exactly in the open air, but under a rush-covered tent or shed.

Jesus went from here through the pastoral region where later, after the second Pasch, He healed a leper. He taught in the different little villages around. But for the Sabbath, He went with His companions to Jezrael, a scattered place, the houses, which were built in groups, being separated from one another by ruins, towers, and gardens. A high road ran through the city, called King's street. Jesus had with Him only three of His companions, several having gone on before.

Jezrael was the home of strict observers of the Jewish Law. They were not Essenians, however, but Nazarites. They made vows for a time, longer or shorter, and practiced various kinds of mortification. They had a large institution, comprising different sections. The unmarried men occupied one part exclusively, the unmarried women another. The married also made vows of continency for a certain period, during which the husbands lived in a house next to that of the unmarried men, while the wives retired to that of the single women. They were all habited in gray and white. Their Superior wore a long, gray garment edged with fringe and little white ornaments like fruit, and bound by a

gray girdle on which were inscribed white letters. Around one arm was
a

Life of Jesus Christ

band of coarse, gray and white woven stuff as thick as a twisted napkin, one end of which—ornamented with tufted fringe—hung down a little. He wore a collar, or little mantle, almost like that of Argos, the Essenian, excepting that it was gray and open behind instead of in front. A blank shield was fastened on it in front, while behind it was tied or laced. On the shoulders hung slit lappets. All wore black, shining, puffed caps, with some words stamped on the front; three bands met on top forming a ball, which, like the rim, was white and gray. The Nazarites had long, thick curly hair and beards. I tried to think which of the Apostles looked like them and, at last, I remembered that it was Paul. His hair and garments, when he persecuted the Christians, were in the style of the Nazarites. I saw him afterward, also, with the Nazarites, for he was one of them. They used to let their hair grow until their vow was accomplished, when they cut it off and burned it in sacrifice. They sacrificed pigeons, also. One could assume and fulfill the unfulfilled vows of another. Jesus celebrated the Sabbath with them. Jezrael is separated from Nazareth by a mountain range. Not far from it is a well near which Saul once encamped with his army.

Jesus taught on the Sabbath of the baptism of John. He said that, although their piety was praiseworthy, yet excess was dangerous; that there are different ways to salvation; that splits in the community would easily give rise to sects; that, in their pride, they looked down upon their weaker brethren who could not do so much as they themselves, but who should be succored by the stronger. Such teaching as His was very necessary here, for in the suburbs there were people who had mixed with the heathens, and who were destitute of rule or direction, because the Nazarites had separated from them. Jesus visited these people in their homes, and invited them to His instruction on baptism.

Next day Jesus was present at a repast given Him

by the Nazarites, at which circumcision was spoken of in connection with baptism. For the first time, I heard Jesus speaking of circumcision, but I cannot exactly recall His words. He said something to this effect, that the law of circumcision had a reason for its existence which would soon be taken away, when the people of God would come forth no longer according to the flesh from the family of Abraham, but spiritually from the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Great numbers of the Nazarites became Christians; but they clung so tenaciously to Judaism that many of them, seeking to combine Christianity with it, fell into heresy.

7. Jesus Among the Publicans

When Jesus left Jezrael, He journeyed awhile toward the east, then went around the mountain which lay between Jezrael and Nazareth and, about two hours from the former place, reached a number of houses standing in rows on either side of the highroad. They were occupied by publicans. Some poor Jews dwelt under tents at a little distance from the road. That road, along which the dwellings of the publicans stood, was fenced in by wickerwork, the entrance at either end being closed. Rich publicans lived here who rented many tolls in the country and again leased the same to under-collectors. Matthew was one of these latter tax gatherers, but belonging to another place. Mary, the niece of Elizabeth, once dwelt here, I think. Having become a widow, she went to Nazareth and afterward to Capharnaum. She was the same that was present at the Blessed Virgin's death. The commercial highroad to Egypt from Syria, Arabia, and Sidon passed through this place. Great bales of white silk in bundles like flax were brought this way on camels and asses; also fine woolen stuffs both white and colored; great, heavy,

woven strips of carpet; and lastly spices. When the

Life of Jesus Christ

camels arrived in this district, the gates were closed and the merchants had to unpack their goods, which were carefully examined. They had to pay a tax, partly in merchandise, and partly in money. The latter was mostly three-or four-cornered yellow, white, or reddish pieces, on which was stamped a figure, raised on one side and hollow on the other. They gave also coins different from these. I saw on those coins little towers, a virgin, also an infant in a little ship. Little bars of gold, such as were offered by the Kings at the Crib, I never saw again excepting with some strangers who came to John the Baptist.

The publicans were all leagued together. When one received more than his fellows, he divided with the rest. They were wealthy and lived well. Their homes were surrounded by courtyards, gardens, and walls, reminding me of those of our well-to-do peasants. They lived entirely among themselves, for others would not associate with them. They had a school of their own and a teacher.

Jesus was well received by them, His followers also. I saw several women arrive here; I think Peter's wife was among them. One of them spoke with Jesus, and they soon went away. Perhaps they were either coming from or going to Nazareth, and were executing some commission for the Mother of God. Jesus stayed first with one, then with another of the publicans, and taught in their school. He especially pointed out to them the fact that they often extorted from travelers more toll than was just. They became very much confused, and could not divine how He knew that. They were more humble than the other Jews, and took His words better. Jesus urged them to receive baptism.

8. Jesus in Kisloth-Thabor

Jesus left the publicans after having taught among them the whole night.
Many of them desired to make

Him presents, but He would accept nothing. Several followed Him, for they wanted to go with Him to baptism. On this day, He journeyed through the country by Dothain and passed the madhouse where, on His first journey from Nazareth, He had calmed the raving and the possessed. As He was passing it, they called Him by name and clamored violently to be released. Jesus commanded their custodians to free them, promising that He would answer for the consequences. They were all set at liberty. Jesus cured them all, and they followed Him. Toward evening, He arrived at Kisloth, a city on Mount Thabor, inhabited mainly by Pharisees. They had heard of Jesus; but they were displeased at seeing Him followed by publicans (whom they looked upon as malefactors), possessed known to be such, and a motley crowd of others. He entered their school and taught of the baptism of John; then, addressing His followers, He exhorted them before attaching themselves to Him to think seriously whether they would be able to persevere or not, for they must not think His path an easy one. He expounded to them also several parables on building. If a man desired to build himself a house, he should consider first whether the owner of the ground would allow him to use it for that purpose; in like manner, they that would follow Him should first expiate their offences and do penance. Again, if a man would erect a tower, he must first estimate the cost. And many other things Jesus taught that were not well received by the Pharisees. They listened only to catch Him in His words. I saw them concerting together to give Him an entertainment at which they hoped to ensnare Him in His speech.

They prepared a great feast in a public hall, down which stood three tables, side by side, and right and left burned lamps. Over the middle table, at which Jesus, some of the disciples, and the Pharisees sat, the aperture, customary in the roofs of that country, stood open. The followers of Jesus were seated at

Life of Jesus Christ

the side tables. In this city there must have been an ancient custom commanding the poor, of whom there were numbers dwelling in the greatest abandonment, to be invited; for as soon as Jesus sat down at table, He turned to the Pharisees asking where were the poor, and whether it was not their right to take part in the feast. The Pharisees were embarrassed, and they answered that the custom had long fallen into disuse. Then Jesus commanded His disciples Arastaria and Cocharia, the sons of Maraha, and Kolaiah, the son of the widow Seba, to go gather together the poor of the city and bring them to the feast. The Pharisees were highly displeased at the command, for it gave rise to much comment throughout the city. Many of the poor were already in bed and asleep. I saw the disciples rousing them. Numerous and varied were the joyous scenes I then witnessed in the huts and haunts of the poor. At last they arrived and were received and welcomed by Jesus and His disciples. The latter served them while Jesus addressed to them a very beautiful instruction. The Pharisees, though greatly irritated, had not a word to say, for Jesus was in the right, and at this the people rejoiced. Great excitement prevailed in the city. After partaking plentifully of the various good things, the poor people departed, taking with them a supply for their friends at home. Jesus had blessed the food for them, prayed with them, and exhorted them to go to John's baptism. He would not tarry longer in the city, and left that night with His followers. Many of the latter, however, discouraged partly by His exhortations, left Him for their homes while others went to prepare for John's baptism.

9. Jesus in the Shepherd Village of Chimki

Jesus journeyed during the night between two valleys. I saw Him sometimes conversing with His followers, then again falling behind and

praying on His

Chimki

361

knees to His Father, after which He again rejoined them. On the following afternoon I saw Him arrive at a shepherd village whose houses lay scattered here and there. It possessed a school, but no resident priest; the people were attended by one from a distance. When Jesus arrived, the school was closed. He assembled the shepherds in an apartment of the inn and there instructed them. As the Sabbath was approaching, there came that evening several priests of the sect of the Pharisees, some of them from Nazareth. Jesus spoke of baptism and the near advent of the Messiah. The Pharisees were very hostile toward Him; they spoke of His humble origin, and tried to make little of Him. Jesus slept here that night.

Jesus, in His instructions on the Sabbath, expounded many parables. He called for a grain of mustard seed and, when they brought it to Him, He spoke for some time of it, saying that if they had faith equal only to a grain of that seed, they would be able to transport the pear tree before them into the sea. A large pear tree laden with fruit stood nearby. The Pharisees mocked at His teaching, which they considered childish. Jesus explained at length, but I have forgotten. He also recounted the parable of the unjust steward.

The people of this place and of the whole country around were in admiration of Jesus. They related what they had heard from their fathers of the teaching and works of the last Prophets, and they compared this new Teacher to them with this exception, however, that He was much milder. The shepherd settlement was named Chimki. The hills of Nazareth could be discerned in the distance, for they were only about two hours off. It was a scattered little place, a few houses only around the synagogue. Jesus took up His abode with a poor family, the mistress

of which lay sick of the dropsy. He had compassion upon her and cured her, laying His hand upon her head and stomach. She was perfectly restored, and served

Life of Jesus Christ

her Guest at table. Jesus forbade her to speak of what had happened until He should have returned from the baptism. Whereupon she asked why she might not tell it everywhere. Jesus answered: "If thou wilt publish it everywhere, thou shalt become dumb," and she did become dumb, and remained so until His return from baptism. At this time it may have been about fourteen days until then, for at Bethulia or Jezrael He had spoken of three weeks.

Jesus taught three days in the synagogue of this place. The Pharisees were greatly incensed against Him. He spoke of the coming of the Messiah, saying, "Ye are expecting Him to appear surrounded by worldly glory. But He is already come, and He will make His appearance as a poor Man. He will teach truth. He will get more blame than praise, for He wills justice. But separate not from Him, that ye may not be lost. Be ye not like those children of Noe who mocked him when he so laboriously built the ark that was to save them from the flood. All they that derided not went into the ark and were saved." Then turning to His disciples, He addressed them, saying, "Separate not from Me like Lot from Abraham when, seeking more fertile regions, he went to Sodom and Gomorrha. And look not around after the glory of the world which fire from Heaven shall destroy, that ye may not be turned into pillars of salt! Remain with Me under every trial. I will always help you," etc. The Pharisees, still more irritated, exclaimed: "What is this that He promises them, seeing that He has nothing Himself?" Then turning to Him, they asked: "Art Thou not from Nazareth? The son of Joseph and Mary?" But Jesus answered evasively that He whose Son He was, would manifest it. Then they continued: "Why dost Thou speak here as elsewhere of the Messiah? We have heard of Thy teaching. Thinkest Thou indeed that we shall imagine that Thou meanest Thyself?" Jesus answered: "Upon that question I have nothing to say, excepting these words,

yes, ye do think it." The excitement in the synagogue became great, the Pharisees extinguished the lights, while Jesus and the disciples, although it was night, left the place and journeyed some distance along the highroad. I saw them sleeping under a tree.

10. Jesus in a Shepherd Village Near Nazareth

On the following morning I saw crowds of people on the road waiting for Jesus. They had not been with Him in that last place, but had gone on ahead of Him. I saw Him turning aside from the road with them and, about three o'clock in the afternoon, coming up to another shepherd field. In it were only some light huts occupied by the shepherds in grazing time. There were no women here. The shepherds went forward to meet Jesus; they must have been informed of His coming by those that had gone on before. While some of their number went to meet Him, the others busied themselves killing birds and lighting a fire in order to prepare a meal. This took place in an open hall, something like an inn, the fireplace being separated from the guest room by a wall. All around the hall ran a mossy bank with a platted support for the back overgrown by green foliage. The hosts led the Lord and His followers in, about twenty in number, equal to that of the shepherds themselves. All washed their feet, a separate basin being assigned to Jesus. He asked for more water and, after using it, commanded it not to be thrown out. When all were ready for table, Jesus questioned the shepherds, who appeared anxious about something, as to the cause of their trouble, and asked if there were not some of their number absent. In answer to His questions, they acknowledged that they were sad on account of two of their companions who were lying sick of leprosy. Fearing that it might be the unclean leprosy, and dreading lest Jesus might not come to them on that account,

Life of Jesus Christ

they had taken care to conceal them. Then Jesus ordered them to be brought before Him, and He sent some of His disciples after them. At last, they appeared so closely enveloped from head to foot in sheets that it was with great difficulty they could walk, though each was supported on either side. Jesus addressed them, telling them that their leprosy had come not from within, but from an outward infection. While He spoke, I was spiritually enlightened that, not through malice, but through temptation they had sinned. Jesus commanded them to wash in the water which He had used for His feet. They obeyed, and I saw the crusts falling from them leaving the scars behind. The water was then poured into a hole in the ground and covered with earth. Jesus strictly commanded the good people to say not a word of their cure until He should have returned from the baptism.

He afterward gave an instruction upon John, the baptism, and the coming of the Messiah. His hearers questioned Him very simply as to which they should follow, Himself or John, and they desired to know which was the greater. Jesus answered: "The greatest is he who serves as the least and last of all. He who for the love of God humbles himself as the least—he is the greatest." He exhorted them also to go to the baptism, spoke of the difficulties to be encountered in following Him, and sent away all that had done so excepting the five disciples. He appointed a meeting place in the desert, not far from Jericho, I think in the region of Ophra. Joachim had owned a pasture ground in those parts. Some of Jesus' hearers left Him entirely, some went straight to John, while others returned home to prepare for their journey to the baptism.

Jesus and the five disciples afterward went on to Nazareth, which at most was only about a short hour's distance. They approached by the side whose gate opens to the east on the road leading to the Sea of

Galilee, but they went not into the city.

Nazareth had five gates. A little less than a quarter of an hour's distance from the city, rose the mountain from whose steep summit they often hurled people, and whence, at a later period, they wanted to cast Jesus. At the foot of this mountain lay some huts. Jesus directed the five disciples to seek lodgings in them, as He did Himself. They were supplied with water to wash their feet, a piece of bread, and a place in which to sleep. Anne's property lay to the east of Nazareth. The shepherds had bread baked in the ashes, also a well dug in the earth, but without masonry.

11. Jesus with Eliud, the Essenian

The valley through which Jesus went by night from Kisloth-Thabor is called Edron, and the shepherd village in whose synagogue the Pharisees of Nazareth had so derided Him was named Chimki. The people with whom Jesus and the five disciples put up outside of Nazareth were Essenians and friends of the Holy Family. The Essenians, both men and women, dwelt around here in the ruins of old stone vaults, solitary and unmarried. The former wore long white garments, the latter mantles, and both cultivated little gardens. They had once dwelt near Herod's castle in the valley of Zabulon but out of friendship for the Holy Family had come hither.

He with whom Jesus stayed was named Eliud. He was a very venerable, gray-haired old man with a long beard. He was a widower, and his daughter took care of him. He was the son of a brother of Zacharias. The Essenians lived very retired around here, attended the synagogue at Nazareth, and were very devoted to the Holy Family. The care of Mary's house during her absence had been entrusted to them.

Next morning the five disciples of Jesus went into Nazareth to visit their relatives and acquaintances, also the school. Jesus, however, stayed with Eliud,

Life of Jesus Christ

with whom He prayed and very confidentially conversed, for to that simple-hearted, pious man many mysteries had been revealed.

There were four women in Mary's house besides herself: her niece, Mary Cleophas; Johanna Chusa, a cousin of Anna the Prophetess; the relative of Simeon, Mary, mother of John Marc; and the widow Lea. Veronica was no longer there, nor was Peter's wife, whom I had lately seen at the place where the publicans lived.

The Blessed Virgin and Mary Cleophas came to Jesus in the morning. Jesus stretched out His hand to His Mother, His manner to her being affectionate, though very earnest and grave. Mary was anxious about Him. She begged Him not to go to Nazareth, for the feeling against Him there was very bitter. The Pharisees belonging to Nazareth, who had heard Him in the synagogue of Chimki, had again roused indignation against Him. Jesus replied to His Mother's entreaties that He would await where He was the multitude that were to go with Him to the baptism of John, and then pass through Nazareth. Jesus conversed much with His Mother on this day, for she came to Him two or three times. He told her that He would go up to Jerusalem three times for the Pasch, but that the last time would be one of great affliction for her. He revealed to her many other mysteries, but I have forgotten them.

Mary Cleophas was a handsome, distinguished looking woman. She spoke with Jesus that morning of her five sons, and entreated Him to take them into His own service. One was a clerk, or a kind of magistrate, named Simon; two were fishermen, James the Less and Jude Thaddeus, and these three were the sons of her first marriage. Alpheus, her first husband, was a widower with one son when she married him. This stepson was named Matthew. She wept bitterly when she spoke of him,

for he was a publican. Joses Barsabas, who also was at the fishery, was

her son by her second husband Sabas; and, by her third marriage with the fisherman Jonas, she had another son, the young Simeon still a boy. Jesus consoled her, promising that all her sons would one day follow Him. Of Matthew, whom He had already seen when on His way to Sidon, He spoke words of comfort, foretelling that he would one day be one of His best disciples.

The Blessed Virgin returned from Nazareth with some of her female relatives to her abode near Capharnaum. Servants had come with asses from the latter place to conduct them home. They took several pieces of furniture with them which, after their last journey, had been left behind in Nazareth, various kinds of tapestry and woven stuffs, packages of other things, and some vessels. All were packed in chests formed of broad strips of inner or outer bark, and fastened to the sides of the asses. Mary's house in Nazareth was so ornamented that it had, during her absence, the appearance of a chapel. The fireplace looked like an altar. A chest was placed over it on which stood a flowerpot with a plant growing in it. After Mary's departure this time, the Essenians occupied the house.

12. Jesus Discourses with Eliud, the Essenian, Upon the Mysteries of the Old Testament and the Most Holy Incarnation

Jesus passed the whole day in most confidential intercourse with Eliud, who asked Him various questions about His mission. Jesus explained all to the old man, telling him that He was the Messiah, speaking of the lineage of His human genealogy and the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant. I learned then that that Mystery had, before the flood, been taken into the ark of Noe, that It had descended from generation to generation, disappearing from time to time, but again coming to light.

Jesus said that Mary at

Life of Jesus Christ

her birth had become the Ark of the Covenant of the Mystery. Then Eliud who, during the discourse frequently produced various rolls of writing and pointed out different passages of the Prophets which Jesus explained to him, asked why He, Jesus, had not come sooner upon earth. Jesus answered that He could have been born only of a woman who had been conceived in the same way that, were it not for the Fall, all mankind would have been conceived; and that, since the first parents, no married couple had been so pure both in themselves and in their ancestors as Anne and Joachim. Then Jesus unfolded the past generations to Eliud, and pointed out to him the obstacles that had delayed Redemption.

I learned from this conference many details concerning the Ark of the Covenant. Whenever it was in any danger, or whenever there was fear of its falling into enemies' hands, the Mystery was removed by the priests; yet still was it, the Ark, so holy that its profaners were punished and forced to restore it. I saw that the family to whom Moses entrusted the special guardianship of the Ark existed until Herod's time. At the Babylonian Captivity, Jeremias hid the Ark and other sacred things on Mount Sinai. They were never afterward found, but the Mystery had been removed. A second Ark was, at a later period, constructed on the first model, but it did not contain the sacred objects that had been preserved in the first. Aaron's rod, also a portion of the Mystery were in the keeping of the Essenians on Horeb. The Sacrament of the Blessing was, however, but I know not by what priest, again replaced in the Ark. In the pit, which was afterward the Pool of Bethsaida, the sacred fire had been preserved. I saw in pictures very many things, which Jesus explained to Eliud, and I heard part of the words, but I cannot recall all.

He related the fact of His having taken Flesh of the blessed germ of

which God had deprived Adam before his fall. That blessed germ, by means of which

all Israel should have become worthy of Him, had descended through many generations. He explained how His coming had been so often retarded, how some of the chosen vessels had become unworthy. I saw all this as a reality. I saw all the ancestors of Jesus, and how the ancient Patriarchs at their death gave over the Blessing sacramentally to the firstborn. I saw that the morsel and the drink out of the holy cup, which Abraham had received from the angel along with the promise of a son, Isaac, were a symbol of the Most Holy Sacrament of the New Covenant, and that their invigorating power was due to the Flesh and Blood of the future Messiah. I saw the ancestors of Jesus receiving this Sacrament, in order to contribute to the Incarnation of God; and I saw that Jesus, of the Flesh and Blood received from His forefathers, instituted a most august Sacrament for the uniting of man with God.

Jesus spoke much to Eliud also of the sanctity of Anne and Joachim, and of the supernatural Conception of Mary under the Golden Gate. He told him that not by Joseph had He been conceived, but from Mary according to the flesh; that she had been conceived, of that pure Blessing which had been taken from Adam before the Fall, which through Abraham had descended until it was possessed by Joseph in Egypt, after whose death it had been deposited in the Ark of the Covenant, and thence withdrawn to be handed over to Joachim and Anne.

Jesus said that to free man He had been sent in the weakness of humanity; that He received and felt everything like a man; that, like the serpent of Moses in the desert, He would one day be raised up on Mount Calvary where the body of the first man lay buried. He referred also to the sad future that awaited Him and to the ingratitude of man.

Eliud simply and confidently asked question after question. Although he understood all that Jesus said better than did the Apostles, although looking upon

Life of Jesus Christ

things in a more spiritual sense than they, yet all was not clear to him; he could not rightly comprehend how the mission of Jesus was to be accomplished. He asked Jesus where His Kingdom was to be, in Jerusalem, in Jericho, or in Engaddi. Jesus answered that where He Himself was, there would His Kingdom be, and that He would have no external Kingdom.

The old man spoke to Jesus so naturally and simply. He related to Him many things of His Mother, as if He knew them not, and Jesus listened to him so kindly. He told Him of Joachim and Anne, and spoke of the life and death of the latter. Jesus remarked that no woman had ever been more chaste than Anne; that she had married twice after Joachim's death in accordance with the command of God, for it was proper that the number of fruits destined to be produced by this branch should be filled up.

As Eliud recounted the circumstances of Anne's death, I had a vision of the same. I saw her lying on a rather high couch in a back room (something like Mary's) of her own large house. She was unusually animated and talkative, and not at all like a dying person. I saw her blessing her little daughters, also her other relatives, who were in the antechamber. Mary was standing at the head, Jesus at the foot of her bed. Jesus was, at this time, a young man, His beard just beginning to appear. Anne blessed Mary, begged the blessing of Jesus, and continued speaking in a joyous strain. Suddenly she glanced upward, became white as snow, and I saw drops like pearls starting out on her forehead. I cried out: "Ah, she is dying! she is dying!" and, in my eagerness, I wanted to clasp her in my arms. Then it seemed to me that she came and rested in them. On awaking I still thought that I held her.

Eliud related also many things connected with the virtues of Mary in the Temple. As he spoke, I saw it all in vision. I saw that her teacher Noemi was

one of Lazarus's relatives. She was about fifty years old and, like all the other women who served in the Temple, she was an Essenian. I saw that Mary learned from her how to knit. Even as a child, she used to go with Noemi when the latter went to cleanse the different vessels and utensils that had been soiled with the blood of sacrifice. Certain parts of the animal sacrificed were received by them, then cut up and prepared as food for the priests and others who served in the Temple; for they depended in part upon that for support. I saw the Blessed Virgin at a later period helping in these duties. I saw Zachary, when it was his turn to serve in the sanctuary, visiting the child Mary. Simeon, also, knew her. And so, as Eliud was recounting it to the Lord, I saw all her pious and lowly serving in the Temple.

They spoke, also, of Christ's conception, and Eliud told of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. Eliud mentioned also a spring that Mary had found there; and that, too, I saw.

I saw the Blessed Virgin going with Elizabeth, Zachary, and Joseph from Zachary's house to another little property belonging to him, and on which there was no water. The Blessed Virgin went alone into the garden, a little rod in her hand, and prayed. She pierced the earth with the rod, and a tiny stream gushed out and flowed around a little knoll. When Zachary and Joseph removed the earth with a spade, an abundant supply rushed forth, and soon formed a most beautiful spring. Zachary dwelt about five hours southward from Jerusalem, and a little to the west.

In confidential discourse like the above, interrupted only by prayer, Eliud treated with Jesus. He honored Him, but quite simply and joyously, looking upon Him as a chosen human being. Eliud's daughter

did not dwell in the same house with her father, but at some distance in a rocky cavern.

There were about twenty Essenians living on the mountain. The women dwelt apart from the men,

Life of Jesus Christ

about five or six together. All honored Eliud as their Superior and daily assembled around him for prayer. Jesus ate with him alone, but very sparingly, their repast consisting of bread, fruit, honey, and fish. Weaving and agriculture formed the chief occupation of these people.

The mountain at whose base the Essenians dwelt, was the highest peak of a ridge on one of whose plateaus Nazareth was built. A valley lay between it and the city. On the other side the descent was steep and overgrown with verdure and grapevines. The abyss at its base, the one into which the Pharisees at a later period wanted to precipitate Jesus, was full of all kinds of rubbish, ordure, and bones. Mary's house stood on a hill outside the city, part of it extending into the hill like a cave. The top of the house, however, arose above the hill, on the opposite side of which lay other dwellings.

Mary and the other women accompanied by Colaya, Lea's son, arrived at her house in the valley of Capharnaum. Her female friends in the neighborhood came out to meet her. Mary's dwelling at Capharnaum belonged to a man named Levi, who lived in a large house not very far from it. It had been rented from Levi by Peter's family and given over to the Holy Family; for Peter and Andrew knew the Holy Family in a general way, also through John the Baptist, whose disciples they were. The house had several buildings attached to it in which relatives of the family and the disciples could stay when visiting the Holy Family. It appeared to have been chosen on that account. Mary Cleophas had with her her little boy Simeon, about two years old, the son of her third marriage.

Toward evening Jesus accompanied Eliud from his house to Nazareth. Outside the city walls, where Joseph had had his carpenter shop, lived

several people, poor but good, who had been known to Joseph, and among whose sons were some of the playmates of Jesus' childhood. Eliud took Jesus to visit these

people. They offered their guests a morsel of bread and a little fresh water. The water was especially good in Nazareth. I saw Jesus sitting on the ground among them and exhorting them to go to the baptism of John. They acted somewhat shyly in Jesus' regard. They had in the past looked upon Him as one of themselves. But now that He was so gravely introduced to them by Eliud, whom they all so highly honored, whose advice they often asked, from whom they were accustomed to seek consolation, and who, moreover, united in persuading them to go to the baptism, they could scarcely reconcile themselves to the position He now held toward them. They had indeed heard of the Messiah, but they could hardly think that Jesus was He.

13. Jesus and Eliud Walking and Conversing Together

The next day Jesus went with Eliud southward from Nazareth through the valley of Esdrelon on the road to Jerusalem. When about two hours beyond the brook Kison, they arrived at a village consisting of a synagogue, an inn, and only a few houses. It was one of the environs of the not far distant Endor, and nearby was a celebrated spring. Jesus put up at the inn. The people of the place behaved rather coldly, though not inimically toward Him. Eliud was not held in special esteem by them, for they were rather pharisaical. Jesus notified their head men that He intended to teach in the synagogue, but they replied that that was not usual for strangers. Jesus told them that He had a special call to do so and, entering the school, He taught of the Messiah whose Kingdom was not of this world, whose coming would not be attended by outward splendor, also of John's baptism. The priests of the synagogue were not favorably inclined toward Jesus. Jesus bade them give Him the Scriptures. He unrolled them and explained

Life of Jesus Christ

many passages from the Prophets.

Eliud's confident communications with Jesus were to me singularly touching. He knew of and believed in His mission and supernatural advent, still without appearing to have a suspicion that He was God Himself. He told Jesus quite naturally, as they walked together, many things connected with His youth, what the Prophetess Anna had related to him, also what she had heard from Mary after the return from Egypt, for Mary had sometimes visited her in Jerusalem. Jesus, in turn, related to Eliud some things that he did not know, each accompanied with significant interpretation. But all was so natural, so simple, like a dear old man speaking with a beloved young friend.

While Eliud was rehearsing what Anna had heard from Mary and told to him, I saw all in pictures. I rejoiced to find them exactly similar to what I had long before seen and partly forgotten.

Jesus spoke to Eliud also of His journey to the baptism. He had gathered together many people and sent them to the desert near Ophra; but He said that He would go alone by the road past Bethania, where He wanted to speak with Lazarus. He spoke of Lazarus by another general name, which I have forgotten. He mentioned also his father, saying that he had been in war. He said that Lazarus and his sisters were rich, and that they would devote all they had to the advancement of Redemption.

Lazarus had three sisters: the eldest Martha, the youngest Mary Magdalen, and one between them also called Mary. This last lived altogether secluded, her silence causing her to be looked upon as a simpleton. She went by no other name than Silent Mary. Jesus, speaking to Eliud of this family, said, "Martha is good and pious. She

will, with her brother, follow Me." Of Mary the Silent, He said, "She is possessed of great mind and understanding; but, for the good of her soul, they have been withdrawn from her. She is not for this world, therefore is she now altogether

secluded from it. But she has never committed sin. If I should speak to her, she would perfectly comprehend the greatest mysteries. She will not live much longer. After her death, Lazarus and his sister Martha will follow me and devote all that they possess to the use of the Community. The youngest sister Mary has strayed from the right path, but she will return and rise to higher sanctity than Martha."

Eliud spoke also of John the Baptist, but he had not yet seen him and was not yet baptized. Jesus and Eliud spent the night at the inn near the synagogue, and early on the following morning, they journeyed along Mount Hermon toward the somewhat dilapidated city of Endor. Around the inns lay masses of broken walls all the way along the mountain' so broad that a wagon could pass over them. Endor was full of ruins interspersed with gardens. On one side were large, magnificent buildings like palaces, while in other quarters of the city the desolation of war was visible. It seemed to me that the inhabitants were a race apart from the Jews. There was no synagogue in Endor, so Jesus went with Eliud to a large square in which three side buildings containing small chambers were built around a pond. The pond was in the center of a green lawn, and on its waters little barks were sailing. There was a pump nearby, and the place bore the appearance of a health giving resort. The little chambers around the pond were occupied by invalids. Jesus, accompanied by Eliud, entered one of the buildings. He was hospitably received, and His feet washed. A high seat was erected for Him on the lawn, and there He taught the people. The women who occupied one of the wings, took back seats in the audience. These people were not orthodox Jews. They were more like slaves, cast out and oppressed, who had to pay tribute of all that they earned. After a certain war, they remained behind in the city. I think their leader, Sisara, was defeated not far off, and was then murdered by a

Life of Jesus Christ

woman.¹ His army had been scattered throughout the whole country and reduced to servitude. There were still about four hundred in these parts. Their forefathers had, under David and Solomon, been forced to quarry stones for the building of the Temple. They were long accustomed to such work. The deceased King Herod had employed them in building an aqueduct to Mount Sion of several hours in length. They were very compassionate and stood by one another under all circumstances. They wore long coats and girdles. Their pointed caps covered their ears like those of the ancient hermits. They had no communication with the Jews, although they were allowed to send their children to the Jewish schools. But the poor little creatures were so badly treated and so despised that the parents preferred keeping them home.

Jesus felt great compassion for them. He had the sick brought to Him. They sat in a kind of bed like my reclining chair (I can still see them), under the movable back of which were supports. When the back was let down, the chair formed a bed.

As Jesus instructed them about the Messiah and baptism and exhorted them to the latter, they answered timidly that they could not lay claim to such a privilege, for that they were only poor outcasts. Then He taught them by the parable of the unjust steward. The clear interpretation He gave of it, I perfectly understood. It haunted me the whole day, but now I have forgotten it. Perhaps I shall recall it again. Jesus also related the parable of the son sent by his father to take possession of his vineyard. He always related that when instructing the poor, neglected heathens. The people prepared a repast for Jesus out in the open air. He invited to it the poor and the sick, and He and Eliud served them at table. This action greatly impressed His entertainers. That evening Jesus returned

with Eliud to the place outside

1. *Judges 4:2.*

of Nazareth, where He stayed overnight and celebrated the Sabbath in the synagogue.

The following day, Jesus and Eliud returned to Endor, which was only a Sabbath distance from the inn, and there He taught. The inhabitants were Canaanites and, I think, from Sichem; for I heard that day, at least once, the name Sichemite. They had an idol hidden away in a subterranean cavern. By some kind of mechanism on springs, it could be made to rise suddenly out of the earth and seat itself on an altar beautifully ornamented and prepared to receive it. They had procured this idol from Egypt, and it was named Astarte, which I understood yesterday to be the same as Esther. The idol had a face round like the moon. On its outstretched arms it held something long and swathed, like the chrysalis of a butterfly, large in the middle and tapering at either end. It may have been a fish. On the back of the idol was a pedestal upon which stood a high pail, or a small half-tub, which extended over the head. In it was something like ears in green husks, also fruits and green leaves. The idol stood in a cask that reached up to the lower part of the body, and all around it were pots of growing plants. These people worshipped their idol in secret, and Jesus in His instructions to them reprehended them for it. They had been accustomed to sacrifice deformed children to the goddess. There was a companion idol belonging to this goddess, the god Adonis, who I think was Astarte's husband.

This nation, as has been said, had been defeated in three parts under their general Sisara, and scattered as slaves throughout the country. They were at this time greatly oppressed and despised. Not very long before Christ, they had excited some disturbance around Herod's castle in Galilee, after which they were still more oppressed.

In the afternoon, Jesus and Eliud returned to the synagogue and there ended the Sabbath.

Life of Jesus Christ

The Jews, meanwhile, were very much displeased at Jesus' visit to Endor. But He rephended them very severely for their hardheartedness toward their abandoned fellow beings. He exhorted them to a spirit of kindness and urged them to take them to the baptism, which they themselves had, at His recommendation, resolved to receive. The Jews of this place became more favorably inclined toward Jesus after they had heard His instructions. Toward evening He returned to Nazareth with Eliud. I saw them conversing together the whole way, sometimes even pausing to stand and talk. Eliud was again recalling many of the incidents of the flight into Egypt, and I saw them again in vision. He began by asking whether Jesus was not going to extend His Kingdom over the good people in Egypt who had been impressed by His presence among them in His childhood.

Here I saw again that the journey of Jesus after the raising of Lazarus through pagan Asia down to Egypt, and which I had seen before, was no dream of mine, for Jesus told Eliud that wherever the seed had been sown, would He before His end reap the harvest.

Eliud knew of the sacrifice of bread and wine, also of Melchisedech; but he knew not what idea to form of Jesus. He questioned Him as to whether He was not another Melchisedech. Jesus answered: "No. Melchisedech had to pave the way for My sacrifice. But I shall be the Sacrifice itself."

I learned also from that conversation that Noemi, Mary's teacher in the Temple, was the aunt of Lazarus, his mother's sister. Lazarus' father was the son of a Syrian king who had, for services in war, received some property as a reward. His wife was a Jewess of distinction. She belonged to the priestly race of Aaron (although Manasses allied with

Anna), and dwelt in Jerusalem. They owned three castles: one in Bethania; one near Herodium; and one at Magdalum, on the Sea of Galilee, not far from

Tiberias and Gabara. Herod also had a castle in the country near Magdalum. Jesus and Eliud spoke also of the scandal Magdalen gave her family.

Jesus went home with Eliud. There they found assembled the five disciples, the Essenians, and many others who were desirous of going to the baptism. Some publicans, also, had come to Nazareth for the same purpose, and several bands had already started for the place of baptism.

14. Jesus in Nazareth

Next morning Jesus resumed His instructions. Two of the Pharisees from Nazareth came to Him and, in a friendly manner, invited Him to go back with them to the school. They had, as they said, heard so much of His teaching in the country around that they were eager to hear Him explain the Prophets. Jesus went with them. They conducted Him to the house of a Pharisee, in which many others were assembled. The five disciples were with their Master. The Pharisees listened very politely to Jesus while He spoke to them in beautiful parables. His teaching appeared to please them greatly, and they led Him to the synagogue, where a numerous audience awaited Him. Jesus spoke of Moses and explained the Prophecies concerning the Messiah. But whenever He dropped any words from which they might infer that He alluded to Himself, they showed displeasure. One of the Pharisees spread for Him a repast, and He spent the night with His five disciples at an inn near the school.

Next day Jesus addressed a crowd of publicans who were journeying just then to receive the baptism. He afterward taught in the synagogue, making use of the similitude of the grain of wheat which must die in the

earth before producing its fruit. His words displeased the Pharisees, and they repeated their remarks about the son of the carpenter Joseph.

Life of Jesus Christ

They reproached Him also for His communications with publicans and sinners, to which Jesus replied with great firmness. Then they took up the Essenians whom they denominated hypocrites who lived not according to the Law. But Jesus showed them clearly that the Essenians were stricter followers of the Law than the Pharisees, and so the reproach of hypocrisy fell back upon themselves. It was the question of benedictions that had led to the Essenians. Blessings were in common use among them, and the Pharisees were annoyed at seeing Jesus blessing little children. When, for instance, He was entering or leaving the synagogue, He was stopped by many mothers with their children, and His blessing craved for the little ones.

While Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, He had always much to do with the children, who became still and quiet near Him. No matter how passionately they cried, His blessing had power to calm them. The mothers, remembering this, now brought their little ones to Him to see whether He had become too proud to notice them. There were some among them who kicked violently, rolling over and over on the floor, as if they had cramps, screaming loudly all the while. But Jesus' blessing stilled them instantly. I saw something like a dark vapor going out from some of them. Jesus laid His hand on the heads of the boys and gave them the Patriarchs' blessing in three lines, one from the head and one from either shoulder down to the heart where all three united. He blessed the girls in the same way, but without laying His hand on them, though He made a sign on their lips. I thought as I saw Him do it that it meant that they should not prattle so much; still, however, it was significant of something else. Jesus passed the night with His disciples in the house of a Pharisee.

The Three Rich Youths

15. Jesus Rejects Three Rich Youths. He Confounds Many Learned Men In the Synagogue of Nazareth

To the five followers of Jesus, four others were now added, relatives and friends of the Holy Family. I think there was a son of one of the three widows among them, and one from Bethlehem, who had found out that He was a descendant of Ruth who had married Booz in that city. Jesus formally received them to the number of His disciples. There were in Nazareth a couple of rich families who had three sons. In childhood these latter had associated with Jesus. They were now quite cultured and well educated. The parents, who had heard much of Jesus' wisdom and teaching, agreed together that their sons should today hear a specimen of it. They would then offer Him money to let the young men travel with Him that they might profit by His knowledge. The good people had so high an opinion of their sons that they thought Jesus would gladly become their tutor. So the young men went to the synagogue whither, by the connivance of their wealthy parents and the Pharisees, all the learned men of the city had flocked. They were determined to put Jesus to the test in every way. Among these men were a lawyer and a physician, the latter a tall, portly man with a long beard. He wore a girdle and had some kind of a badge upon one shoulder of his mantle. I saw Jesus, on entering the school, again blessing many children whom their mothers brought to Him, among them some afflicted with leprosy whom He healed. During His discourse, He was interrupted in various ways by the literati who proposed to Him all kinds of subtle questions. But His wisdom silenced them.

To the lawyer's speech, Jesus answered most wonderfully from the Law of Moses, and when divorce was spoken of, He rejected it entirely. Divorced, husband and wife could never be; but if the former could

Life of Jesus Christ

not in any way live with the latter, he might leave her. Still were they one body, and could not again marry. These words of the Lord greatly displeased the Jews.

The physician asked whether He could tell whether a man was of a dry, matter-of-fact nature or of a phlegmatic disposition, under what planets such a one was born, what simples were good for this or that temperament, and how the human body is formed. Jesus answered him with great wisdom. He spoke of the complexion of some of those present, their diseases and the remedies, and of the human body, with a depth of knowledge quite unknown to the physician. He spoke of life, of the spirit, and how it influences the body, of sicknesses that could be cured only by prayer and amendment, of such as needed medicine for their cure—and that in language so profound, and yet so beautiful, that the physician in astonishment declared himself vanquished and that he had never before heard such things. I think he afterward became one of Jesus' disciples. Jesus described to him the human body with all its members, muscles, veins, nerves, and intestines, their special functions and their various relations one with another, in general terms and yet with such accuracy that His questioner was humbled and silenced.

There was an astrologer present who spoke of the course of the stars. He explained how one constellation ruled another, how different stars possess different influences, and he discoursed upon comets and the signs of the Zodiac. Jesus in most appropriate language treated with another upon architecture; with others of trade and commerce with foreign nations, taking occasion at the same time to censure severely the various fashions and frivolities lately introduced from Athens. He condemned likewise the games and juggling now in use among them, and which were also spreading throughout Nazareth and

other places. These games were likewise a product of their intercourse with Athens. Jesus stigmatized them as unpardonable since they that indulge in them look upon them as no sin; consequently, they do no penance for them, and therefore they cannot be pardoned.

His hearers were ravished at His wisdom. They begged Him to take up His residence among them, offering to give Him a house and all that He needed, questioning Him also as to why He and His Mother had removed to Capharnaum. Jesus replied that He could not remain with them, and He spoke of His mission and the duties it imposed. In answer to their question as to why He had gone from among them, He said that it was because of His desire to dwell in a more central locality, etc. But they did not understand His reasons, and they were offended at His rejection of their offer, which they thought a very fine one. They looked upon His words, "*mission*," and "*duties*" as the offspring of pride. And so they left the school that evening.

The three youths, who were about the age of twenty, greatly desired to speak with Jesus. But He would not allow them to do so until His nine disciples were present. That annoyed them. Jesus told them that He insisted upon having witnesses to what He might say to them. When at last they were admitted to an audience, they very modestly and humbly laid before Him their own and their parent's wishes that He would receive them as His pupils. Their parents, they said, would remunerate Him, and as for themselves, they would bear Him company in all His labors, they would serve and help Him. I saw that Jesus was troubled at having to refuse their request, partly for their own sake, and partly on account of His disciples, for He was obliged to assign reasons for His refusal which they could not as yet comprehend. He replied to the youths that he who gave money to obtain something, aimed at gaining

Life of Jesus Christ

some temporal advantage; but that whoever would follow Him, must abandon all earthly possessions, must leave parents and friends, and that His disciples must neither woo nor marry. He laid down many other hard conditions, so that the young men became very much discouraged. They argued that many of the Essenians were married. Jesus replied that they, the Essenians, acted rightly and in accordance with their laws, but that His doctrine was to accomplish fully that for which theirs only paved the way, etc. With this remark and bidding them take time to reflect, He left them.

The disciples were intimidated by His words. His teaching was so severe that they could not understand it, and they grew fainthearted. But on the way from Nazareth to Eliud's, He bade them not despond, that He had good reasons for talking as He had done, that those youths would only at some distant day, and perhaps never, come to Him; but as for themselves, the disciples, they should follow Him calmly and be without anxiety, etc. And so they arrived at Eliud's. I do not think He will again go to Eliud's, for great talk and excitement had arisen in Nazareth on His account. The inhabitants were vexed at His not remaining among them. They thought that He had acquired all His knowledge during His travels. "True," they said, "He is a very clever and extraordinary man; but, for a carpenter's son, He is rather conceited." I saw the three young men returning to their homes. Their parents were very much displeased at the objections Jesus made to receiving them. The sons chimed in with the parents, and all talked at random in their indignation against Him.

On the following day, the three youths went again to Jesus and begged once more to be accepted. They promised Him perfect obedience and faithful service. But Jesus again dismissed them, and I saw that their

inability to seize the meaning of His refusal troubled

Him. He spoke then with His nine disciples who, by His directions, were to go first to a certain place and afterward to John. On the subject of those whom He had dismissed, Jesus said that they desired to follow Him for the sake of what they might gain, that they were not willing to give all for love. But that they, the disciples, sought for nothing, consequently they had been received. He spoke again in significant and beautiful terms of the baptism, telling them to go over to Capharnaum and say to His Mother that He was going to the baptism. He charged them likewise to speak to the disciples, John, Peter, and Andrew about John (the Baptist) and say to the last named that He (Jesus) was coming.

16. Jesus with Eliud In the Leper Settlement

I saw Jesus journeying with Eliud in a southwesterly direction from Nazareth, but not exactly on the highroad. He wanted to go to Chim, a leper settlement. They reached it at daybreak, and I saw that Eliud tried to restrain Jesus from entering it, that He might not be defiled; for, as Eliud urged, if it were discovered that He had been there, He would not be allowed to go to the baptism. But Jesus replied that He knew His mission, that He would enter, for there was in it a good man who was sighing for His coming. They had to cross the Kishon. The leper settlement lay near a brook formed by the waters of the Kishon which flowed into a little pond in which the lepers bathed. The water thus used did not return into the Kishon. This settlement was perfectly isolated; no one ever approached it. The lepers dwelt in scattered huts. There were no others in the place, excepting those that attended the infected. Eliud remained at a distance and waited for the Lord. Jesus entered one of the most remote huts wherein lay stretched on the ground a miserable creature entirely

Life of Jesus Christ

enveloped in sheets. He was a good man. I have forgotten how he contracted leprosy. Jesus addressed him. He raised himself, and appeared to be deeply touched at the Lord's deigning to visit him. Jesus commanded him to rise and stretch himself in a trough of water that stood near the hut. He obeyed, while Jesus held His hands extended over the water. The rigid limbs of the leper relaxed, and he was made clean. He then resumed his ordinary dress, and Jesus commanded him not to speak of his cure until He should have returned from the baptism. He accompanied Jesus and Eliud along the road till Jesus ordered him to go back.

I saw Jesus and Eliud the whole day journeying toward the south through the valley of Esdrelon. Sometimes they conversed together, and at others walked apart as if in prayer and meditation.

The weather was not very pleasant at that time, the sky dark, and fog in the valley. Jesus had no stick. He never carried one. But Eliud had one with a little shovel on it like those of the shepherds. Jesus wore only sandals, though a kind of perfect shoe, consisting of a thick, woven upper of coarse cotton, was in use at the time. Once I saw Jesus and Eliud at noon resting by a well and eating bread.

17. Jesus Transfigured Before Eliud

During the night, I saw them again walking, sometimes together, sometimes separate. And then I witnessed something extraordinary, an unspeakably lovely vision. While Jesus was walking on ahead, Eliud passed some remarks upon the symmetry and beauty of His person. Jesus replied: "If thou shouldst behold this Body two years hence, thou wouldst find in it neither beauty nor symmetry, so greatly will they

abuse and maltreat Me." But Eliud understood not His words. Above all he could not comprehend why Jesus always spoke of His Kingdom as existing

so short a time; for he thought ten, or even twenty years must elapse before it would be founded. He could not bring himself to think otherwise, since his thoughts were all of an earthly kingdom.

When they had gone on a short distance, Jesus paused and bade Eliud, who was following lost in thought, to approach and He would show him who He was, of what nature was His Body, and of what kind His Kingdom. Eliud drew near to within several steps of Jesus. Then Jesus raised His eyes to Heaven and prayed. A cloud, like those seen in a thunderstorm, descended and enveloped both. From without they could not be seen, but over them opened a Heaven of light which seemed to descend toward them. Above I saw a city of shining walls, I saw the Heavenly Jerusalem! The whole interior was lit up with a rainbow colored light. I saw a figure like God the Father, and Jesus, His form perfectly luminous and transparent, connected with Him by beams of light. Eliud stood awhile gazing upward as if entranced, and then sank prostrate on his face, in which position he remained until the apparition and the light had melted away. Then Jesus resumed His way, and Eliud followed speechless and frightened by what he had seen. It was a vision like the Transfiguration, but I did not see Jesus lifted up.

I think Eliud did not live to see the Crucifixion of Christ. Jesus was more confidential toward him than toward the Apostles, for Eliud was very enlightened and very familiar with many of the mysteries connected with the family of Jesus. Jesus took him as a friend and companion, and clothed him with authority, so that he did much for His community. He was one of the best instructed of the Essenians. In Jesus' time, the Essenians did not dwell all together on the mountains as formerly; they were more scattered throughout the cities. I had that wonderful vision about twelve o'clock at night.

In the morning, I saw Jesus and Eliud arrive at

Life of Jesus Christ

a shepherd field. It was daybreak, and the shepherds were already out of their huts and with the cattle. They came forward to meet Jesus, who was known to them. They cast themselves down before Him, and then led Him and His companion under a shed where they had their cooking utensils. Here they washed their feet, prepared for them a couch, and set before them bread and little drinking cups. They roasted some turtledoves for their guests. The birds had their nests in the roofs of the huts, and were hopping around in great numbers like hens. And now I saw Jesus dismissing Eliud, who knelt to receive His blessing. The shepherds were present. Jesus told him that he would end his days in peace, that the path which He Himself had to walk would be too difficult for him, that He had admitted him to His Community, that he had already done his part in the vineyard, and that he should receive his reward in His Kingdom. Jesus explained this by the parable of the laborers in the vineyards. Eliud was very grave since the vision of the preceding night, very silent, and deeply impressed. I think he was afterward baptized by the disciples. He accompanied Jesus a part of the way from the shepherd field. The Lord embraced him, and he departed with signs of manly emotion.

The place to which Jesus was going for the Sabbath could be seen from here. Some of His relatives once dwelt there. The place to which He now went alone was called Gur. It was built on a mountain. Joseph's brother, who afterward removed to Zabulon and who had had frequent communication with the Holy Family, once dwelt there. Jesus went unnoticed to an inn, where they washed His feet and presented Him food. He had a chamber to Himself. He caused a roll of the Scriptures to be brought to Him from the synagogue, and out of it He read and prayed sometimes standing, sometimes kneeling, often raising His eyes toward Heaven. He did not go to the school. Once I saw some people going to

the inn and asking to speak to Jesus, but He would not see them.

18. A Glance at the Disciples Going to the Baptism

I saw the disciples whom Jesus had dispatched with messages arrive in Capharnaum. They were about five of the best-known. They had an interview with Mary, and then two of them went to Bethsaida for Peter and Andrew. James the Less, Simon, Thaddeus, John, and James the Greater were present. The disciples spoke of the mildness, meekness, and wisdom of Jesus, while the followers of John the Baptist proclaimed with enthusiasm the austere life of their master, and declared that they had never before heard such an interpreter of the law and the Prophets. Even John spoke enthusiastically of the Baptist, although he already knew Jesus. His parents had once lived only a couple of hours from Nazareth, and Jesus loved him even as a child. The disciples celebrated the Sabbath here.

The next day I saw the nine disciples along with those named above on the road to Tiberias, whence they were to go to John, passing near Ephron and then through the desert toward Jericho. Peter and Andrew particularly distinguished themselves by the zeal with which they spoke of the Baptist. He was, they said, of a noble, priestly race; he had been educated by the Essenians in the wilderness, he would suffer no irregularity around him, he was as rigorous as he was wise. Then Jesus' disciples put forward the mildness and wisdom of their Master, to which the others retorted that many disorders arose from such condescension, and they cited instances in proof of what they said. Jesus' disciples replied that their Master, too, had been educated by the Essenians and that, moreover, He had but lately returned from travelling. But John entered not into

Life of Jesus Christ

this discussion. I did not hear him saying anything more in that strain. They started together for the place of baptism, but after a few hours took different directions. As I listened to their conversation, I thought, "Men were then as they now are."

19. Jesus in Gophna

Gur, where Jesus prayed alone in the inn, lay not very far from a city, Mageddo, and a field of the same name. I have clearly seen that, toward the end of the world, there will be fought in that field a battle with Antichrist. Jesus arose with the dawn, rolled up His couch, laid a coin on it, girded Himself, and went forth. His way led Him around many towns and villages, but He met no one, put up at no inn. He passed Mount Garizim near Samaria, which lay to the left, as He journeyed southward. Occasionally He ate a few berries and some other fruit, and in the hollow of His hand or with a concave leaf scooped up some water to quench His thirst.

Toward evening, Jesus entered Gophna, a city on Mount Ephraim. It was built upon very jagged foundations, some high, some low, numerous gardens and pleasure grounds scattered between the houses. Some relatives of Joachim dwelt here, but they had not maintained intimate communications with the Holy Family. Jesus put up at an inn where they washed His feet and gave Him some little refreshment. But soon there came to the inn some of His relatives accompanied by a couple of Pharisees of the better sort, and escorted Him to their own home, one of the handsomest houses in the city. The city itself was of some importance, and possessed at this time jurisdiction over a portion of the country around. Jesus' relative was an official, and was much employed in writing. I think the city belonged to Samaria. Jesus was

received with respect. There were several guests at His relative's house and all, standing

or walking, took refreshments in a pleasure garden. Jesus slept here overnight.

It was a day's journey from Gophna to Jerusalem. There was a little river in this region. During the loss of the Boy Jesus in the Temple, the Holy Family went to Gophna in search of Him; for when they missed Him at Machmas, they thought He might perhaps have gone to His relatives there. Mary feared that He had fallen into the little river.

Jesus, having gone to the synagogue, asked for the writings of one of the Prophets, and taught of baptism and the Messiah. He proved to His hearers from the Prophets, that the time must have arrived for His appearance. He cited events which were to precede His coming, and which had actually been accomplished, alluding especially to one that had happened three years before. I do not now remember whether that particular event was a war, or whether it was that the scepter had passed from Juda. And so He went on enumerating proofs of accomplished signs which were to precede the coming of the Messiah. He mentioned also the multiplication of sects and the irreligious nature of so many of their ceremonies. He told them that the Messiah would be in their midst, and they would not know Him. He alluded, in words something like the following, to the connection existing between Himself and John: "There will be one who will point Him out (the Messiah), but ye will not acknowledge Him. Ye wish to see a conqueror, an illustrious personage, a man surrounded by magnificence and eminently learned companions. Ye will not recognize as the Messiah one that comes among you destitute of wealth and authority, unattended by the pomp of worldly splendor and magnificence, one whose companions are unlettered peasants and laborers, whose followers are made up of beggars, cripples, lepers, and sinners."

In this way Jesus spoke at length, interpreting the Prophecies, and putting forth clearly the connection

Life of Jesus Christ

between Himself and John. Still, He never once said, "I", but spoke of Himself in the third person. His instruction occupied the greater part of the day. His relatives concluded that He must be an envoy, a forerunner of the expected Messiah. On His return to their house, they referred to a book in His presence wherein they had recorded all that had happened in the Temple to Jesus, the Son of Mary, in His twelfth year. They were struck by the similarity between what He had then said and His teaching of today, and on perusal of that record they were still more astonished.

The father of the house was an aged widower. His two daughters, both widows, lived with him. I heard the two daughters talking together of the marriage of Joseph and Mary in Jerusalem, at which they had been present. They recalled the magnificence of that wedding, how well-off Anne had been, but how changed the circumstances of the family had become. They spoke just as people of the world are accustomed to do, a vein of blame and reproach running through their words, as if they of whom they were speaking had greatly degenerated. While thus conversing and, womanlike, recounting the particulars of the wedding and Mary's bridal dress, I saw a circumstantial vision of the whole ceremony and especially of the Blessed Virgin's ornaments. Meanwhile the men were hunting up what had been written years before about Jesus and His teaching as a Boy in the Temple. The parents of Jesus had anxiously sought Him here, and it was thus that the news of where and how He was found had reached them. The affair had attracted much attention, especially as He was a relative of theirs.

While His relatives were still expressing surprise at the connection between His former and His present teaching, by which they were even more prejudiced in His favor, Jesus informed them that He must take leave and, in spite of their remonstrances, set

out accompanied by several of the men. They had to cross a little river over a bridge of masonry on which trees were growing. They journeyed some hours to a plain covered with meadows. It was here the Patriarch Joseph was when Jacob sent him to his brethren in Sichem. The regions from which Jesus had lately come had also been much frequented by Jacob. Late in the evening Jesus entered a shepherd village this side of a small river, and His companions left Him. The village lay on both sides of the river, the part on the opposite bank being the larger. The synagogue was on this side. The Lord went to an inn where were assembled two sets of candidates for baptism. They were on their way through the desert to the appointed place. They had spread the news here of Jesus' coming. He conversed with them that evening, and they departed next morning. The servants washed the Lord's feet. He partook of a light repast, and then retired for prayer and rest.

20. Jesus Condemns Herod's Adultery. The Journey of the Holy Women

Next morning Jesus went to the school, where many were assembled. He spoke, as usual, of the baptism and of the nearness of the Messiah whom they would not acknowledge. He reproached them for their obstinate adherence to old, meaningless customs, on which point these people had a special failing. They were, on the whole, tolerably simple-minded and received His remonstrances well. Jesus requested the High Priest of the synagogue to conduct Him to the sick. He visited about ten, but cured none; for, in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, He had told Eliud and His five disciples that He would perform no more cures until He had been to the baptism. The sick in this place were mostly dropsical, gouty, and infirm women. Jesus exhorted them and told them separately what religious acts they should perform,

Life of Jesus Christ

according as their infirmities were a part punishment of sin. Some He ordered to purify themselves and go to the baptism.

There was a meal prepared for Him at the inn, at which many men of the place were present. Before the hour for it these men spoke of Herod, of his unlawful connection with his brother's wife, blaming him severely and inquiring into Jesus' opinion on the point in question. Jesus warmly censured Herod's conduct and denounced the sin of adultery, but He told them likewise that if they judged others, they would themselves be judged.

Now there were in this place many sinners. Jesus spoke with them privately and earnestly reproved them for living in adultery. He told many all their secret sins. Trembling with fear, they promised to do penance. Jesus went from here to Bethania, a distance of perhaps six miles, and again entered a mountainous region. It was the winter season, foggy and cloudy by day, and sometimes white frost by night. Jesus enveloped His head in a scarf, and journeyed straight on toward the east.

I saw Mary and four holy women leaving the house and wending their way through a field near Tiberias. They had with them two servants from the fishery. One went on ahead, the other followed, both laden with baggage which they carried on a pole across the shoulder, a pack in front and another behind. The four women were Johanna Chusa, Mary Cleophas, Mary Salome, and one of the three widows. They, too, were going to Bethania by the usual route which ran by Sichem to the right. When Jesus passed it, it was on His left. The holy women walked generally in single file, a couple of steps apart. They went in this way probably because most of the roads, excepting the broad highways, were narrow, intended for foot passengers, and led through the

mountains. They walked quickly with a firm step, not swaying from side to side, as the country people do here. Very

probably this is because from early youth the inhabitants of that country are accustomed to making long journeys on foot. They had their gowns tucked up to about the middle of the calf, their lower limbs bandaged tightly down to the ankle, and bound to the soles of their feet were thick, padded sandals. Over the head was a veil, the ends of which were fastened into the scarf wound round the neck. This scarf was crossed on the breast, thence carried behind and caught in the girdle; sometimes the wearers ran their hands into its folds and there let them rest. The man, going on before the travelers, prepared the way for them. He opened the hedges, removed stones from the path, laid bridges, gave orders at the inns and, in fine, saw to everything. The one who followed put everything again into its first order.

21. Jesus in Bethania

About six miles from Bethania, the road upon which Jesus was travelling again led through a mountainous country. That evening He entered a little village consisting of only one street, about half an hour in length, which ran across a mountain. Bethania was probably still three hours further on. One could see in the distance the region in which it lay, for it was a low plain. From this mountain stretched north and east a desert of about three hours in breadth toward the desert of Ephron. It was between these two deserts that I saw Mary and her companions tonight putting up at an inn.

The mountain is that one upon which Joab and Abisai, in the persecution of Abner, stopped when the latter addressed them. It is called Amma, and lies to the north of Jerusalem. The place where Jesus was faced both north and east. I think it was called Giah. It was opposite the desert Gibeon, which began at the foot of the mountain and

stretched off to the desert Ephron. It was about three hours long. Jesus

Life of Jesus Christ

arrived in the evening and entered a house to procure some refreshment. They washed His feet, and set before Him a drink and little rolls. Several persons soon gathered around Him. As He had just come from Galilee, they questioned Him about the Teacher from Nazareth, of whom they had heard so much from John and other sources. They asked also whether John's baptism was of any value. Jesus instructed them in His usual style, exhorted them to baptism and penance, and spoke of the Prophet from Nazareth and of the Messiah. He said that the latter would appear among them, but they would not acknowledge Him, yea, they would even persecute and ill treat Him. They must indeed remark that the time was come for His advent. He would not appear in splendor and triumph. He would be poor and would walk among the simple. The people of this place did not know Jesus, but they received Him well and expressed veneration for Him. Aspirants to baptism had passed through the place and had spoken of Him. After resting about two hours, He continued His journey accompanied by some of the good people.

He arrived in Bethania at night. Lazarus had been perhaps for some days at his house in Jerusalem on the west side of Mount Sion, the same side as Mount Calvary. But he must have heard from the disciples of Jesus' intended visit to Bethania, for he had come thither in time to receive Him. The castle in Bethania belonged in reality to Martha; but Lazarus loved to be there, so he and his sister kept house together. They were expecting Jesus, and a repast was in readiness. Martha dwelt in a house on the other side of the courtyard. There were guests assembled in both houses. With Martha were Seraphia (Veronica), Mary Marcus, and an aged woman of Jerusalem who had been in the Temple when Mary entered and had left soon after. She had desired to remain, but God had other designs for her, and she married. With Lazarus were Nicodemus, John Marc, the only son of Simeon,

and an old man named Obed, a brother or brother's son of the Prophetess Anna. All were, in secret, friends of Jesus, partly through John the Baptist, partly through the Holy Family, and again through the prophecies of Simeon and Anna in the Temple.

Nicodemus was a thoughtful, inquiring man, who was anxiously awaiting Jesus' coming. All had received the baptism of John, and all were secretly assembled here at Lazarus's invitation. Nicodemus afterward served Jesus and His cause, but in secret.

Lazarus had sent some of his servants to meet Jesus on the way. About thirty minutes from Bethania, Jesus came up with a trusty old servant who afterward joined the disciples. The old man prostrated on his face before Him, saying, "I am the servant of Lazarus. If I have found favor before Thee, my Lord, follow me to his house." Jesus bade him rise, and followed him. He was kind to the old man, but at the same time He conducted Himself in accordance with His dignity. It was just that way of acting that gave Him such power to attract. People loved the Man, but felt the God. The servant led Jesus to a porch near a fountain at the entrance of the castle, where all had been prepared for washing His feet and changing His sandals. He wore thick, green, padded soles which He now exchanged for a pair of stout ones with low, leather uppers. From that time He continued to wear these latter. The servant dusted and aired His garments. When the washing of His feet was over, Lazarus and his friends appeared, bringing to Jesus a light refreshment and something in a drinking cup. Jesus embraced Lazarus and greeted the others, extending to them His hand. They served Him hospitably and escorted Him to the house. Sometime after, Lazarus conducted Him across the courtyard to Martha's dwelling. The women there knelt veiled before Him. Jesus raised them by the hand, and told Martha that

His Mother was coming to await there His return from the baptism.

Life of Jesus Christ

They all went back to Lazarus' where a meal was awaiting them. It consisted of roasted lamb, doves, vegetables, little rolls, honey, and fruits. On the table were cups, and the guests reclined on leaning stools, two and two. The women ate in an antechamber. Jesus prayed before the meal began and blessed the food. He was very grave, even a little sad. During the repast, He said that a time of trial was approaching, that He was about to begin a toilsome journey, which would come to a bitter end. He exhorted them, if they were His friends, to stand firm, for like Himself they would have much to suffer. He spoke so feelingly that they all wept, though they did not perfectly understand Him and knew not that He was God.

That want of understanding on the part of those around Jesus is always a subject of wonder to me, since I have seen innumerable testimonies of His Godhead and mission; and I cannot help asking why was not that, which I perceive so clearly, shown to those people. I have seen man created by God, Eve taken from his side and bestowed upon him as a wife, and both fallen from their first innocence. I have seen the Promise of the Messiah, the dispersion of mankind, the wonderful providence of God and His mysteries preparing the way for the coming of the Blessed Virgin. I saw the descent of the Blessing from which the Word became Flesh running like a path of light through all the generations of Mary's ancestors. At last I saw the angel's message to Mary and the ray of light from the Godhead which penetrated her at the instant the Saviour became Man. And after all this, how wonderful did it not seem to me, miserable, unworthy sinner, to see those holy contemporaries and friends of Jesus in His presence—though loving and honoring Him—yet possessed by the thought that His Kingdom was to be an earthly one; to see them regarding Him, indeed, as the promised Messiah, and yet never dreaming

that He was God Himself. He was to them only the son of Joseph and Mary, His Mother. None guessed that Mary was a virgin, for they knew not of her supernatural Immaculate Conception; indeed, they did not even know of the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant. It was already a great deal, and a sign of special grace, that they loved Him and acknowledged Him. The Pharisees, although they knew of the prophecies of Simeon and Anna at the time of His Presentation in the Temple, and who had listened to His wonderful teaching in the Temple when still only a child, were perfectly obdurate. They had indeed made some inquiries at the time concerning the family of the Child and later on concerning His instructors; but they esteemed Him and His relatives too poor, too insignificant, too despicable. They wanted a Messiah in every way magnificent. Lazarus, Nicodemus, and many of the followers of Jesus entertained the secret belief that He was called with His disciples to take possession of Jerusalem, to free the Jews from the Roman yoke, and to establish them in a kingdom of their own. Truly, it was then as now, when each man might look upon him as a Saviour who would restore his fatherland to freedom and once again establish the beloved old government. Neither was it known at that time that the Kingdom which alone can help us, is not of this world of penance. Yes, they indeed rejoiced for the moment in the thought, "Now it will soon be all over with the glory of such or such a tyrant." They did not, however, venture to mention their thoughts to Jesus. They stood in great awe of Him; besides, they could read a fulfillment of their hopes in no trace of His behavior, in no word that He uttered.

After the meal, all retired to an oratory where Jesus offered a prayer of thanksgiving that His time, His mission was now to begin. It was extremely affecting, and all shed tears. The women were present, but standing back. They recited together the usual

Life of Jesus Christ

prayers, after which Jesus gave them His blessing, and was conducted by Lazarus to His chamber for the night. This was a large room divided off into alcoves where the men slept; but these alcoves were more beautiful than those of ordinary houses. The beds were not rolled up, as they were in general; they were placed on a kind of stationary platform with a cornice in front ornamented with hangings and fringes. A fine mat was rolled up on the wall by the bed. It could, by means of a pulley, be drawn up or let down before the bed, thus concealing it when not in use, and forming a kind of slanting roof. Beside the bed was a small table, and in a niche of the wall stood a tall water vessel, along with a smaller one for drawing and pouring. A lamp projected from the wall, and on the arm of the same hung a toilet towel. Lazarus lighted the lamp, cast himself on his knees before Jesus, who again blessed him, and departed.

Silent Mary, the simple sister of Lazarus, did not make her appearance. Before others she never uttered a word; but when alone in her room or the garden, she talked aloud to herself and to all the objects around her, as if they had life. It was only before others that she was perfectly mute and still; her eyes cast down, she looked like a statue. On being saluted, however, she inclined and was very polite in all her bearing. When alone, she busied herself in various occupations, attending to her own wardrobe, and keeping all things in order. She was very pious, though she never appeared in the school. She prayed in her own chamber. I think she had visions and conversed with apparitions. Her love for her brother and sisters was unspeakable, especially for Magdalen. From her earliest years she had been what she now was. She had a female attendant, but she was perfectly neat in her person and surroundings with no trace of insanity to be found about her.

No word had as yet been spoken in Jesus' presence in reference to Magdalen, who was then living

Silent Mary

401

at Magdalum in the height of her grandeur.

On the night that Jesus went to Lazarus', I saw the Blessed Virgin, Johanna Chusa, Mary Cleophas, the widow Lea, and Mary Salome passing the night at an inn between the desert Gibeia and the desert Ephraim, about five hours from Bethania. They slept under a shed enclosed on all sides by light walls. It contained two apartments. The front one was divided off into two rows of alcoves, of which the holy women took possession; the back served as a kitchen. Before the inn was an open hut in which a fire was burning. Here the male attendants slept or kept watch. The innkeeper's dwelling was not far distant.

On the following day, Jesus taught walking about the courtyards and gardens of the castle. He spoke earnestly, feelingly, and lovingly, though His manner was full of dignity and He uttered no unnecessary word. All loved Him and followed Him, though not without a sentiment of awe. Lazarus approached Him the most confidently. The other men were more reserved; they gazed on in admiration.

22. Jesus' Interview with Silent Mary. His Conversation with His Mother

Accompanied by Lazarus, Jesus went also to the abode of the women, and Martha took Him to her silent sister Mary, with whom He wished to speak. A wall separated the large courtyard from a smaller one, which latter, however, was still quite spacious. In it was an enclosed garden adjoining Mary's dwelling. They passed through a gate, and Jesus remained in the little garden while Martha went to call her silent sister.

The garden was highly ornamental. In the center stood a large date tree, and all around were aromatic herbs and shrubs. On one side was a fountain or rather a kind of tiny lake with a stone seat in the center. From the opposite edge to the seat was laid a plank, upon which silent

Life of Jesus Christ

Mary could cross and there sit under an awning and surrounded by the water. Martha went to her and bade her come down into the garden, for there someone was waiting to speak to her. Silent Mary was very obedient. Without a word, she threw her veil around her and followed her sister into the garden. Then Martha retired. Mary was tall and very beautiful. She was about thirty years old. She generally kept her eyes fixed on Heaven. If occasionally she glanced to one side where Jesus was, it was only a side glance and vaguely, as if she were gazing into the distance. Even when speaking of herself, she never used the pronoun, "I," but always "thou," as if she saw herself as a second person and spoke accordingly. She did not address Jesus nor cast herself at His feet. Jesus was the first to salute, and they walked together around the garden. Properly speaking, they did not converse together. Silent Mary kept her gaze fixed on high and recounted heavenly things, as if passing before her eyes. Jesus spoke in the same manner of His Father and to His Father. Mary never looked at Jesus, though while speaking she sometimes half turned to the side upon which He was walking. There was more a prayer, a song of praise, a contemplation, a revealing of mysteries than a conversation. Mary appeared as if ignorant of her own existence. Her soul was in another world while her body lived on earth.

Of their speech during that interview, I can remember that, glancing intuitively upon the Incarnation of Christ, they spoke as if gazing upon the Most Holy Trinity acting in that mystery. Their simple, and yet profoundly significant words I cannot recall. Mary gazing upon it, said, "The Father commissioned the Son to go down to mankind, among whom a Virgin should conceive Him." Then she described the rejoicings of the angels, and how Gabriel was sent to the Virgin. And so she ran through the nine angelic choirs, who all came down with the bearer of the glad tidings,

just as a child would joyously describe a procession moving before its eyes, praising the devotion and zeal of all that composed it. Then she seemed to glance into the chamber of the Virgin, to whom she spoke words expressive of her hope that she might receive the Angel's message. She saw the Angel arrive and announce the coming of the Saviour. She saw all and repeated all, as if uttering her thoughts aloud, gazing the while into the distance. Suddenly she paused, her eyes fixed on the Virgin who appeared to be recollecting herself before replying to the Angel, and said very simply, "Then, thou hast made a vow of virginity? Ah, if thou hadst refused to be the Lord's Mother, what would have happened? Would there have been found another virgin?" Then addressing her nation, she exclaimed: "Had the Virgin refused, long wouldst thou, O orphaned Israel, still have groaned!" And now, filled with joy by the Virgin's consent, she burst forth into words of praise and thanksgiving, rehearsed the wonders of Jesus' birth and, addressing the Divine Child, said, "Butter and honey shalt Thou eat." She again repeated the Prophecies, recalled those of Simeon and Anna, etc., spoke with the different personages connected with them, and all this as if gazing upon those scenes, contemporary with them. At last, descending to the present, she said, speaking as if alone: "Now goest Thou on the painful, bitter way," etc. Although she knew that the Lord was at her side, yet she acted and spoke as if He were no nearer to her than all the other visions just recounted. Jesus interrupted her from time to time with prayer and thanksgiving, praising His Father and interceding for mankind. The whole interview was inexpressibly touching and wonderful.

Jesus left her. Relapsing into her usual silence and exterior apathy, she returned to the house. When Jesus went back to Lazarus and Martha, He said to them something like the following: "She is not without understanding, but her soul is not of this world."

Life of Jesus Christ

She sees not this world, and this world comprehends her not. She is happy. She knows no sin."

Silent Mary, in her altogether spiritual state of contemplation, was really and truly oblivious to all that happened to her or around her. She was always thus abstracted. She had never before spoken in the presence of others as she had just done in that of Jesus. Before all others she kept silence, though not from pride or reserve. No; it was because she saw not those people interiorly, saw not what they saw, but gazed upon Redemption and the things of Heaven alone. When at times accosted by a learned and pious friend of the family, she would indeed utter some words audibly, though without understanding a single word of what had been said to her. Not having reference to or connection with the vision upon which she was interiorly gazing at the time, she heard without hearing; consequently her reply, bearing upon what was then engrossing her own attention, mystified her hearers. It was for this reason that she was regarded by the family as a simpleton. Her state necessitated her dwelling alone, for her soul lived not in time. She cultivated her little garden and embroidered for the Temple. Martha brought her her work. She was skillful with her needle, which she plied in uninterrupted musing and meditation. She prayed most piously and devoutly, and endured a kind of expiatory suffering for the sins of others, for her soul was often oppressed as if the weight of the whole world was upon her. Her dwelling was comfortably fitted up with sofas and different kinds of furniture. She ate little and always alone. She died of grief at the immensity of Jesus' Passion, which in spirit she foresaw.

Martha spoke to Jesus of Magdalen and her own great anxiety on her account. Jesus comforted her, telling her that Magdalen would certainly

be converted, but that she must on no account weary of praying for her and exhorting her to change her life.

At about half-past one the Blessed Virgin arrived with Mary Chusa, Lea, Mary Salome, and Mary Cleophas. The servant had in advance announced their approach. Martha, Seraphia, Mary Marcus, and Susanna proceeded to that hall at the entrance of the castle where Jesus the day before had been received by Lazarus. They took with them refreshments and the vessels necessary for washing their guests' feet. After welcoming the newly-arrived and performing for them that duty of hospitality, the latter changed their dress, lowered their skirts, and put on fresh veils. All were clothed in undyed wool, yellowish-white or brownish. They partook of a light refreshment, and then accompanied Martha to her house.

Jesus and the men now presented themselves to salute the holy women, after which Jesus retired for an interview with the Blessed Virgin. He told her most earnestly and lovingly that He was about to begin His career, that He was now going to John's baptism whence He would return and once more be with her for a short time in the region of Samaria, but that then He would retire to the desert for forty days. When Mary heard Him speak of the desert, she became very uneasy. She besought Him not to go to so frightful a place where He would die of hunger and thirst. Jesus replied that henceforth she should not seek to deter Him by human considerations, for He must accomplish what was marked out for Him; a very different life was now about to commence for Him, and they who would adhere to Him must suffer with Him; that He must now fulfill His mission, and she must sacrifice all purely personal claims upon Him. He added that although He would love her as ever, yet He was now for all mankind. She should do as He said and His Heavenly Father would reward her, for what Simeon had foretold was about to be fulfilled—a sword should pierce her soul. The Blessed Virgin listened gravely. She was very much troubled, though at the same time strong in

her resignation to God, for Jesus was very tender and loving.

That evening Lazarus gave a feast to which Simon the Pharisee, and some others of the sect were invited. The women ate in an adjacent room, which was separated by a grating from the men's dining hall, but within hearing of all that Jesus said. He taught of faith, hope, charity, and obedience. He said that they who desired to follow Him must not look back. They should practice what He taught and suffer the trials that might befall them, but that He would never abandon them. He again alluded to the thorny path before Him, to the buffetings and persecutions He would have to undergo, and impressed upon them the fact, that whoever called themselves His friends, would have to suffer with Him. His hearers, deeply touched, listened in wonder to His words, but what He said in allusion to His bitter Passion they did not rightly understand. They did not take His words in their simple and literal meaning, but looked upon them as the figurative expressions of prophecy. The Pharisees present, though less favorably disposed than the others, found nothing to carp at in Jesus' speech. This time, however, He spoke very moderately.

23. Jesus Journeys with Lazarus to the Place of Baptism

The entertainment over, Jesus rested awhile and then started with Lazarus toward Jericho to the place of baptism. One of Lazarus' servants went on ahead with a lighted torch, for it was night. After walking for about half an hour, they reached an inn belonging to Lazarus where at a later period the disciples often stopped. This inn must not be confounded with that other of which I have often made mention, and at which also the disciples frequently put up. That one was farther on in an opposite direction. The hall in which Jesus and Mary

were received by Lazarus

on their arrival at his house, was the same in which Jesus was stopping and teaching before the resurrection of Lazarus when Magdalen went to meet Him. On arriving at the inn, Jesus removed His sandals and went barefoot. Lazarus, touched with compassion, begged Him in consideration of the rough, stony roads not to do so. But Jesus gravely replied: "Let it be thus! I know what it behooveth Me to do," and so they entered into the wilderness. The desert, broken up by narrow chasms, stretched out before them a distance of five hours toward Jericho. Then came the fruitful vale of Jericho, also interspersed by wild tracts, about two hours' in breadth, whence to John's place of baptism was a journey of another two hours. Jesus walked more quickly than Lazarus, and was often an hour ahead of him. A multitude, among them some publicans whom Jesus had sent from Galilee to the baptism, were now on their return journey. They passed Jesus in the desert, though at some distance, on their way back to Bethania. Jesus stopped nowhere. He passed Jericho on His left and a couple of other places on the way, but paused at none.

Lazarus' friends, Nicodemus, Simeon's son, and John Marc, had spoken but little with Jesus. But to one another they were constantly interchanging words of admiration at His behavior, His wisdom, His human, yes, even His personal attractions. In His absence or when walking behind Him, they said to one another: "What a man! There never before was such a one, there never again will be another like Him! How earnest, how mild, how wise, how discerning, and yet how simple! But I cannot perfectly comprehend His words, though I accept them with the thought, 'He said it!' One cannot look Him in the face, for He seems to read one's thoughts. Look at His figure—how majestic in bearing! How swiftly He moves, and yet no undignified haste! Whoever walked like Him! How quickly He journeys from place to place, and yet shows no signs of weariness! He is always ready to

Life of Jesus Christ

start again for hours. What a man He has turned out to be!" Then they went on to speak of His childhood, His teaching in the Temple, and referred to the dangers attendant on His first voyage when He had aided the sailors. But not one of them dreamed that he was speaking of the Son of God. They saw that He was greater than all other men, they honored Him, and stood in awe of Him; still He was to them only a man, though, indeed, a man full of prodigies. Obed of Jerusalem was an aged man, the fraternal nephew of the husband of old Anna the Prophetess. He was a pious man, one of the so-called Elders at the Temple, a member of the Sanhedrin. He was one of the secret disciples of Jesus and, as long as he lived, lent assistance to the Community.

JOHN PREACHING PENANCE AND BAPTIZING

1. John Leaves the Desert

John received from On High a revelation concerning the baptism, in consequence of which shortly before leaving the desert he dug a well within reach of the inhabited districts. I saw him on the western side of a steep precipice. On his left ran a brook, perhaps one of the sources of the Jordan which rises on Libanus in a cave between two ridges. It cannot be seen from a distance. To the right lay a level space in the midst of the wilderness, and there he dug a well. I saw him kneeling on one knee and supporting on the other a long roll of bark upon which he was writing with a reed. The sun was darting hot beams upon him as he knelt facing Libanus toward the west. While thus engaged, he became like one entranced. I saw him as if in ecstasy, and standing by him was a man who drew plans and wrote upon the roll. When John returned to consciousness, he read what had been written, and at once set vigorously to work at the well. The bark roll lay beside him on the ground, weighted by a stone at either end to prevent it from rolling together. John often examined it. It seemed as if all he had to do was there marked down.

Side by side with his vision of the well, I beheld a scene in the life of Elias. I saw him sitting in the desert, sad and dejected, on account of some fault

Life of Jesus Christ

he had committed. At last he fell asleep, and had a dream, in which it seemed to him that a little boy approached and pushed him with a stick, and that he feared falling into a well nearby. The thrusts he received from the child were so violent as to send him rolling forward some steps. At this stage of the dream an angel awoke him and gave him to drink. This took place on the same spot upon which John now dug the well.

I recognized the signification of every layer of earth through which John dug and of every step in the work until its completion. All had some relation to human obduracy and its other characteristics, which he had to overcome before the grace of the Lord could take effect upon mankind. This work of John's was, like all his actions and his whole life, a symbol, a prefiguration. By it the Holy Spirit not only instructed him what he was to do, but *he really accomplished in its performance all that the work itself signified, God accepting the good intention which he had thereto associated.* The Holy Ghost urged John on in his work, as formerly the inspired Prophets.

He removed the sod from a wide circumference and dug out of the hard marl a large circular basin, which he very carefully and beautifully lined with stones, excepting in the center where it was dug to a little water. With the excavated earth, he formed around the basin a rim which he divided into five sections. Opposite the openings between four of these sections and at equal distances around the basin, he planted four slender saplings whose tops were covered with luxuriant foliage. These four trees were of different kinds, each bearing its own signification. But in the center of the basin, he set a very choice tree with narrow leaves; its blossoms hung in pyramidal clusters surrounded by a prickly calyx. This tree had long lain partially withered before John's cave. The four

little trees were more like slender berry bushes. John protected their roots by little mounds of earth.

When the basin had been excavated down to the well, in which later on the central tree was planted, John hollowed out a channel from the brook near his cave to the basin. Then I saw him gathering reeds in the wilderness, inserting one into the other and, through this conduit (which he covered with earth) conducting the waters of the brook to the basin. The reed pipe could be closed at pleasure.

He had made a path through the bushes down to one of the openings in the basin's rim. It ran all around the basin between it and the four trees I have just described. Before the opening at the entrance there was no tree, and on this side alone was access to the basin free; on all the others the path was hemmed in by bushes and rocks. John planted on the mounds at the foot of the four trees an herb well known to me. I was fond of it when a child and, whenever I found it, I used to transplant it to the neighborhood of my home. It has a tall, succulent stalk and bears brownish-red, globular blossoms. It is a very efficacious remedy for ulcers and such sore throats as that from which I am today suffering. John set around also various other plants and young trees. During his labor, he consulted from time to time the bark roll before him, and measured all off with a stick, for it seemed to me that every step of the work, even to the trees that he had planted, was therein sketched. I remember having seen in it a drawing of the middle tree.

John labored thus for several weeks and when he had finished, there was only a small quantity of water in the bottom of the basin. The middle tree, whose leaves had lately been brown and withered, had now become fresh and green. In a vessel formed of the bark of a large tree and whose sides had been smeared with pitch, John now brought water from another well and poured it into the basin. This water was from a well near one of the caves in which John had first dwelt. It had gushed

from a rock upon which he

Life of Jesus Christ

struck with the end of his standard. I heard that he could not have built the fountain at that earlier dwelling place of his because it was too rocky there, and that, too, had its own signification. After that he let as much water into the basin from the brook as was necessary. If the reservoir became too full, the water could flow off by the channels in the rim and refresh the vegetation of the surrounding surface.

I saw John stepping into the water up to the waist. With one hand he clasped the tree in the center while he struck the water with a little staff to the end of which he had fastened a cross and pennant. Every stroke sent the water in a spray above his head. At the same time, I saw descending upon him from above a cloud of light and, as it were, an effusion from the Holy Spirit, while angels appeared upon the rim of the basin and addressed to him some words. I saw that this was John's last labor in the desert.

That well was in use even after Jesus' death. When the Christians were obliged to flee, the sick and travelers were baptized there; it was frequented also as a place of devotion. It was at that time, that is during Peter's time, protected by a surrounding wall.

Soon after the completion of the baptismal well, John left the desert for the haunts of men. Wherever he went, he made a wonderful impression. Tall of stature, strong and muscular, though emaciated by fasting and corporal mortification, he presented an extraordinarily pure and noble appearance, his manner simple, straightforward, and commanding. His face was thin and haggard; his expression, grave and austere; his auburn hair in curls over his head, and his beard short. Around his waist was a tunic that reached to the knee, and his rough brown mantle appeared to be of three pieces. The back part was fastened around the waist by a

strap, but in front it was open, leaving the breast uncovered and the arms free. His breast was rough with hair almost the color of his mantle, and in his hand he carried

a staff bent like a shepherd's crook.

Coming down from the desert, he built first a little bridge over a brook. He took no notice of the crossing that lay at some distance, for he never turned out of his way, but worked straight on wherever he went. There was an old highway in those regions. He was near Cydessa here, and he instructed the people in the neighborhood. They were the first pagans that afterward went to his baptism. They lived in mud huts entirely neglected. They were the descendants of a mixed multitude who, after the destruction of the Temple, the last one before Jesus' coming, had settled here. One of the latest of the Prophets had foretold to them that they should remain in these parts until a man should come to them, a man like John, who would tell them what they should do. Later on they removed toward Nazareth.

John allowed nothing to prove an obstacle in his way. He walked boldly up to all he met, and spoke of one thing only, penance and the near coming of the Lord. His presence everywhere excited wonder and made the lightest grave. His voice pierced like a sword. It was loud and strong, though tempered with a tone of kindness. He treated all kinds of people as children. The most remarkable thing about him was the way in which he hurried on straight ahead, deterred by nothing, looking around at nothing, wanting nothing. It was thus I saw him hastening on his way through desert and forest, digging here, rolling away stones there, removing fallen trees, preparing resting places, calling together the people who stood staring at him in amazement, yes, even bringing them out of their huts to help him. I saw their looks of astonishment. He tarried long nowhere, but was soon in another place. He went along the Sea of Galilee, around Tarichea, down to the valley of the Jordan, then past Salem, and on through the desert toward Bethel. He passed by

Jerusalem. He had never been in the Holy City; he gazed sadly upon

Life of Jesus Christ

it, and uttered lamentations over it. Entirely possessed by the thought of his mission, on he went, earnest, grave, simple, full of the Holy Spirit, crying aloud the selfsame words: "Penance! Prepare! The Lord is nigh!" He entered the shepherd valley, and journeyed on to the place of his birth. His parents were dead, but some youths, his relatives on Zachary's side, resided there. They were among the first to join him as disciples. When he passed through Bethsaida, Capharnaum, and Nazareth, the Blessed Virgin did not see him, for since Joseph's death, she seldom went out of the house. But several male relatives of her family were present at his exhortations, and accompanied him some distance on his way.

During the three months immediately preceding the baptism, John twice made the circuit of the country announcing Him who was to come. His progress was made with extraordinary vehemence. He marched on vigorously, his movements quick though unaccompanied by haste. His was no leisurely travelling like that of the Saviour. Where he had nothing to do, I saw him literally running from field to field. He entered houses and schools to teach, and gathered the people around him in the streets and public places. I saw the priests and elders here and there stopping him and questioning his right to teach, but soon, astonished and full of wonder, they allowed him to proceed on his way.

The expression, "To prepare the way for the Lord," was not wholly figurative, for I saw John begin his mission by actually preparing the way and traversing the roads and different places over which Jesus and His disciples afterward travelled. He cleared them of stones and briars, made paths, laid planks across brooks, cleaned the channels, dug wells and reservoirs, put up seats, resting places, and sheds to afford shade in the various places where later on the Lord rested, taught, and acted.

While thus engaged, the earnest, simple-hearted, solitary man—by his rough

garments and conspicuous figure—attracted the attention of the people, and excited wonder when he entered the huts sometimes to borrow a tool, sometimes even to claim assistance from the inmates. Everywhere he was soon surrounded by a crowd whom he boldly and earnestly exhorted to penance, and to follow the Messiah of whom he announced himself the precursor. I often saw him pointing in the direction in which Jesus was passing at that moment. But yet I never saw Jesus with him, although they were sometimes scarcely one hour apart. Once I saw him at the most only a short hour's distance from Jesus, crying out to the people that he himself was not the looked-for Redeemer, but only His poor precursor; but that there went the Saviour, and he pointed to Him. John saw the Saviour face to face only three times in his whole life. The first time that he did so, was in the desert when the Holy Family were journeying from Egypt. He had then been hurried by the Spirit to greet his Master whom, years before while still in his mother's womb, he had saluted. He felt the nearness of his Saviour, and he knew that He thirsted. The boy prayed and thrust his little staff into the ground, whereupon a plentiful stream sprang forth. He then hurried further on the road and took his stand by the running water, to watch Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as they passed by. When they appeared and as long as they remained in sight, he danced about with joy, waving his little standard.

The second time that John saw Jesus was at the baptism; and third was when, at the Jordan, he rendered testimony to Him as He was passing at a distance. I heard the Saviour speaking to His Apostles of John's great self-command; for even at the baptism he had restrained himself within the bounds of solemn contemplation, although his heart was almost bursting with love and desire. After the ceremony, he was more anxious to abase and humble himself than to yield to his love and seek for Jesus.

Life of Jesus Christ

But John saw the Lord always in spirit, for he was generally in the prophetic state. He saw Jesus as the accomplishment of his own mission, as the realization of his own prophetic vocation. Jesus was not to John a contemporary, not a man like unto himself. He was to him the Redeemer of the world, the Son of God made man, the Eternal appearing in time, therefore he could in no way dream of associating with Him. John felt also that he himself was not like his fellow men, existing in time, living in the world and connected with it; for even in his mother's womb had the Hand of the Eternal touched him, and by the Holy Spirit had he in a way superior to the relations of time, been brought into communication with his Redeemer. As a little boy he had been snatched from the world and, knowing nothing but what appertained to his Redeemer, had remained in the deepest solitude of the wilderness until, like one born anew, earnest, inspired, ardent, he went forth to begin his wonderful mission, unconcerned about aught else. Judea is now to him the desert; and as formerly he had had for companions the fountains, rocks, trees, and animals, as with them he had lived and communed, so now did he treat with men, with sinners, no thought of self arising in his mind. He sees, he knows, he *speaks* only Jesus. His word is: "He comes! Prepare ye the ways! Do penance! Receive the baptism! Behold the Lamb of God who beareth the sins of the world!" In the desert, blameless and pure as a babe in the mother's womb, he comes forth from his solitude innocent and spotless as a child at the mother's breast. "He is pure as an angel," I heard the Lord say to the Apostles. "Never has impurity entered into his mouth, still less has an untruth or any other sin issued from it."

John baptized in different places: first, at Aïnon in the neighborhood of Salem; then at On opposite Bethabara on the west side of the Jordan, and not far from Jericho. That third place was on the east

side of the Jordan, a couple of hours further north than the second. The last time he baptized was at Aion, whither he had returned. It was there that he was taken prisoner.

The water in which John baptized was an arm of the Jordan formed by a bend of the river to the east, and of about an hour in length. At some places it was so narrow that one could leap over it; at others it was broader. Its course must have changed here and there, for in many places I saw it dry. This bend of the river encircled pools and wells which were fed by its waters. One of these pools, separated by a dam from the arm of the river, formed the baptism place of John at Aion. Under the dam ran pipes, by means of which the pool could be emptied or filled at pleasure. John himself had so arranged it. On one side of the pool, its waters flowed inland like a creek, and into this extended tongues of land. The aspirants for baptism stood in the water up to the waist between two of these tongues, supporting themselves by a railing that ran along before them. On one tongue stood John. He scooped up water in a shell and poured it on the head of the neophyte, while on the opposite tongue stood one of the baptized with his hand resting on the shoulder of the latter. John himself had laid his hand upon the first. The upper part of the body of the neophytes was not entirely nude; a kind of white scarf was thrown around them, leaving only the shoulders bare. Near the pool was a hut into which they retired for unrobing and dressing. I never saw women baptized here. The Baptist wore a long, white garment during the ceremony.

The region in which John baptized was an exceedingly charming and well-watered district called Salem. It lay on both sides of an arm of the Jordan, but Aion was on the opposite side of the river. It was larger than Salem, further north and nearer the river. Around the numerous

creeks and pools of this region were pasture grounds for cattle, and
droves

Life of Jesus Christ

of asses grazed in the verdant meadows. The country around Salem and Aion was, as it were, free, possessing a kind of privilege established by custom, by virtue of which the inhabitants dared not drive anyone from its borders.

John had built his hut at Aion on the old foundations of what was once a large building, but which had fallen to ruins, and was now covered with moss and overgrown by weeds. Here and there arose a hut. These ruins were the foundations of the tent castle of Melchisedech. Of this place in particular, I have had visions, all kinds of scenes belonging to early times, but I can now recall only this, that Abraham once had a vision here. He pulled two stones in position, one as an altar, and upon the other he knelt. I saw the vision that was shown to him—a City of God like the Heavenly Jerusalem, and streams of water falling from the same. He was commanded to pray more for the coming of the City of God. The water streaming from the City spread around on all sides. Abraham had this vision about five years before Melchisedech built his tent castle on the same spot. This castle was more properly a tent surrounded by galleries and flights of steps similar to Mensor's castle in Arabia. The foundation alone was solid; it was of stone. I think that even in John's time, the four corners where the principal stakes once stood were still to be seen. On this foundation, which now looked like a mount overgrown with vegetation, John had built a little reed hut. The tent castle in Melchisedech's time was a public halting place for travelers, a kind of charming resting place by the pleasant waters. Perhaps Melchisedech, whom I have always seen as the leader and counselor of the wandering races and nations, built his castle here in order to be able to instruct and entertain them. But even in his time, it had some reference to baptism. It was also the place from which he set out to his building near Jerusalem, to Abraham, and elsewhere. Here it was, also, that

he assembled the various races and peoples whom he afterward separated and settled in different districts.

Jacob, too, had once lived at Aion a long time with his herds. The cistern of the baptism pool was in existence at that early time, and I saw that Jacob repaired it. The ruins of Melchisedech's castle were near the water and the place of baptism; and I saw that in the early days of Christian Jerusalem a church stood on the spot where John had baptized. I saw this church still standing when Mary of Egypt passed that way when retiring into the desert.

Salem was a beautiful city, but it was ruined during a war, I think at the destruction of the Temple before the time of Jesus. The last Prophet, also, dwelt there awhile.

John, perhaps for about two weeks, had been attracting public attention by his teaching and baptizing, when some messengers sent by Herod from Callirrhoe came to him. Herod was at that time living in his castle at Callirrhoe, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. There were numerous baths and warm springs in the vicinity. Herod wanted John to come to him. But John replied to the messengers: "I have much to occupy me. If Herod wishes to confer with me, let him come himself." After that I saw Herod going to a little city about five miles south of Aion. He was riding in a low-wheeled chariot, and surrounded by a guard. From its raised seat he could command a view upon all sides as from a canopied throne. He invited John to meet him in the little city. John went to a man's hut outside the city, and thither Herod repaired alone to meet him. Of their interview, I remember only that Herod asked John why he dwelt in so miserable an abode at Aion, adding that he would have a house built for him there. But to this John replied that he needed no

house, that he had all he wanted and that he was accomplishing the will of One greater than he. He spoke earnestly and severely, though briefly, standing

Life of Jesus Christ

the while with his face turned away from Herod.

I saw that Simon, James the Less, and Thaddeus, the sons of Mary Cleophas by her deceased husband Alpheus, and Joses Barsabas, her son by her second marriage with Sabas, were baptized by John at Aion. Andrew and Philip also were baptized by him, after which they returned to their occupations. The other Apostles and many of the disciples had already been baptized.

One day many priests and doctors of the Law came to John from the towns around Jerusalem intending to call him to account. They questioned him as to who he was, who had sent him, what he taught, etc. John answered with extraordinary boldness and energy, announced to them the coming of the Messiah and charged them with impenitence and hypocrisy.

Not long after, multitudes were sent from Nazareth, Jerusalem, and Hebron by the Elders and Pharisees to question John upon his mission. They made his having taken possession of the place chosen for baptism a subject of complaint.

Many publicans had come to John. He had baptized them and spoken to them upon the state of their conscience. Among them was the publican Levi, later called Matthew, the son of Alpheus by his first marriage, for he was a widower when he married Mary Cleophas. Levi was deeply touched by John's exhortations, and he amended his life. He was held in low esteem by his relatives. John refused baptism to many of these publicans.

2. Herod's Soldiers. Deputies From the Sanhedrin. Crowds of

Neophytes Come to John

In Dothain, where Jesus had calmed the raving possessed, Jews and pagans had, since the Babylonian Captivity, dwelt together indiscriminately. On

Herod's Soldiers. The Sanhedrin

421

a hill in the vicinity, the heathens had their idols and a place of sacrifice. The Jews, roused by the rumor of the advent of the Messiah who was to come from Galilee, would no longer suffer the heathens to dwell among them. The report had been spread both by John himself when journeying through those parts, and by those whom he had there baptized. A neighboring prince of Sidon had dispatched soldiers to the defense of the idols and Herod also sent troops thither to bring the people to order.

These troops were made up of the rabble. I saw them with Herod at Callirrhoe. They told him that they would first be baptized by John, but this was mere policy. They thought by so doing they would have more success among the people. Herod replied that it was not at all necessary to be baptized by John, especially as he wrought no miracles, and neither were they obliged to recognize his mission, but that they might make inquiries at Jerusalem. Then I saw them going to Jerusalem. They had among them chief men of three different ranks, whose office it was to propose the questions to John, and by that I saw they were of three different sects. They had an interview with the priests in the judgment hall in which Peter afterward denied the Lord. In it sat many judges, and it was full of people. The priests derided the soldiers' question, as to whether they should receive John's baptism or not. Their answer was that they might or they might not, it was all the same. About thirty of the soldiers went to John, who reproved them sharply as if to imply that he had little cause to hope for their amendment. He administered

baptism to only a few of them in whom he perceived still a little good. These last also he sternly reproached for their dissimulation.

The multitude gathered at Aion was very great. John baptized none for several days, being engaged in vehement and zealous preaching. Crowds of Jews, Samaritans, and heathens occupied the hills and ramparts

Life of Jesus Christ

around, separate from one another, some under shelter, some under sheds, and some in the open air. John's pulpit was in the center of the encampment, and all listened to him as he preached. Their number amounted to many hundreds. They came to hear his teaching and receive baptism, after which they departed. Once, in particular, I saw many heathens, also people from Arabia and others from a land still farther east. They brought large asses and sheep with them. They had relatives around the country whom they visited here and there, and at last came to John.

In Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin held a great consultation about John, the result of which was that nine messengers were dispatched to him from three different authorities. Annas sent Joseph of Arimathea, also Simeon's eldest son, and a priest whose office it was to inspect the sacrifices; three members of the council, and three private citizens were also chosen for the mission. Their instructions were to question John as to who he was, and to summon him to appear in Jerusalem; for if his mission was authorized, he should first have presented himself at the Temple. They likewise found fault with his unseemly raiment and, moreover, with his administering baptism to the Jews when it was customary to do so only to heathens! Some believed that he was Elias returned from the other world.

Andrew and John the Evangelist were with the Baptist. Many of the disciples and most of the future Apostles excepting Peter, who had already been baptized, and Judas the Traitor (who, however, had been at the fishery around Bethsaida making inquiries concerning Jesus and John) were with John at this time.

For three days, John had not baptized; but he had just resumed that

work as the messengers from Jerusalem arrived. They wanted an audience with him right away, but John replied roughly and shortly that they must wait until he was ready. When at last they gained a hearing, they represented to him

that he acted entirely too independently, that he should present himself at Jerusalem, and should adopt a less unsightly garb. When the envoys departed, Joseph of Arimathea and the son of Simeon remained with John and received from him baptism. There were many present whom John would not baptize; consequently they went to the envoys and charged John with partiality.

The future Apostles, returning to their own part of the country, told what they knew of John, and in consequence of his teaching, listened favorably to Jesus.

As Joseph of Arimathea was journeying back to Jerusalem, he met Obed, a relative of Seraphia (Veronica). He was a server in the Temple. Joseph, in answer to his questions, told him much about John. Obed then went and received the baptism. As a Temple server, he belonged to the number of the secret disciples. It was only at a later period that he followed Jesus openly.

3. John Receives an Admonition To Go to Jericho

I saw John crossing the Jordan to baptize the sick. He had only his linen scarf thrown around him and his mantle hanging from his shoulders. At one side hung a leathern bottle of baptismal water; on the other, the shell he used in baptizing. On the shore of the river opposite John's place of baptism, were many sick persons who had been brought thither, some in litters and some on a kind of wheelbarrow. They could not be taken across the river on the raft, and so they implored John to come to them. He did so attended by two of his disciples. He prepared a beautiful basin separated from the river by a dyke. This he did himself, for he always had a spade with him. Through a channel, which he could

close at pleasure, he let in the water from the river and then poured into it the bottle of baptismal water that he had brought with

Life of Jesus Christ

him. He instructed the sick and then baptized them, pouring water out of a shell over them as they lay on the edge of the basin. When he had finished, he returned to Aion by the east bank of the Jordan.

Here I beheld an angel appear to him and tell him to go to the other side of the Jordan near Jericho, for the time was drawing nigh. *One* would soon arrive there, and he should announce His coming.

At this command, John and his disciples took down their tents at the place of baptism near Aion. They journeyed for some hours along the east side of the Jordan, then crossed the river, pursued their course along the western bank for a short distance, and again pitched their tents. There was a bathing place here, consisting of pits lined with white masonry and connected with the Jordan by canals that could be opened or closed as needed. There were no islands in this part of the river.

This second baptism place lay between Jericho and Bethagla on the western side of the Jordan and opposite Bethabara, which was situated somewhat further down on the east side of the river. From this place of baptism to Jericho, the distance was about five miles. The direct road led through Bethania and a desert. There was an inn on the route, but built a short distance off from the road. This region was a pleasure resort. The water of the Jordan is beautiful, becoming so clear when allowed to stand. In many places also it is highly odoriferous owing to the blossoms that fall into it from the bushes in full bloom upon its banks. At times it is very shallow, one can see almost to the bottom, and I saw along the shore deep caves hollowed out of the rocks. I like so much to be in the Holy Land, though I never exactly understand the seasons there. When it is winter with us everything there is in full bloom, and in our summer they already have their second harvest.

There is also a season of thick mists and heavy rains. There were about one hundred people with John, among them

his disciples and numerous pagans. They all set to work preparing the place and building the tent. All sorts of things were brought over from the baptism place at Aion. All was now better arranged, and the sick were carried thither in beds.

It was in this part of the Jordan that Elias divided the waters with his mantle and passed over with Eliseus, who did the same on his return. Eliseus also rested here, and over this same spot the Children of Israel crossed.

From the Temple of Jerusalem messengers, both Pharisees and Sadducees, were now dispatched to John. He knew through the angel of their coming. When they reached the neighborhood of the Jordan, they sent a courier on before, to summon John to meet them at a place nearby. But he replied by their messenger that, if they wanted to speak with him, they might come to him. They did so, but John paid no attention to them. He went on teaching and baptizing. They listened for awhile and then withdrew. When John had finished, he ordered them to meet him under the shelter or tent that the disciples had erected.

And now, accompanied by his disciples and many others, he went to them. They put all kinds of questions to him, asking whether he was this one or that one, and I saw that he invariably answered in the negative. Then they asked who that *One* was of whom he spoke so much, for the old Prophecies were still remembered, and the rumor was current among the people that the Messiah had come. John answered that among them had arisen One whom they knew not, that he himself had never seen Him, and yet before his birth, he had been commanded by Him to prepare His ways and to baptize Him. If they would return at a certain time, he continued, they would behold Him there, for He was

coming to receive baptism. Then he chided them severely, telling them that they had not come to the baptism, but merely for the purpose of seeing what was going on. They

Life of Jesus Christ

retorted that they now knew who he was, that he was baptizing without a mission, that he was a hypocrite clothed in rough garments, etc., and thus abusing him, they went their way.

Not long after, about twenty other messengers from the Sanhedrin arrived in Jerusalem. They were men of all conditions, among them some priests wearing caps and broad girdles and long scarves hanging from the arm. The ends of these scarves were rough as if trimmed with fur. They addressed John very earnestly, telling him that they had been sent to him by the whole Sanhedrin, to summon him to appear before the Council in order to prove his calling and mission. They urged as a proof of his having none, his want of obedience to the Sanhedrin. I heard John replying in plain terms, bidding them tarry a little while and they should see coming to him the One from whom he had his mission. He told them undisguisedly that the One to whom he so plainly referred had been born in Bethlehem and reared in Nazareth, that He had fled into Egypt, etc., but that he himself had never seen Him. The deputies of the Sanhedrin reproached John with maintaining a secret understanding with Jesus, asserting that their communications were carried on by means of trusty messengers. To this John replied that he could not show to their blind eyes the messengers between Jesus and himself, they could not be seen by them. Indignant at his words, the deputies departed.

Multitudes from all sides, heathens as well as Jews, came to John. Herod very often sent people to hear him, and they carried back to their master an account of his teaching.

All things were very beautifully arranged at this place of baptism. John, with the help of his disciples, had put up an immense tent in which the

sick and weary found refreshment, and in which also instructions were given. They sang hymns. I heard them singing a Psalm that treated of the passage of

the Children of Israel through the Red Sea.

By degrees there sprang up at this place a little village of huts and tents covered partly with skins, partly with rushes. The concourse of strangers was very great. They came from the most distant countries, even from the land of the Three Kings. They brought with them numbers of camels, asses, and beautiful, little frolicsome horses. They always journey this way into Egypt. All encamped around John's baptism place to hear his teaching concerning the Messiah and to receive baptism.

From this place they proceeded in crowds to Bethlehem. Not far from the Crib Cave, off toward the shepherd field was a well of Abraham. He and Sara had dwelt for a period in this region, and during an illness he had had an eager craving after some water from this well. But when it was brought to him in a bottle, he mortified himself, denied himself the cooling draught for the love of God. In reward he was cured. The water of this well was hard to raise on account of its great depth. A large tree stood by it, and the well itself was near the spot upon which lay buried Maraha, Abraham's nurse. When he came to these parts, he brought her with him on a camel. This spot had, like Mount Carmel and Horeb, become a place of pilgrimage for devout Jews. The three Holy Kings had once prayed there.

There were not as yet many Galileans among John's followers, only a few of the subsequent disciples of Jesus. Many went from the region of Hebron, among them numbers of heathens. Therefore did Jesus in His discourses on His way through Galilee, so zealously exhort His hearers to go to John's baptism.

4. Herod's Interview with John. The Celebration of a Festival at the Place of Baptism

The place at which John taught was about a short

Life of Jesus Christ

hour further on from where he was accustomed to baptize. It was one of the holy memorial places of the Jews, and was surrounded by walls like a garden inside and around which were rush-covered huts. In the center of this enclosure lay a stone upon the spot where the Children of Israel, when crossing the Jordan, had first rested the Ark of the Covenant and celebrated a festival of thanksgiving. John had erected his tent for teaching, a large canopy of latticework covered with rushes, over this stone at whose base was the chair from which he taught. Here John was holding forth to his disciples when Herod came marching by, but he continued his discourse undisturbed by his presence.

Herod had gone to Jerusalem to meet his brother's wife, who had repaired thither with her daughter Salome, then about sixteen years old. He desired to marry the mother, and had in vain laid the question of the lawfulness of such a union before the Sanhedrin. The refusal of the Council to sanction his desires excited his wrath and, as he feared the public voice, he determined to silence it by the decision of the Prophet John. He doubted not that John, in order to win his favor, would approve the step he wished to take.

I saw Herod's cavalcade consisting of himself, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, her female attendants, and about thirty followers marching toward the Jordan. Herod and the women rode in a chariot. He had sent a courier on to John, but the latter would not suffer Herod to come to the place of baptism. He regarded him as a man who, with his women and followers, would defile the sacred ceremonies. He suspended the baptism therefore, and, followed by his disciples, went to the place destined for preaching. Here he spoke boldly on the question which Herod intended to propose. He said that Herod should wait for the One who was to come after him, that he himself would not baptize there

much longer, for he must

make way for Him whose precursor he was.

John's words were so pointedly directed against Herod, that the latter could not fail to see that his design was known. However, he caused a large roll of writings on the subject of his suit to be presented to John. The latter would not pollute the hand so often raised in baptism by contact with them, and so they were laid before him. Then I saw Herod and his train indignantly leaving the place. He was still residing at the baths of Callirrhoe, some hours distant from John's place of baptism. He left behind him some of his followers with the writings in order to compel John to give his sanction to what they contained, but in vain. After Herod's departure, John returned to the place of baptism. The women in Herod's retinue were arrayed magnificently, though with tolerable modesty. Magdalen was more fantastic in her attire.

A three days' festival was now celebrated at the stone of the Ark of the Covenant where John's teaching tent had been erected. I cannot now say for certain whether it was to commemorate the passage of Israel through the Jordan, or some other event. John's disciples adorned the place with branches of trees, garlands, and flowers. Peter, Andrew, Philip, James the Less, Simon, and Thaddeus were there, and many of the subsequent disciples of Jesus. This spot was always regarded as sacred by the devout among the Jews, but at this time it was rather dilapidated. John had it repaired. He, as well as some of his disciples, were in priestly robes. Over a gray undergarment, the Baptist wore a white robe, long and wide, girded at the waist by a sash woven in yellow and white, the ends fringed. On either shoulder was a setting as if of two curved precious stones, upon which were engraven the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, six on each. On his breast was a square shield, yellow and white, fastened at the corners by fine golden chains.

In this shield were set twelve precious stones each bearing the name of one of the twelve tribes.

Life of Jesus Christ

Around his shoulders hung a long linen scarf like a hand towel. It was a white and yellow stole fringed at the ends. His robe also was fringed with white and yellow silk balls like fruit. His head was uncovered, but under the neck of his robe he wore a narrow strip of woven stuff which could be drawn over the head like a cowl, and which then hung over the forehead in a point.

Before the stone upon which the Ark of the Covenant had rested stood a small altar. It was not exactly square. In the center of the surface was a cavity covered by a grating, and below it a hole for ashes; on the sides were pipes, which looked like horns. There were present many disciples in white garments and broad girdles such as the Apostles used to wear in the early assemblies for divine worship. They served at the incense sacrifice. John burned several kinds of herbs, also spices, and I think some wheat on the portable altar of incense. All was decorated with green branches, garlands, and flowers. Crowds of aspirants to baptism were present.

The priestly garments and ornaments of the Baptist had all been prepared at this place of baptism. In those days there dwelt near the Jordan some holy women recluses, who worked at all kinds of necessary things and prepared the sacred robes of the Baptist. They were not baptized.

The ceremonies performed by John at this time reminded one of the opening of a new church. He wore a long, white garment when baptizing. He performed no manual labor, with the exception of completing the place for Jesus' baptism. He did all with his own hands, the disciples carrying to him the materials.

I saw John at this place holding forth in a long and vehement discourse. Arrayed in his priestly vestments, he stood above the tent, which was surrounded by galleries like the tents of the kings in Arabia. Tiers of seats were erected within the walls of the enclosure, and on them stood an innumerable crowd

of listeners. John spoke of the Saviour, who had sent him and whom he had never seen, also of the passage through the Jordan. Incense was again offered in the tent, and fragrant spices.

From Maspha down into Galilee the news had spread that John was to hold this great meeting for instruction, consequently multitudes of men were present. Almost all the Essenians had come. Most of the people were clad in long, white garments. I saw married couples arriving, the wives sitting between panniers of doves on asses which the husbands led. The men offered bread; the women, doves. John stood during the ceremony behind a grating and received the loaves, which were laid on a grated table and the flour still clinging to them removed. They were then piled in pyramids on dishes, blessed by John, and raised on high as if for an offering. It was afterward cut into pieces and distributed among the people, they that came from the greatest distance receiving the largest portions, since they had the most need of it. The flour scraped from the loaves, and the crumbs of the cutting, fell through the grated table on a tray and were burned on the altar. The doves brought by the women were divided also. The ceremony occupied almost half a day. The whole festival lasted during the Sabbath and three days inclusively. At its conclusions, I saw John busied again at the place of baptism.

5. The Island Upon Which Jesus Received Baptism Rises Out of The Jordan

John delivered to his disciples at the Jordan a discourse upon the nearness of the Messiah's baptism. He told them that he had never seen Him, "But," said he, "I shall, as a proof of what I say, show unto you the place at which He will receive baptism. Behold, the waters of the Jordan will divide and from their midst an island will arise." At the

same moment

Life of Jesus Christ

I beheld the waters of the river dividing and, on a level with its surface appeared a small, white island circular in shape. This happened at the spot over which the Children of Israel had crossed the Jordan with the Ark of the Covenant and at which also Elias had divided the waters with his mantle.

Wonder seized upon the beholders. They prayed and sang praises. John and his disciples laid great stones in the water. Upon them they placed branches and trees, over which they scattered fine, white gravel, thus forming from the shore to the island a bridge beneath which the water could flow. Then they planted twelve small trees around the island, connecting their upper branches in such a way as to form a kind of latticed arbor. Between the trees they set hedges of low bushes, of which numbers were found here and there along the Jordan. They had red and white blossoms, the fruit was yellow with a little crown like the medlar. These hedges looked very beautiful, for some were covered with blossoms, others full of fruit.

The new island, the spot upon which the Ark at the passage through the Jordan rested, appeared to be rocky and the bed of the river deeper than in Joshua's time. But when John called it forth for the place of Jesus' baptism, the water seemed to be much lower, so that I could not determine whether it had sunk or the island had risen.

To the left of the bridge, not in the middle of it, but nearer to the shore of the island, there was a deep hole in which welled up clear water. Some steps led down to it. Nearby rising above the surface of the water lay a smooth, red stone of triangular form, upon which Jesus was to stand, and to the right of it was a slender, fruit-bearing palm tree which He was to clasp with one arm during His baptism. The edge of the well

was laid out in ornamental style and very beautifully wrought.

I saw that the Jordan was very much swollen when

Joshua led the Israelites through it. The Ark of the Covenant was borne far ahead of the people. Among the twelve carriers and attendants were Joshua, Caleb, and one whose name sounded something like Enoi. When arrived at the Jordan, the forepart of the Ark, which was usually borne by two, was now taken charge of by one alone, while the others supported the back. As soon as the leader set the foot of the Ark in the river, the rushing waters instantly stood still, rose up like galleries on either side, and continued rising and swelling, until like a mountain they could be seen far away in the region of the city of Zarthan. They flowed toward the Dead Sea leaving the bed of the river such that the carriers bore the Ark over dry-shod. The Israelites crossed in the same way, but at some distance from the Ark and further down the river.

The Ark of the Covenant was borne by the Levites far into the riverbed to a spot upon which were four square, blood-red stones arranged in order. On either side lay two rows of triangular stones, six in number. They were smooth, as if cut with a chisel. Besides these there were twelve others on each side. The twelve Levites set down the Ark of the Covenant on the four central stones and stepped, six to the right, six to the left, on the twelve lying near. These latter were triangular, the sharp end sunk in the earth.

There were twelve others still further off. They, too, were triangular, very large and massive, and were differently variegated, some of them marked with all kinds of figures and flowers. Joshua caused twelve men from the Twelve Tribes to be chosen to bear these stones on their shoulders to the shore, and thence to a place at some distance where they were deposited in a double row for a memorial. At a later period a city rose in the neighborhood of this spot. The names of the Twelve Tribes and of those that bore them were engraved on the stones. Those

upon which the Levites stood were still larger than

Life of Jesus Christ

the others and, before the Israelites left the bed of the river, they were turned so that their point stood upward. The stones borne to the shore were no longer to be seen in John's time. Whether they lay buried in the earth or had been destroyed by war, I cannot now say. John, however, had pitched his tent between the sites of the double rows. At a subsequent period, I think through the influence of Helena, a church was built on the spot.

The place upon which the Ark of the Covenant rested in the Jordan was the exact spot upon which, later on, was the baptismal well of Jesus on the island, which otherwise appeared to be destitute of water.

When the Israelites and the Ark of the Covenant had crossed and the twelve stones had been turned upward, the Jordan began again to flow.

The water in the baptismal well on the island was so low down that from the shore only the head and neck of him that was being baptized could be seen. The descent to the well was by a very gentle slope. The octangular basin, about five feet in diameter, was surrounded by a broad ledge in five sections upon which was standing room for several.

The twelve triangular stones, upon which the Levites had stood, extended to both sides of Jesus' baptismal well, their sharp ends rising out of the ground. In the well itself lay those four red ones upon which the Ark had rested. They were now below the surface of the water though in earlier times, when the waters of the Jordan were low, their points were distinctly visible.

Close to the edge of the well was a three-cornered pyramidal stone resting on the sharp end. It was on this that Jesus was standing at His

baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon him. On His right, and close to the edge of the well, arose the slender palm tree which He clasped during the baptism; on His left stood the Baptist. This triangular stone upon which Christ stood was not one of the twelve that surrounded

the inside of the well. I think John brought it himself from the shore. There was a mystery connected with it also. It was covered with all kinds of veining and flowers. The other stones, the twelve, were of different colors, and they, too, were pierced by innumerable veinings and covered with flowers. They were larger than those carried to the land. It seems to me that they were precious stones that had been placed there by Melchisedech before the waters of the Jordan had begun to flow. But when he placed them there they were small. He had in this way laid the foundations of many subsequent buildings. These foundations had long lain cancelled by mud and earth, but when brought to light, they became holy places wherein something remarkable happened.

I think also that the gems worn by the Baptist in his breastplate at this feast had been taken either from those twelve stones or from those that had been removed to the shore.

6. New Embassy from Jerusalem. Herod Again Seeks an Interview With John

When John was once more busy at the place of baptism, I again saw about twenty deputies from all the authorities of Jerusalem approaching with the intention of calling him to account. They paused on the spot where the festival had been celebrated and sent word to him to appear, but John heeded not. Next day I saw them distant from the baptism place about a short half-hour. But John would not allow them so much as to enter the circle of the numerous dwellings on the outskirts of the enclosure. This was the circle that was hedged off. When he had finished his labors, I saw him speaking to the envoys, though standing at some distance from them. He spoke in his customary style, paying no attention to the questions put to him, but dwelling upon Him

Life of Jesus Christ

who would soon come to be baptized, who was greater than he and whom he had never seen.

Then I saw Herod sitting in a kind of chest upon a mule. He was accompanied by his brother's wife, with whom he was then living. She was magnificently and shamelessly adorned, her hair in curls, her robes wide and flowing. She, too, rode a mule and was attended by a retinue of servants. I saw them coming into the neighborhood of the place of baptism. The wife, without dismounting, halted at some distance; but Herod alighted and approached on foot for a conference with John who, however, would not permit him to come nearer than was absolutely necessary. Herod expostulated with John for having pronounced against him a sentence of excommunication shortly after he laid before him the papers in defense of his unlawful connection. John had excluded him from all share in the baptism and the salvation of the Messiah if he refused to break off his shameful relations with his brother's wife. Herod inquired of John whether he knew a Man by the name of Jesus of Nazareth of whom the whole country was talking, whether or not he kept up communication with Him, and whether that Man was the One whose coming he was constantly announcing. He urged that John need not hesitate to inform him on these points, for that he intended to lay his case before Him. John answered that that Man would give him (Herod) just as little quarter as he himself did, that he (Herod) was and would always be an adulterer, that he might present his case where he would, but it would always remain adultery. When Herod asked John why he did not approach nearer to him and why he would speak to him only from a distance, John answered: "Thou wast blind before, but thy adultery has made thee still blinder. The nearer I approach to thee, the blinder wilt thou become. But when I shall be in thy power, thou wilt do that of which thou wilt have cause to repent." In these words of John lay the prophecy of his own death. Herod and

the wife now left, very much irritated.

The time drew near for Jesus to come to the baptism, and I saw that John was greatly troubled in mind. It was as if his time was now short. His manner of acting was no longer so spirited, and he became deeply depressed. By turns from Jericho, from Jerusalem, and from Herod came people deputed to drive John from the place of baptism. John's followers had pitched their encampment to a great distance around the place. The newcomers demanded of John that he should retire to the other side of the Jordan. Herod's soldiers broke down the hedges of the enclosure and drove the people away; but they did not proceed as far as John's tent, which lay between the two rows formed by the twelve stones. John's words to his disciples on this occasion were anxious and dejected. He earnestly longed for Jesus to present Himself at the baptism, for then, as he said, he would retire before Him to the opposite side of the Jordan. He told them that he would not much longer be among them, which words troubled them very much, for they did not want him to leave them.

When John was informed of Jesus' approach, he roused himself and with new courage began to baptize. Crowds came to him, chiefly those whom Jesus had exhorted to receive baptism, among them many publicans, also Parmenas and his parents from Nazareth. When John discoursed of the Messiah, saying that for Him he himself would soon make room, his words breathed so great humility as to cause real trouble to his disciples. The disciples whom Jesus had left in Nazareth also came to John. I saw them with him in his tent conversing about Jesus. John was so inflamed with ardent love for Jesus that he grew almost impatient at His not proclaiming Himself the Messiah openly and in unmistakable terms. When John baptized these disciples, he

received the assurance of the nearness of the Messiah. He saw a cloud of light hovering over them, and had a vision

Life of Jesus Christ

of Jesus surrounded by all His disciples. From that moment, John became unspeakably joyous and expectant, constantly glancing into the distance, to see whether or not the Lord was yet in sight.

The island with the baptismal well had grown beautifully green, but no one went to it excepting John occasionally. The path over the bridge was usually kept barred.

7. Jesus Baptized by John

Jesus, walking more quickly than Lazarus, reached John's place of baptism two hours before him. It was morning twilight when, on the road near the place, He caught up with a crowd of people who also were going to the baptism, and He walked on with them. They did not know Him, but they could not keep their eyes off Him, for there was something about Him very remarkable. When they reached the end of their journey, it was morning. A crowd more numerous than usual was assembled to whom John was with great animation preaching of the nearness of the Messiah and of penance, proclaiming at the same time that the moment was approaching for him to retire from his office of teacher. Jesus was standing in the throng of listeners. John felt His presence. He saw Him also, and that fired him with zeal and filled his heart with joy. But he did not on that account interrupt his discourse, and when he had finished he began to baptize.

He had already baptized very many and it was drawing on to ten o'clock, when Jesus in His turn came down among the aspirants to the pool of baptism. John bowed low before Him, saying: "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Jesus answered: "Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfill all justice that thou baptize Me and

I by thee be baptized." He said also: "Thou shalt receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of blood." Then John begged Him to follow him to the

island. Jesus replied that He would do so, provided that some of the water with which all were baptized should be poured into the basin, that all present should be baptized at the same place with Himself, and that the tree by which He was to support Himself should be transplanted to the ordinary place of baptism, that all might share the same conveniences.

The Saviour now went with John and His two disciples, Andrew and Saturnin. Andrew had followed those disciples and adherents of the Lord whose conversation between Capharnaum and this place has been recorded above. They crossed the bridge to the island and into a little tent that, close to the eastern edge of the baptismal well, had been erected for the purpose of robing and disrobing. The disciples followed the Lord to the island, but at the far end of the bridge the people stood on the shore in great crowds. On the bridge itself three could stand abreast. One of the foremost in the latter position was Lazarus.

The baptismal well lay in a gently inclined, octangular basin the bottom of which was encircled by a similarly shaped rim connected with the Jordan by five subterranean canals. The water surrounded the whole basin, filling it through incisions made in the rim, three in the northern side serving as inlets, and two on the southern acting as outlets. The former were visible, the latter covered, for at this point were the place of action and the avenue of entrance. For this reason the water did not here surround the well. From this south side, sodded steps led down into it by an inclination of about three feet in depth.

In the water off the southern shore, was a red triangular, sparkling stone sunk close to the margin of the basin, the flat side toward the center of the well, the point toward the land. This side of the well upon which

were the steps leading down into it, was somewhat higher than the opposite one. This latter, viz. the north side, was the one with the three inflowing canals. On the southwestern side was a step leading

Life of Jesus Christ

to the somewhat deeper part of the margin and on this side only was there access to the well. In the well, in front of the triangular stone, there stood a green tree which had a slender trunk.

The island was not quite level. It was rather elevated toward the center and in some parts rocky. It was covered with moss and in the middle of it was the wide-spreading tree connected with which were the tops of the twelve trees planted around the edge of the island. Between every two of the trees, was a hedge of several small shrubs.

The nine disciples that were always with Jesus during His last days went down to the well with Him and took their stand on the ledge around it. Jesus entered the tent and there laid off, first, His mantle and girdle; then a yellow, woolen garment which was closed in front by laces; then that narrow, woolen strip which He wore around His neck and crossed over the breast, and which He was accustomed to wind around His head at night and in stormy weather. Retaining His brown, woven undergarment, He stepped forth and descended to the margin of the well, where He drew it off over His head. About His loins was fastened a broad linen band which was also wound around each limb for about half a foot. Saturnin received the garments of the Lord as He disrobed, and handed them to Lazarus, who was standing on the edge of the island.

And now Jesus descended into the well, and stood in the water up to His breast. His left arm encircled the tree, His right hand was laid on His breast, and the loosened ends of the white, linen binder floated out on the water. On the southern side of the well stood John, holding in his hand a shell with a perforated margin through which the water flowed in three streams. He stooped, filled the shell, and then poured the water

in three streams over the head of the Lord, one on the back of the head, one in the middle, and the third over the forepart of the head and on the face.

Halting Places of the Holy Family

461

11. Jesus Visits Certain Inns, The Halting Places of the Holy Family on Their Flight into Egypt

Jesus had spent His nights alone and in prayer. Upon leaving the shepherds He addressed His disciples, telling them that He was now going to make another journey to some people who had hospitably sheltered Him and His parents on their flight, that He would cure their sick and convert a sinner, that no footstep of His holy parents should remain unblessed, and that everyone who had shown them compassion and kindness on their flight, He would now seek out and lead to salvation. The mercy and benevolence of all such persons have been to them a pledge and a furtherance of salvation; their effects will continue forever. As now, He said, He was visiting all that had at that time shown charity to Him and His, so would His Heavenly Father be mindful of all that showed mercy and charity to even the most insignificant of His brethren. Jesus then appointed a place near the city and Mount Ephraim, where His disciples were to await His coming.

He now journeyed alone around Herod's dominions toward the desert near Anim, or Enzannim, a few hours from the Dead Sea. His way lay through a wild, though tolerably fertile region where, hedged in by enclosures, were pastured a great many camels divided into droves of forty. There was an inn for the accommodation of travelers through the desert, and to it Jesus went. Several huts and sheds stood nearby, and the proprietors of the inn owned many camels.

This inn was the last in Herod's dominions met by the Holy Family on

their flight into Egypt. The people were a bad set who carried on thievery, but notwithstanding they had received the Holy Family kindly. The neighboring city contained many disorderly characters who had settled there after some war.

Jesus went to the inn and asked hospitality. The

Life of Jesus Christ

proprietor was a man about fifty years old, called Reuben, who had been there at the time of the flight into Egypt. When Jesus glanced at him and addressed him, grace shot like a ray of light into his breast. The words of Jesus and His salutation fell upon him like a blessing, and deeply moved he exclaimed: "Lord, it is as if the Promised Land enters with Thee into my house!" Jesus replied that, if he would believe in the Promise and would not cast away from him its fulfillment, he would indeed share in the Promised Land. Then He spoke of good works and their consequences, telling him that He had now come to announce salvation to him, because he had kindly entertained His Mother and His foster-father so many years before when on their flight to Egypt. In like manner does every action, the good as well as the bad, bear its own fruit. At these words of Jesus, the man cast himself trembling on the ground before Him, saying: "Lord, whence is this to me, a poor, despised, miserable man, that Thou shouldst enter my house?" Jesus answered that He had come to cleanse sinners from their iniquity and lead them back to God. The man still spoke of his own baseness, and said that all the inhabitants of the place belonged to a miserable, lost generation; he also told Jesus of his poor, sick grandchildren. Jesus replied that if he would believe in Him and be baptized, He would restore his grandchildren to health. He washed Jesus' feet, and gave Him the best he had for His refreshment. When the neighbors came in, he told them who Jesus was and what He had promised. He had a relative among them who was named Issacher.

After that he conducted Jesus to his sick grandchildren who, some from leprosy and some from lameness, had become quite deformed. Jesus commanded the children to rise, and they stood up cured. He visited some women also, who were sick of a bloody flux. Then He ordered a bath to be prepared. They got ready a large vessel of water under a tent. From

one of the two flasks that He carried with Him strapped to His side under His outer robe, He poured into it some of the baptismal water from the Jordan, and blessed the whole. The sick were then ordered to bathe in it. They did so, and came forth cleansed and thanking the Lord. Jesus did not baptize them Himself, although this washing was equivalent to Baptism in case of death; but He exhorted them to go seek for the baptism at the Jordan.

When the people questioned Jesus, asking if the Jordan really possessed special virtue, He answered that the channel of the Jordan had been hollowed out and its course directed; that all holy places of this land had been allotted to special purposes by His Heavenly Father long before man had existed there, yea, even before the land or the Jordan had sprung forth from nothing. Very wonderful things spoke Jesus on this subject, and He instructed the women on marriage inculcating modesty and continency. He pronounced the degeneracy of the people of this place and the pitiful condition of the children, consequences of the illegitimate connections so common among them. He spoke of the parents' share in the corruption of their children, of arresting the evil by penance and satisfaction, and of the second birth in baptism.

Then He recounted to them all the kind offices they had performed for the Holy Family at the time of their flight, and gave them some information relative to the places at which they had rested and refreshed themselves. Mary and Joseph had with them on their flight a she-ass, as well as the ass upon which the Blessed Virgin rode. Jesus showed the people all their actions at the time of the flight, that is all the acts of kindness they had shown the Holy Family, as so many types of their present turning from sin to salvation. They prepared for the Lord a repast from the best they had. It consisted of a kind of milk thick like

white cheese, honey, rolls

Life of Jesus Christ

baked in the ashes, grapes, and birds.

Accompanied by some of these men, Jesus left Ainon and, returning by another route, arrived toward evening at a city built on both sides of a mountain, through which ran a rugged valley full of deep ravines. Both mountain and city bore the name of Ephraim, or Ephron. The mountain faced straight toward Gaza. Jesus had come through the country of Hebron. At some distance from the road that He travelled could be described a ruined city with a tower still standing, whose name sounded like Malaga.¹ About an hour's distance from this place was the grove Mambre whither the angels bore to Abraham the promise of a son, Isaac; also the double cave that Abraham bought from Ephren, the Hethite, and which afterward formed his tomb. The field that witnessed David's combat with Goliath was not far off.

Jesus, His escort having taken leave, wended His way around one side of the double city and met His disciples in the rugged valley road which had been designated by Him as the place of meeting. He conducted them out of the winding ravine into a very spacious cave in the wildest part of the mountain, to which no path led. It had afforded a resting place, the sixth in order, to the Holy Family on their flight into Egypt, and here Jesus and His disciples passed the night.

Jesus told this circumstance to the disciples, impressing upon them the sacred character of the place, while they were busying themselves making a fire. They struck a light by revolving one piece of wood inside another. One of the Prophets had frequently spent some time in this cave, in order to give himself more unreservedly to prayer. I think it was Samuel. David, too, while guarding his father's flocks around here, had made the cave a place of prayer and there received commands of

God through

1. Probably *Molada* is meant, or the *Malatha* of Josephus Flavius, 18, 7, 2.

the ministry of angels. It was while thus engaged that he was admonished to slay Goliath.

When the Holy Family reached this cave, they were dejected and exhausted. The Blessed Virgin wept sadly. They were in want of all things, because they had fled by unfrequented ways, shunning the great cities and customary inns. They spent a whole day here recruiting their strength, and several wonders were vouchsafed them for their refreshment—a fountain sprang up in the cave, and a wild goat bounded in and allowed itself to be milked.

Jesus spoke to the disciples of the great tribulations in store for Him and all His followers, of the hardships here endured by Himself and His Blessed Mother, of the mercy of His Heavenly Father, and of the holiness of the place. He added that at some future day there would be a church built on the spot, and He blessed the cave as if consecrating it. The disciples had brought with them some fruit and rolls, and of them all partook.

12. Jesus Goes Toward Maspha to Visit A Relative of St. Joseph

When Jesus and His disciples left the cave, they struck off in the direction of Bethlehem. On this side of Ephron they entered an inn that stood among houses built apart, and there, after washing their feet, took some refreshment. The people were good and somewhat inquisitive. Jesus instructed them on penance, the nearness of Redemption, and of what they must do to follow Him. They asked Him why His Mother took that long journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, since she could have been so comfortably cared for at home. Jesus answered by telling them of the Promise and that He was to be born in poverty at Bethlehem

among the shepherds, since like a shepherd He was to gather the flocks together. It was also for this same reason that now, after His Heavenly

Life of Jesus Christ

Father's testimony of Him, He visited these shepherd regions first.

From here Jesus turned His steps to the south side of Bethlehem about two hours distant, crossed a portion of the shepherd valley, and proceeded around the west side of the city, leaving Joseph's paternal house to the right. Toward evening He entered the now little city of Maspha, some hours from Bethlehem.

Maspha could be seen at a great distance, for on the highroads all around the city burned lights in iron lanterns. It was encompassed by walls and towers, and traversed by several streets. Maspha was long one of the principal places of devotion. Judas Maccabeus ¹ had before battle held here a great prayer meeting in which he reminded Almighty God of all the outrageous decrees of the enemy, recalled to Him His own promises, and exposed the priestly garments before the assembled multitude. Then five angels appeared to him before the city and promised him victory. It was here also that Israel had assembled against the tribe of Benjamin, on account of an outrage and murder committed upon the wife of a travelling Levite. The infamous scene was enacted under a tree, which was afterward walled around, and no one went near it. In Maspha also Samuel had exercised his office of Judge; and here was found that Essenian cloister in which dwelt Manahem, who had foretold the scepter to Herod when the latter was only a boy. This cloister had been built by the Essenian Chariot, who lived about one hundred years before Christ. He was a married man from the country of Jericho. He had separated from his wife and both, he for men and she for women, had founded several communities of Esseniens. He was a very holy man and died in a cloister founded by him not far from Bethlehem. He was the first to arise from his tomb at the death of Christ and appear to men.

1. *Mach.* 3:46.

Maspha was full of inns, and the arrival of a stranger was soon noised about the city; consequently Jesus had scarcely entered the inn when He was surrounded by a crowd. He was conducted to the synagogue where He explained the Law. Some of His hearers were spies whose intentions were insincere. They sought to draw Him out, because they had heard of His promise to lead the heathens also into the Kingdom of God, and that He had spoken among the shepherds about the Three Kings. Jesus' words on this occasion were very severe. He said that the days of the Promise were completed; and that all who would be born again in Baptism, would believe in Him whom the Father had sent, and would keep His commandments, should as well as His followers have a share in the Kingdom. But from the unbelieving Jews should the Promise be withdrawn and given over to the heathens.

I cannot repeat Jesus' words exactly, but they were to this effect: that He knew their intentions, that they were spies, that they might betake themselves to Jerusalem, and there tell all they had heard Him say.

Jesus had alluded to Judas Maccabeus and the several important events that had here taken place. His hearers boasted the magnificence of the Temple and the superiority of the Jews over the heathens. But Jesus explained to them that the end for which the chosen people had been called and their Temple erected was now attained, since the One promised by God through the Prophets was now come to establish the Kingdom of His Heavenly Father, and to raise to Him a new Temple.

After this instruction, Jesus left Maspha and went about an hour eastward. He reached first a row of houses, then came to a residence that stood alone and which belonged to one of Joseph's family. Joseph's father had married a widow with one son. This stepson had married and

settled in this place, and his

Life of Jesus Christ

descendants now occupied the house alluded to. They had been baptized and had a family of children. They received Jesus cordially and with every mark of deference. Several of the neighbors assembled at the house. Jesus gave an instruction after which He partook of a repast with them. The meal over, He retired with two of the men, Aminadab and Manasses. They questioned Him as to whether He was acquainted with their circumstances and whether they should follow Him right away. Jesus replied no, that they should for the present be numbered among His secret disciples. Then they knelt before Him, and He blessed them. Prior to His death, they publicly joined the disciples. Jesus stayed here overnight.

13. Jesus Visits an Inn at Which Mary Stopped on Her Journey to Bethlehem

From here Jesus and His disciples went on for a couple of hours till they came to a farmhouse which had been the last stopping place but one on Mary's journey to Bethlehem. It may have been about four hours' distance from the city. The men of the house came out to meet Jesus and, falling down before Him on the road, begged Him to enter. He was very cordially received. These people went almost daily to John's instructions and were all familiar with the wonders connected with the Lord's baptism. A warm bath was prepared for Jesus, also a repast, and a beautiful couch was made ready for Him that night. Jesus taught here.

The woman who had harbored the Holy Family here thirty years ago was still alive. But she was blind, and had been for many years almost bent double. She lived alone in the main building and her children, who lived nearby, sent her her food. When Jesus had performed His ablutions, He went to see the poor, old woman. He spoke to her of

compassion and hospitality, of good works that bear no merit,

and of selfishness, placing her present afflictions before her as a punishment of the same. She was deeply touched, confessed her fault, and He cured her. He ordered her to bathe in the water He had just used. She did so, recovered her sight, and became straight and well. But Jesus commanded her to say nothing of her cure.

The people of this place questioned Jesus as to which was the greater, He or John. Jesus answered: "He of whom John gives testimony." Then they spoke of John's zeal and energy, also of the beautiful, manly figure of Jesus Himself. Jesus remarked that, three and a half years hence, they would see no beauty in Him, they would not even recognize Him so disfigured would He be. Of John's zeal and energy He spoke, likening him to one knocking at the house of a sleeping man, to rouse him for the coming of the Lord; to one breaking a path through the wilderness, that the king might safely travel over it; and lastly to an impetuous torrent that rushing along purifies the channel through which it flows.

14. “Behold the Lamb of God”

Next morning at daybreak Jesus departed with His disciples, followed by the crowd that had gathered around Him. They wended their way toward the Jordan, distant from this point at least three hours. The Jordan flows through a broad valley that rises on either bank for the distance of about half an hour. The stone in the enclosed space whereon the Ark of the Covenant had rested, and where the recent festival was celebrated, was about an hour's distance from John's place of baptism, that is, taking it in a straight line toward Jerusalem. John's hut near the twelve stones was in direction of Beth-Araba and somewhat more to the south than the stone of the Ark of the Covenant. The twelve stones lay one-half hour from the place of baptism and in the direction of Gilgal.

Gilgal was on a

Life of Jesus Christ

gentle slope on the west side of the mountain.

From John's baptismal pool the view up both the shores, which were very fertile, was most lovely. The most delightful region, however, rich in fruits and teeming with abundance, was around the Sea of Galilee. But here, and also around Bethlehem, there were broader meadowlands, more husbandry, and a greater abundance of durra, garlic, and cucumbers.

Jesus had already passed the memorial stone of the Ark of the Covenant and was about one quarter of an hour beyond John's tent, before which the latter stood teaching. A gap in the valley disclosed this scene to the distant traveler, and Jesus in passing was for not longer than a couple of minutes visible to the Baptist. John was seized by the Spirit and, pointing to Jesus, he cried out: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world!" Jesus passed, preceded and followed by His disciples in groups, the multitude lately gathered around Him in the rear. It was early morning. The people crowded forward at the words of John, but Jesus had already disappeared. They called after Him in acclamations of praise, but He was out of hearing.

When returned from their fruitless attempt to see Jesus, the people complained to John that Jesus had so many followers and that, as they had heard, His disciples had already begun to baptize. What, they asked, would be the outcome of all that. John made answer by repeating that he would soon resign his place to Jesus, since he was only a servant and precursor. These words were not at all acceptable to John's followers, who were somewhat jealous of Jesus' disciples.

Jesus now directed His steps toward the northwest, leaving Jericho on

the right and proceeding to Gilgal about two hours distant from Jericho. He stopped at many places on the way. The children followed Him singing songs of praise, and ran into the houses to bring their parents out.

15. Jesus in Gilgal, Dibon, Socoth, Aruma, and Bethania

The region known as Gilgal comprised the whole of the elevated country above the low valley of the Jordan, and which was embraced by the inflowing streams of the Jordan for a circumference of five hours. But the city Gilgal, to which Jesus drew near before evening, lay scattered and interspersed by numerous gardens for the distance of about one hour, in the direction of the place to which John had retired to preach and baptize.

Jesus first entered the precincts of a sacred spot open to Prophets and Doctors of the Law. It was the place where Joshua had communicated something to the Children of Israel, namely, the six maledictions and six benedictions that had been revealed to Eliezer and himself by Moses before his death. The circumcision hill of the Israelites was nearby, and it, too, was enclosed by a wall.

I saw on this occasion the death of Moses. He died upon a low, but steep peak of Mount Nebo, which rises between Arabia and Moab. The camp of the Israelites flanked the mount, the outposts extending far into the valley around. A growth like ivy covered the whole mount. It was short and crisp, and grew in tufts like the juniper. Moses was obliged to support himself by it when climbing to the top of the peak. Joshua and Eliezer were with him. Moses had a vision from God that his companions saw not. He delivered to Joshua a roll of writing containing six maledictions and six benedictions, which the latter had to publish to the people when in the Promised Land. Then having embraced them, he commanded them to depart and not to look back. When they had gone, Moses cast himself upon his knees with outstretched arms, and gently sank upon his side dead. I saw the earth open under him and enclose

him as in a beautiful grave. When Moses appeared at the

Life of Jesus Christ

Transfiguration of Jesus on Thabor, I saw that he came from that place. Joshua read the six blessings and six maledictions before the people.

Many of Jesus' friends awaited Him in Gilgal: Lazarus, Joseph of Arimathea, Obed, a son of the widow of Nazareth, and others. There was an inn here, in which they set refreshments before the Lord and His companions after washing their feet.

Before the crowds here assembled, many of whom were on their way to John's baptism, Jesus gave an instruction. The spot chosen for the purpose was near the baths and place of purification built high up on the sloping, terraced shore of an arm of the Jordan. It was shaded by an awning, and all around were pleasure gardens ornamented with trees, shrubs, and green plots. Saturnin and two other disciples who had left John to follow Jesus baptized after Jesus had given an instruction on the Holy Ghost. He taught of the several attributes of the Holy Spirit, and pointed out the marks that distinguish one that has received Him.

John's baptism was preceded by only a summary confession of sins accompanied by proofs of contrition and a promise of amendment. But at the baptism of Jesus the acknowledgment of sin was not made in this general way. Everyone accused himself individually and mentioned his chief transgressions. Jesus exhorted to sincerity. He frequently proclaimed the sins of those that, through pride or false shame, concealed them thus to lead them to repentance.

Here also Jesus alluded to the passage over the Jordan and the ceremony of circumcision that had here been performed. It was in memory of this latter circumstance that baptism was now administered here and, through its efficacy, He said, they should henceforth be

circumcised in their heart. He spoke likewise of the fulfillment of the Law.

The baptized on this occasion were not immersed in the water, they only inclined their head over it;

nor did they put on an entire baptismal garment, a white cloth only was placed on their shoulders. The disciples did not make use of a three-channeled shell like John's; but from the basin over which the neophyte inclined, they dipped up the water three times with the hand. Jesus had previously blessed it and poured into it some from His own baptismal well. About thirty were baptized at this time. They appeared radiant with joy after the ceremony, and declared that they truly felt that they had now received the Holy Ghost.

Jesus then proceeded with His followers amid the acclamations of the multitude to Gilgal, to celebrate the Sabbath in the synagogue, a very large, old building on the east side of the city. It was a four-cornered edifice, longer than broad, the angles filled in in such a way as to give it something of the appearance of an octagon. It contained three stories, in each of which was a school. A spiral, exterior flight of steps joined to the wall led up to each, and around each landing ran a little portico. High up in the rounded corners of the building were niches, in which one could stand and view the country far and near. The synagogue stood by itself with gardens cut off on both sides. In front of the entrance was a porch and a teacher's desk similar to that of the Temple in Jerusalem, and there was also an open court containing an altar upon which sacrifice had once been offered. There were likewise covered porches for women and children. One could easily detect the similarity of all these arrangements with those of the Temple, also that the Ark of the Covenant had once rested here and sacrifices had been offered.

The school on the lowest story was the most beautiful in its arrangements. At one end, in the spot corresponding to that occupied by the Holy of Holies in the Temple, stood an octagonal pillar around which were compartments containing rolls of writings. A table

encircled the base of the pillar, and below that

Life of Jesus Christ

was a vault. Here it was that the Ark of the Covenant had once stood. The pillar was very beautiful, of polished white marble.

In the school on the first story, Jesus taught before the priests, the people, and the Doctors of the Law. Among other things He alluded to the fact that here the promised kingdom had been first established, but that idolatry so abominable had been practiced at a later period that scarcely could seven just souls be found among the inhabitants. Ninive, though five times greater, had been able to produce five just. Gilgal had been spared by God, therefore they should not now repulse Him who came to fulfill the Promise: they should do penance and through Baptism be born anew. Then taking the rolls from their places around the pillar, Jesus read and explained them.

After that He taught the young men in the school on the second story, and lastly the boys on the third. Coming down, He delivered another instruction to the women in an open space under a porch, and still another to the young maidens. To these last He spoke of modesty and chastity, of repressing curiosity, of modesty in dress, of veiling the hair, and of covering the head in the Temple and in the synagogue. He reminded them of the presence of God and the angels in holy places, and that the latter themselves veil their face before the Lord. He told them that in the Temple and synagogue there were myriads of angels hovering around the worshippers, and He explained why females should veil the head and hair. The children ran familiarly to Jesus. He blessed them and took them up in His arms. They were very much attached to Him. The joy and jubilation over Jesus were general in this place. As He left the school, the people ran from all sides to meet Him, crying out, and exclaiming: "The Promise is fulfilled! May it remain with us. May it never forsake us!"

When Jesus had finished His instructions, the people were anxious to bring their sick to Him. But He

dismissed them, saying that it was neither the time nor the place for that, He must now leave them, for He was called elsewhere. Lazarus and the friends from Jerusalem returned to their homes and Jesus took leave of the Blessed Virgin, telling her that He would see her again before He retired into the desert.

The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem again held a long consultation on the subject of Jesus. Everywhere they had spies bribed to give them information of His words and actions. The Sanhedrin consisted of seventy-one priests and doctors, of whom twenty were again divided into fives, thus forming so many subcommittees for deliberating and disputing together. They examined the genealogical register, and could in no way deny that Joseph and Mary were of the House of David and Mary's mother of the race of Aaron. But as they said, these families had fallen into obscurity, and Jesus strolled around with vagrants. He also defiled Himself with publicans and heathens, and sought the favor of slaves. They had heard, they said, of the familiar way in which He had spoken lately to the Sichemites, who were returning home from their work in the region of Bethlehem, and they thought that He must have designs to raise an insurrection with the aid of such hangers-on. Some gave it as their opinion that He was very likely an illegitimate child, because He had once proclaimed Himself the son of a king. Others declared that He must in some way receive secret training from the devil, for He often retired apart and spent the night alone in the wilderness or on the mountains. They knew what they were saying, for they had already inquired into all this. Among these twenty deliberators were some who knew Jesus and His family very well, who were most favorably inclined toward Him, who were indeed His friends in secret. Nevertheless, they did not contradict what was said against Him. They kept silence in order to be the better able to serve Him and His disciples and to

Life of Jesus Christ

give them information of whatever might come to their knowledge. The majority of the committee concluded at last that Jesus was in communication with the devil from whom He received instruction, and this was the opinion they publicly proclaimed and which was spread throughout Jerusalem.

John's disciples announced to him the baptism that had lately taken place in Gilgal, representing the same as a usurpation of his rights. But in deepest humility John again repeated what he had often told them before; viz., that he would soon give place to his Lord, whose herald and precursor he had been. The disciples could not rightly understand his words.

With about twenty followers, Jesus left Gilgal and moved on to the Jordan which He crossed on a raft. All around on the beams of the raft were seats, and in the center two concave spaces in which they were accustomed to stand the camels that they might not slip between the beams into the water. Three camels could be so accommodated; but now there were none on board, the Lord and His disciples being the only passengers. It was night, and lighted torches stood in the hollow spaces. Jesus related the parable of the sower which, on the following day, He explained. The passage over the river occupied fifteen minutes at least, for the current at this point was very strong. They had to row some distance up the river, and then drift down to the spot at which they intended to land, and which was not directly opposite their starting point. The Jordan is a singular river; it cannot be crossed at all in many places, and its steep shores are pathless. It makes frequent and sudden bends, and often appears to flow straight past a place around which it is, in reality, running. Its bed in many places is rocky and its course consequently arrested. Its waters encircle numerous islands as they flow

sometimes troubled, sometimes clear, according to the nature of its bed, here and there forming falls. The water of the Jordan is soft and tepid.

They landed near the settlement of the publicans. A highroad from the region of Kedar passed nearby and there, too, a lovely valley took its rise. The publicans, who had already received John's baptism, entertained Jesus; but several of His followers, surprised at their Master's intimacy with these despised people, stood shyly aloof. Jesus and His disciples spent the night here, accepting hospitality from the publicans, who were most deferential to them. Their houses stood on the side of the road that ran through the valley and not far from the Jordan; somewhat further on was the inn for the accommodation of merchants and their camels. There were many tarrying here at the time, on account of the next day's feast, that of Tabernacles; for although most of them were pagans, yet they were obliged to observe the festivals as days of rest. The publicans questioned Jesus as to how they should restore their unjustly acquired goods. He told them that they should be taken to the Temple, which however He meant only spiritually, for in reality He designated thereby His own community, the Church. There should, He said, be purchased with it a field near Jerusalem for the support of poor widows, and He explained to them why a field, illustrating by the parable of the sower.

Next day Jesus walked with them on the shore and in the country around, teaching again of the sower and the future harvest. He took His text from the feast of Tabernacles, which was then beginning, and which commemorated the vintage as well as the ingathering of the fruits of the field. From the publican village, Jesus pressed on further through the valley. On either side of the mountain slope, for the distance of half an hour perhaps, were rows of houses in which the Feast of Tabernacles was being celebrated. These houses extended as far as Dibon in the environs of which indeed they appeared to be. By their side were erected the booths formed of green branches of trees and adorned with bushes, festoons,

Life of Jesus Christ

and clusters of grapes. On one side of the road were the tabernacles and the little tents of the women; on the other, the huts in which the animals were slaughtered. All the food was carried across the road. The children, adorned with garlands, went in bands from one tabernacle to another, singing and playing upon musical instruments. These last consisted of triangles furnished with rings which they tinkled, triangles spanned by cords, and a wind instrument from which arose spiral tubes.

Jesus paused here and there to teach. Refreshments were offered to Him and His disciples, grapes on sticks, two clusters on each. At the further end of this row of houses stood an inn which Jesus entered. Not far from the inn, between it and Dibon, was a broad, open space in the middle of the road. Here, surrounded by trees, arose the large and beautiful synagogue of Dibon.

On the next day Jesus taught in the synagogue, taking again the parable of the sower, alluding to the baptism and the nearness of the Kingdom of God. He spoke also of the feast of Tabernacles and of its celebration here, taking occasion to reprove the people for mixing up heathenish customs in their services, for some of the Moabites still dwelt in this place, and with them the Jewish people had intimate relations. When Jesus left the synagogue, He found in the open court numbers of sick who had been borne thither on litters. They cried out as soon as they saw Him: "Lord, Thou hast been sent from God! Thou canst help us! Help us, Lord!" He cured many. That evening a banquet was prepared in the inn for Jesus and His followers. There were many of the heathen merchants near Jesus when He spoke of the call of the Gentiles, of the star that had appeared in the Land of the Kings, and of their going to visit the Child. Jesus left the place that night alone and went to pray on the mountain. He had engaged to meet His disciples the following

morning on the road

at the other side of Dibon. Dibon was six hours distant from Gilgal. It was rich in fountains and meadows, gardens and terraces, for it lay in the valley and up both sides of the mountain.

Jesus next went to Socoth where He arrived toward evening. An innumerable multitude gathered around Him, among them many sick. He taught in the synagogue, and allowed Saturnin and four other disciples to administer baptism. It took place at a spring in a rocky grotto facing westward toward the Jordan which, however, could not be seen from it as a hill intervened. But the spring was fed from the deep waters of the river. The light fell into the grotto from apertures in the roof. In front of it was an extensive pleasure garden beautifully laid out with small trees, aromatic shrubs, and well-kept lawns. In it was an ancient memorial stone commemorative of an apparition of Melchisedech to Abraham.

Jesus taught here of John's baptism, which He called a baptism of penance, and which would soon be discontinued. In its stead would be received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and the remission of sin. He received from them a kind of general confession of their sins, and then some separately disclosed their predominant passions and transgressions. Many trembled at hearing Jesus accusing them of sins that they thought secret. After the confession Jesus laid His hands upon them as if giving absolution. They were not immersed when receiving baptism. A large basin of water was placed on Abraham's memorial stone, and over it the neophytes bowed with bared shoulders. The baptizers poured the water thrice from the hollow of their hand over the heads of the baptized, who were very numerous at this place.

Abraham had once dwelt at Socoth with his nurse Maraha, and had

owned fields in three different localities. Even here he had begun to share with Lot. It was here that Melchisedech first appeared to Abraham in the same way as did the angels. Melchisedech

Life of Jesus Christ

commanded him a threefold sacrifice of doves, long beaked birds, and other animals, promising to come again and offer bread and wine in sacrifice. He told him what was going to happen to Sodom and to Lot, and pointed out to him several graces for which he should pray. Melchisedech at that time had no longer an earthly abode at Salem. Jacob also dwelt at Socoth.

From Socoth Jesus proceeded to Great Chorazin where, at an inn near the city, He had appointed to meet His Mother and the holy women. On the way thither He passed through Gersas where He kept the Sabbath, after which He went to an inn in the desert some hours from the Sea of Galilee. The proprietors dwelt nearby. The inn was still adorned as for the feast of Tabernacles, for the holy women had rented it some days previously and put all things in order. The necessary provisions were brought at their expense from Gerasa. Peter's wife was with them, also Susanna of Jerusalem, and all the others excepting Veronica. Jesus had an interview with His Mother alone. He told her that He was now on His way to Bethania, whence He would retire to the desert. Mary was grave and anxious. She begged Him not to go to Jerusalem for awhile, for she had heard of the council convened on His account.

Later on Jesus gave an instruction. The place chosen for it was a hill upon which was a stone seat formerly used for the same purpose. There were rows of people from the surrounding country and about thirty women present. They stood apart from the men. After the instruction Jesus told His followers that He must now leave them for a time and that they, as well as the women, should disband until His return. He spoke of John's baptism soon to cease, and of the bitter persecution awaiting Him and His.

Jesus left the inn with about twenty disciples and followers, and journeyed some twelve hours southwest toward the city of Aruma near which an inn for Him and His friends was always in readiness.

Jesus in Aruma

481

Martha, for whom the journey to Gerasa was her first expedition with the holy women, had prepared this inn for Jesus, and His friends in Jerusalem bore the cost. The steward and servants lived in the neighborhood. The holy women told Jesus of the inn before His departure. The city was about nine hours from Jerusalem and between six and seven from Jericho.

Some Essenians dwelt near the inn. They went to see Jesus, conversed and ate with Him. Jesus went to the synagogue and taught of John's baptism, which was a baptism of penance, a preliminary purification, a preparatory action such as was prescribed in the Law. It was different from the Baptism of Him whom John heralded. They that were baptized by John I did not see again baptized, until after the death of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Ghost when, for the most part, the ceremony was performed at the pool of Bethsaida. The Pharisees of this place asked Jesus by what signs they should know the Messiah, and He told them. He gave an instruction on the subject of mixed marriages with the heathens and Samaritans.

Judas Iscariot, subsequently the Apostle, here heard Jesus preaching. He had come alone and not with the other disciples. After listening to His instructions for two days, and passing remarks on the same with the disaffected Pharisees, he departed for a neighboring village which did not bear a very good name. There he gave an account of what he had heard, talking with an air of importance to a pious man of the place. The latter in consequence invited Jesus to visit him. Judas carried on some kind of traffic. He was much occupied with writing, and held himself in

readiness for general services of any kind.

When Jesus and His disciples arrived at the aforementioned place, which had been lately built and which on account of its mixed population was not in very good repute, Judas had departed. Herod owned a castle in the neighborhood. Something connected with

Life of Jesus Christ

the Benjaminites must have happened in this place, for there was a tree close at hand surrounded by a wall, and no one went near it. Abraham and Jacob had each offered sacrifice here, and hither had Esau withdrawn when at variance with Jacob on the subject of the Blessing. Isaac at that time was living near Sichar.

The man that had invited Jesus to these parts was called Jairus; he belonged to the married Essenians. He had a wife and several children, among the latter two sons named Ammon and Caleb. He had also a daughter whom Jesus at a later period cured of some disease, but he was not the Jairus of the Gospel. He was a descendant of Chariot the Essenian, who had founded the convents near Bethlehem and Maspha, and he was familiar with many circumstances of Jesus' youth and family. He and his sons went forth to meet Jesus, whom they received with marks of deference. Jairus was, on account of his charity, the chief man of this despised place. He helped the poor and, on certain days, gave instructions to the children and the ignorant, for they had here neither schools nor priests. He likewise cared for the sick. As usual, Jesus taught of the baptism of John, setting it forth as a preparatory baptism of penance, also of the near coming of the Kingdom of God. With Jairus He visited the sick, and consoled them, but He would not cure any. He promised to return in four months and cure them. In His instructions He alluded to the events that had taken place here, namely, the estrangement of Esau in anger from his brother, and the consequences following upon his rage. It was this that had brought the place into ill-repute. Jesus told of the mercy of the Heavenly Father, who would realize all His promises in favor of those that would believe in the One sent by Him, would do penance, and be baptized and He showed how penance wards off the consequences of sin. Toward evening, accompanied about halfway by Jairus and his sons, Jesus

went with His disciples to Bethania.

They stopped at an inn in the vicinity, and there Jesus gave His disciples a long instruction in which He alluded to the trials in store for Him and all His followers. He told them that they should now leave Him, and weigh well whether they would be able to stand by Him in His future sufferings.

Lazarus came out to meet Him. The disciples departed for their homes, Aram and Themeni alone accompanying Him to Bethania where many friends from Jerusalem were awaiting Him, among them the holy women and Veronica. Aram and Themeni were the nephews of Joseph of Arimathea on the mother's side. They had been John's disciples, but had followed Jesus when on His way to Gilgal He had passed John's place of baptism. Jesus gave an instruction at Lazarus' on the baptism of John, on the Messiah, on the Law and its fulfillment, and on the various sects among the Jews. His friends had brought with them from Jerusalem some rolls of writings from which Jesus explained to them the words of the Prophets relative to the Messiah. But only a few were present at this instruction, only Lazarus and some intimate friends.

Jesus advised with them on the subject of His future abode. They counseled Him not to remain in Jerusalem, telling Him all that was said of Him there. They proposed to Him Salem as proper for His residence, since but few Pharisees were in it. Jesus spoke of various places and of Melchisedech, whose figurative priesthood was soon to be realized. Melchisedech had laid out all the roads, founded all the places that in the designs of God the Son of Man was afterward to travel over and evangelize. Jesus concluded by telling them that He would be found mostly around the Lake of Genesareth. This conference was held in a

retired apartment that opened upon a garden attached to the baths.

Jesus had an interview with the women in a chamber

Life of Jesus Christ

fronting on the road that led to Jerusalem, and which had formerly been occupied by Magdalen. In obedience to Jesus' direction, Lazarus brought his silent sister Mary and left her alone with the Lord, the other women retiring in the meantime to the antechamber.

Silent Mary's bearing toward Jesus was somewhat different from that of the last interview, for she cast herself down before Him and kissed His feet. Jesus made no attempt to prevent her, and raised her up by the hand. With her eyes turned heavenward, she, as once before, uttered the most sublime and wonderful things, though in the most simple and natural manner. She spoke of God, of His Son, and of His Kingdom just as a peasant girl might talk of the father of the village lord and his inheritance. Her words were a prophecy, and the things of which she spoke she saw before her. She recounted the grave faults and bad management of the wicked servants of the household. The Father had sent His Son to arrange affairs and payoff all debts, but they would receive Him badly. He would have to die in great suffering, redeem His Kingdom with His own Blood, and efface the crimes of the servants, that they might again become the children of His Father. She carried out the allegory in most beautiful language, and yet in as natural a manner as if she were recounting a scene enacted in her presence. At times she was gay, at others sorrowful, calling herself a useless servant and grieving over the painful labors of the Son of the merciful Lord and Father. Another cause of sorrow to her was that the servants would not rightly understand the parable, although so simple and so true. She spoke of the Resurrection. The Son, she said, would go to the servants in the subterranean prisons also. He would console them and set them free, because He had purchased their Redemption. He would return with them to His Father. But at His second advent, when He would

come again to judge, all those that had abused the satisfaction He had made and who would not turn from their evil ways, should be cast into the fire. She then spoke of Lazarus' death and resurrection: "He goes forth from this world," she said, "and gazes upon the things of the other life. His friends weep around him as if he were never to return. But the Son calls him back to earth, and he labors in the vineyard." Of Magdalen too she spoke: "The maiden is in the frightful desert where once were the children of Israel. She wanders in accursed places where all is dark, where never human foot has trod. But she will come forth, and in another desert make amends for the past."

Mary the Silent spoke of herself as of a captive, for her body appeared to her a prison, and she longed to go home. She was so straitened on all sides; not one around her understood her and they were, as it seemed to her, all blind. But, she said, she was willing to wait, she would bear her captivity submissively, for she deserved nothing better. Jesus spoke to her lovingly, consoling her and saying: "After the Pasch, when I again come here, thou shalt indeed go home." Then as she knelt before Him, He raised His hands over her and blessed her. It seemed to me that at the same time He poured over her something from a flask, but I cannot say whether it was oil or water.

Mary the Silent was a very holy person, but none knew or understood her. Her whole life was one uninterrupted vision of the work of Redemption, of which she spoke like an innocent child. No one guessed her interior life, and she was regarded as a simpleton. When Jesus signified to her the time of her death, viz., that she should, freed from captivity, at last go home, He anointed her for death.

From this we may conclude that anointing is more necessary for the

body than some people generally think. Jesus pitied Silent Mary who,
as a reputed

Life of Jesus Christ

simpleton, would have received no embalming. Her holiness was hidden. Jesus dismissed her, and she returned to her abode.

After this Jesus again instructed the men on the baptism of John and that of the Holy Ghost. I do not remember any very great difference between the first named and that bestowed by the disciples of Jesus. The latter, however, was a little more like that which at a later period was to take away sin. Nor did I ever see any of those that had been baptized by John rebaptized before the descent of the Holy Ghost.

The friends from Jerusalem returned to the city before the Sabbath, Aram and Themi going in company with Joseph of Arimathea. Jesus had told them that He would retire awhile in order to prepare for the painful mission before Him, that of teaching, but He did not tell them that He was going to fast.