

The disciples questioned Jesus also upon the reproach made Him by the Nazarenes, that He had no love for His neighbor, and in His own city, which ought to be the nearest and dearest to Him, He would work no cures. They asked if one's fellow townsmen should not be looked upon as neighbors. Then Jesus gave them a long instruction upon the love of the neighbor, proposing to them all kinds of similitudes and questions, the former of which He drew from different states of life in the world. He dwelt long upon them and pointed out place after place that rose up in the distance, and said in which such or such an industry was especially pursued. He spoke, too, of those that were to follow Him. They were, He said, to leave father and mother, and yet obey the Fourth Commandment. They must treat their native city as He had done Nazareth, if so it deserved of them, and still exercise the love of the neighbor. God, their Heavenly Father, and He who had been sent by Him, had the first claim to their love. Then He spoke of the love of the neighbor such as the world understands it, and of the publicans of Galaad (which city they were then passing), who loved those most that paid them the highest tax. He pointed afterward to Dalmanutha, which lay to the left, and said: "Those tentmakers and carpet-weavers love as their neighbor those that buy many tents from them, but their own poor they leave without shelter."

He then borrowed a comparison from the sandal makers, which had reference to the vain curiosity of the people of Nazareth. "I have no need," He said, "of their homage which they clothe in beautiful colors like the variegated sandals in the workshop of the sandal maker, but which will afterward be trodden underfoot in the mud." And again, pointing to a certain city, He said: "They are like the sandal maker of that city. They slight and disparage their own children, and so the latter are forced to go abroad. But when among strangers they have learned a new



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style of making beautiful, green sandals, their fellow citizens recall them through desire to see their work. They boast of the new-fashioned articles which, like the glory attached to them, are soon to be trodden underfoot." Then Jesus put the question: "Suppose a traveler tears one of his sandals and goes to a sandal maker's to buy one. Will the latter present him with the other one, also?" In this way Jesus drew comparisons from fishermen, architects, and other avocations.

The disciples asked Him where He intended to fix His abode, whether He would build a house in Capharnaum. He answered that He would not build upon sand, and He mentioned another city that He had to found. I could not so well understand the conversation between Jesus and the disciples when they were walking; when they were seated I could hear better. I remember this much, however, that Jesus expressed His desire for a little boat, that He might go here and there upon the lake. He wanted to teach on water as well as on land.

They now went into the country of Galaaditis. Abraham and Lot had sojourned here, and even at that early period had divided the country between them. Jesus referred to that circumstance. He told the disciples also that in order to avoid scandalizing anyone, they should not speak of the lepers who had lately been cleansed. He warned them to be particularly circumspect now to cause no excitement, for the Nazarenes would certainly stir up alarm and hatred. He told them that on the Sabbath He would again teach in Capharnaum. They should then have a chance to see the love of the neighbor and the gratitude of men exemplified, for the welcome extended to Him this time would be very different from that received on the occasion of the cure of the Centurion's son.

They may have been journeying for some hours to the northeast around a curve of the lake, when they

arrived near Galaad to the south of Gamala. As in most of the cities in this district, the population was made up of heathens and Jews. The disciples were disposed to enter the city. But Jesus told them that, if He went to the Jews of the place, they would neither welcome Him nor give Him anything; and if to the heathens, the Jews would be scandalized and would pursue Him with calumny. He predicted the entire destruction of the city, saying that iniquity abounded in it.

The disciples spoke of a certain Agabus, a prophet living at that time in Argob, a city of that region. For a long time, he had had numerous visions of Jesus and His doings, and had lately uttered some prophecies regarding Him. Later on Agabus joined the disciples. Jesus informed them that Agabus was the son of Herodian parents, who had reared him in the errors of their sect, but he had afterward rejected them. He called the sects beautifully covered sepulchers full of corruption.

The Herodians were numerous on the west side of the Jordan in Perea, Trachonitis, and especially in Ituraea. They lived very privately and had some kind of mysterious organization by which they secretly helped one another. Many poor people applied to them, and received immediate relief. These Herodians were outwardly great sticklers for the prescriptions of the Pharisees; in secret they aimed at freeing Judea from the Roman yoke, and consequently were closely attached to Herod. They were something like the modern freemasons. I understood from Jesus' words that they feigned to be very holy and magnanimous, but in reality they were hypocrites.

Jesus and the disciples remained at some distance from Galaad at an inn resorted to by publicans. Quite a number of them were gathered there at the time, to whom the heathens paid taxes on their imported goods.

They did not appear to know Jesus, and He did not address them. He taught, however, of the

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nearness of the Kingdom, and of the father who had sent his son into the vineyard. He gave them very clearly to understand that He Himself was the Son, adding that all who do His will are children of the Father. But these last words perplexed them. Jesus exhorted them to Baptism. Many were converted, and asked whether or not they should be baptized by John's disciples. He answered that they should wait patiently until His own disciples baptized in those parts. The disciples also asked their Master today whether His Baptism was different from that of John, because they had received the latter. Jesus, in His answer, made a distinction between the two, calling John's a baptism of penance.

In Jesus' instruction to the publicans, something entered relating to the Trinity, something about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in their Unity, though expressed in other terms. The disciples were not at all reserved before the publicans of this place.

As Jesus when in Nazareth had stopped with the Essenians, a circumstance that drew upon Him the reproaches of the Pharisees, the disciples put questions to Him concerning that sect. I heard Jesus answering in sentences expressive of praise, though interrogative in form. Mentioning various ways by which justice and fraternal love might be wounded, He asked after each: "Do the Essenians do this? Do the Essenians do that?" etc.

Near Galaad some possessed, who were running around in a desolate region outside the city, began to cry after Jesus. They were perfectly abandoned. They robbed and killed anyone that ventured within their reach, and committed diverse kinds of excesses. Jesus looked back after them and gave them His blessing. They instantly ceased to rave, were freed from the evil spirit and, hurrying to Him, fell at His feet. He

exhorted them to penance and Baptism, though bidding them wait for the latter until His disciples should go to Ennon to baptize. The country



about Galaad was rocky, of a white, brittle formation.

Jesus and the disciples went from here across the mountain, to the south of which lay Gamala, and took a northwesterly direction to the lake. He passed Gerasa which, at about one hour's distance, lay between two ridges of the mountain. Nearby was a kind of morass formed from a brook whose waters were dammed up, and whose only outlet into the lake was through a ravine. Jesus related to the disciples some incidents connected with this place: The people of Gerasa had once upon a time ridiculed a Prophet, on account of his misshapen form, whereupon he had said to them: "Listen, O ye that insult my misfortune! Your children shall remain obdurate when One greater than I shall teach and heal in this place. Troubled at the loss of their unclean herds, they will not rejoice at the salvation that is offered them." This was a prophecy regarding Jesus Christ and the driving of Satan into the swine.

Jesus told the disciples what awaited Him in Capharnaum: that the Pharisees of Sephoris, exasperated by His teaching upon divorce, had sent their emissaries to Jerusalem; that the Nazarenes had joined their complaints to theirs; and that a whole troop of Pharisees from Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Sephoris was now dispatched to Capharnaum, to be on the watch for Him and to dispute against Him.

Just at this moment they encountered several immense caravans of heathens with mules and oxen. The latter had great, thick jaws, broad, heavy horns, and went along with lowered head. It was a trading caravan going from Syria into Egypt. They had come over into the country of Gerasa partly in ships, and partly over the bridge of the Jordan higher up. There were many among them who had joined the caravan for the purpose of hearing the Prophet. A company waited upon

Jesus to know whether the Prophet would teach in Capharnaum. But He told them that they should not now go to Capharnaum, but encamp on

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the declivity of the mountain to the north of Gerasa, whither the Prophet would soon go. There was something in Jesus' tone and manner that made them respond: "Master, Thou too art a Prophet!" and His glance roused in them the doubt as to whether He might not Himself be the one for whom they were in search.

When Jesus entered the inn outside Gerasa with His disciples there to lodge, the crowd of heathens and travelers was so great that He left at once, but the disciples stayed with the heathens, talking to them of the Prophet and instructing them.

Gerasa lay on the declivity of a valley about an hour and a half from the lake. It was larger and cleaner than Capharnaum and, like almost all the cities of these parts, it had a mixed population of heathens and Jews. The former had their own temples. The latter formed the poor and oppressed portion of the inhabitants, although they had their synagogue and Rabbi. There was much business carried on and the trades were numerous, for the caravans from Syria and Asia passed through Gerasa going down into Egypt. I saw before the city gate a long building, seven and a half minutes in length, wherein were manufactured long iron bars and pipes. They forged the bars flat, and then soldered them together into a circular form. Leaden pipes also were made. The furnaces at which they worked were not fed with wood, but with some kind of a black mass dug out of the earth. The iron they used came from Argob.

The heathens of the caravan had encamped to the north of Gerasa and on the southern side of the rising mountain. To the same place some heathens belonging to the city had come, also some Jews; but these latter stood apart by themselves. The heathens were differently clad from the Jews, their tunics reaching only halfway down the lower limbs.

Some of them must have been rich, for I saw women who had their

hair so braided with pearls as to form a perfect cap. Some wore it on the top of the head above their veil, braided with pearls into a little basket.

Jesus ascended the mountainside, where walking about He taught the crowds. He went among them, here and there, and at times He stood still, keeping up a kind of conversation with the travelers. He addressed them questions, which He answered Himself in words full of instruction. He asked, for instance: "Whence are ye? What impelled you to take this journey? What do ye expect from the Prophet?" and then He taught them what they must become, in order to share in salvation. He said: "Blessed are they that have journeyed so long and so toilsome a way, to seek salvation! But woe to them among whom it arises and who will not receive it!" He explained the Prophecy of the Messiah and the call of the heathens, told of that of the Three Kings (of whom these people knew) and also of their expedition in obedience to it.

In the caravan were some people from that country and city where the envoy of Abgarus of Edessa had stayed overnight near the brick kilns, on his return journey with Jesus' picture and letter. Jesus did not cure any sick here. The strangers were for the most part well-disposed, but there were some among them who regretted having undertaken such a journey. They had expected to hear something very different from the Prophet's words, something more flattering to the senses.

After these instructions, into which Jesus introduced many similitudes, He went with His four disciples to dine with a Jewish Doctor of the Law, a Pharisee, who dwelt outside the city. He had invited Jesus to be his guest, though his pride prevented his appearing at the instruction given the heathens. There were present at table some other Pharisees

from the city. They received Jesus in a friendly manner which, however, was only feigned, for they were hypocrites.

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A circumstance occurred during the course of the meal that gave Jesus a suitable opportunity for telling them the truth. A heathen slave, or servant, laid upon the table a beautiful dish of many colors filled with confectionery, made of spices kneaded together in the shape of birds and flowers. One of the guests raised the alarm. There was, he said, something unclean on the dish, and he pushed the poor slave back, called him opprobrious names, and put him last among the other servants. Jesus interposed: "Not the dish, but what is in it is full of uncleanness." The master of the house replied: "Thou mistakest, those sweetmeats are perfectly clean and very costly." Jesus responded in words like these: "They are truly unclean! They are nothing else than sensual pleasures made of the sweat, the blood, the marrow, and the tears of widows, orphans, and the poor," and He read them a severe lesson upon their manner of acting, their prodigality, their covetousness, and their hypocrisy. They grew wrathful, but could make no reply. They quitted the house, leaving Jesus alone with the host. This latter was very smooth and affable toward Jesus, but it was all hypocrisy. He was hoping in this way to entrap Him and get something at last to report against Him to the committee at Capharnaum.

Toward evening Jesus again taught the heathens on the mountain. When they asked Him whether they should be baptized by John and expressed a wish to settle in Palestine, Jesus counseled them to put off their Baptism until better instructed. He told them, moreover, to go first of all across the Jordan to Upper Galilee and into the region of Adama, where they would find good people and heathens already instructed, and where He Himself would again teach. It was dark and Jesus taught by torchlight. The instruction over, He left His hearers, and went to the shore of the lake and down to the spot where Peter's men were waiting for Him with a boat. It was late. The three sailors made use of lights when they





disembarked about half an hour below Bethsaida-Julias. Peter and Andrew, with the help of their servants, had built especially for His use the little boat in which Jesus had crossed. They were not only mariners and fishermen, but shipbuilders also.

Peter owned three vessels, one of them very large, as long as a house, Jesus' little boat held about ten men. It was oval in form, almost like an egg. In the forepart and stern were enclosed places for storing, and affording accommodations for washing the feet. In the center rose the mast with poles extended from it to the sides of the vessel for support; above and around these poles swung the sails. The seats were ranged around the mast. Jesus often taught from this little barque, which He used likewise to cross from point to point and to sail about among the other ships. The large vessels had around the lower part of the mast decks formed like terraces, or galleries, one above another. They were supported by posts placed at regular intervals, so that a view could be had through them from side to side. They were furnished with canvas curtains that could be drawn so as to form separate compartments like little cells. The poles supporting the mast had projecting rounds to facilitate climbing, and on either side of the vessel were floating chests, or barrels like wings or fins, to prevent its being overturned in a storm. They could be filled with water or emptied, according as it was necessary for the ship to ride more lightly or sink to a greater depth. The fish caught was sometimes preserved in them. At either end of the vessel were movable planks which, on being shoved out, facilitated access to the casks, to neighboring boats, or to the nets. When not in use for fishing purposes, the vessels were held in readiness to transport caravans and travelers across the lake. The sailors and servants of the fishermen were, for the most part, pagan slaves. Peter owned some.

## **7. Jesus in Peter's House. Measures Taken by the Pharisees. Cures**

Jesus landed above Bethsaida not far from the house of the lepers where Peter, Andrew, John, James the Greater, James the Less, and Philip were awaiting His coming. He did not go with them through Bethsaida, but took the shorter route over the height to Peter's dwelling in the valley between that city and Capharnaum, where Mary and the other women were assembled. Peter's mother-in-law was in bed sick. Jesus went to see her, but did not cure her yet. They washed the Master's feet and then sat down to a meal, during which the conversation turned principally upon the fact that, from the several most famous schools in Judea and Jerusalem, fifteen Pharisees had been sent to Capharnaum to spy Jesus' actions. From the larger places, two had been sent; from Sephoris only one; and from Nazareth came that young man who had several times begged of Jesus to be admitted to His disciples, and whom Jesus had again rejected at His last visit to His native city. He had married lately, and was now appointed Scribe of the commission. Jesus said to the disciples: "Behold, for whom you interceded! He desired to become My disciple, and yet he is now come to lay snares for Me!" This young man wanted to join Jesus through a motive of vanity and, not being allowed to do so, he took part with Jesus' enemies. The Pharisees forming the commission were empowered to remain for some time in Capharnaum. Of those that came in pairs, one returned to report, the second remaining to spy Jesus' conduct and teaching. They had already held a meeting before which the Centurion Zorobabel, the son, and father had to appear and answer interrogatories respecting the boy's cure and Jesus' doctrine. They could neither deny the cure nor challenge the doctrine, nevertheless

they could not reconcile themselves to what had happened. They were angry because Jesus had not studied under them; they found fault with His frequenting the company of common people, such as the Essenians, fishermen, publicans, and sinners; they were indignant at His presuming to teach without a mission from Jerusalem, from the Sanhedrin; they were offended at His not having recourse to themselves for counsel and instruction; and they could not endure that He was neither Pharisee nor Sadducee, that He taught among the Samaritans, and cured on the Sabbath day. They were in short furious at the thought that to render Him justice would be to denounce and condemn themselves. The young man from Nazareth was a violent enemy of the Samaritans, whom he persecuted in many ways.

Jesus' friends and relatives did not want Him to teach in Capharnaum on the Sabbath. Even His Mother was full of anxiety, and she expressed her opinion that it would be more advisable for Him to go to the other side of the lake. From such objections, Jesus turned aside with a few brief words and without explanations.

There were in Bethsaida and Capharnaum immense numbers of sick, of heathens, and Jews. Several troops of the travelers that Jesus had lately met on the other side of the lake were here awaiting Him. Near Bethsaida were large open inns covered with reeds, some for heathens, some for Jews. Above this place were the heathen baths; below were the Jewish.

Peter accommodated many of the Jewish sick in the precincts of his dwelling, and Jesus next morning healed a large number of them. Jesus had said to Peter the evening before that he should leave his fishery on the following day and help Him to fish after men; soon would He call

upon him to quit it entirely. Peter obeyed, though not without some inward embarrassment. He was always of the opinion

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that life with the Master was too high for him, he could not understand it. He believed in Jesus, he saw His miracles, he shared freely his substance with the other disciples, he did willingly all that was enjoined upon him, but yet he felt unfit for such a vocation. He thought himself too simple, too unworthy, and to this was added a secret anxiety for the welfare of his business. Sometimes also it was very vexatious to him to find himself the object of such railleries as, "He is only a poor fisherman, and yet look at him going around with the Prophet! And his house is a perfect rendezvous for fanatics and seditious persons. See how he neglects his business!" All this made it a struggle for Peter since, though full of faith and love, he was not at that time so enthusiastic, so zealous as Andrew and the other disciples. He was timid and humble, attached to his ordinary occupations, and in his simplicity would have preferred being left in the peaceful discharge of them.

Jesus went from Peter's dwelling over the mountain ridge to the north side of Bethsaida. The whole road was full of sick, pagans and Jews, separate however, the leprous far removed from all others. There were blind, lame, dumb, deaf, paralytic, and an exceedingly large number of dropsical Jews. The ceremony of curing was performed with the greatest order and solemnity. The people had already been two days here, and the disciples of the place, Andrew, Peter, and the others whom Jesus had notified of His coming, had arranged them comfortably in the nooks, retired and shady, and the little gardens on the road. Jesus instructed and admonished the sick, who were carried or led and ranged around Him in groups. Some desired to confess their sins to Him, and He stepped with them to a more retired spot. They sank on their knees before Him, confessing and weeping. Among the heathens were some that had committed murder and robbery on their journeys. Jesus passed

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by some, leaving them lying unnoticed for a time while He turned to others; but afterwards coming back to them, He exclaimed: "Rise! Thy sins are forgiven thee!" Among the Jews were adulterers and usurers. When Jesus saw in them proofs of repentance, He imposed on them a penance, repeated some prayers with them, laid His hands upon them, and cured them. He commanded many to purify themselves in a bath. Some of the heathens He ordered to receive Baptism or to join their converted brethren in Upper Galilee. Band after band passed before Him, and the disciples preserved order.

Jesus went through Bethsaida also. It was crowded with people, as if upon a great pilgrimage. He cured here in the different inns and along the streets. Refreshments had been prepared in Andrew's house. I saw some children there: Peter's stepdaughter and some other little girls of about ten years, two others between eight and ten, and Andrew's little son who wore a yellow tunic with a girdle. There were also some females of advanced age. All were standing on a kind of covered porch outside the house, speaking of the Prophet, asking whether He would soon come, and running from side to side to see whether He were in sight. They had assembled here in order to get a glimpse of Him, though ordinarily the children were kept under greater restraint. At last Jesus passed, turned His head toward them, and gave them His blessing. I saw Him going again to Peter's and curing many. He cured about one hundred on that day, pardoned their sins, and pointed out to them what they should do in the future.

I saw again that Jesus exercised many different manners of curing, and that probably He did so in order to instruct the disciples as to how they should act, also the ministers of the Church till the end of time. All the actions of Jesus, even His sufferings, appeared to be of a purely human

nature. There were no sudden, no magical transformations in the cures

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He wrought. I saw in them a certain transition from sickness to health analogous to the nature of the malady and the sins that had given rise to it. I saw stealing upon those over whom He prayed or upon whom He laid His hand a certain stillness and inward recollection, which lasted for some moments, when they rose up as if from a slight swoon, cured. The lame rose without effort and cast themselves cured at His feet, though their full strength and agility returned to some only after a few hours, to others not for days. I saw some sick of the dropsy who could totter toward Him without assistance, and others who had to be carried. He generally laid His hand on their head and stomach and pronounced some words, after which they at once arose and walked. They felt quite relieved, the water passing from them in perspiration. The leprous, on being cured, immediately lost the scales of their disease, though still retaining the red scars. They that recovered sight, speech, or hearing, had at first a feeling of strangeness in the use of those senses. I saw some swollen with gout cured. Their pains left them, and they could walk, but the swelling did not go down at once, though it disappeared very soon. Convulsions were cured immediately and fevers vanished at His word, though their victims did not instantly become strong and vigorous. They were like drooping plants regaining freshness in the rain. The possessed usually sank into a short swoon from which they recovered with a calm expression of countenance and quite worn out, though freed from the evil one. All was conducted quietly and methodically. Only for unbelievers and the malevolent had the miracles of Jesus anything frightful in them.

The heathens present on this occasion had been influenced to come chiefly by people that had been to the baptism and teaching of John, and by other heathens from Upper Galilee where Jesus had formerly taught and cured. Some had already received





John's baptism, and some had not. Jesus did not order them to be circumcised. When questioned on this point, He instructed them upon the circumcision of the heart and the senses, and taught them how to mortify themselves. He spoke to them of charity, temperance, frugality, ordered them to keep the Ten Commandments, taught them some parts of a prayer like the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, and promised to send them His disciples.

### **8. Jesus Teaches and Cures In Capharnaum**

On the preceding evening, flags with knots and strings of fruit were raised on the synagogues and public buildings of Bethsaida, to herald the last day of the month Ab. With the Sabbath, the first day of the month Elul began. Next morning after Jesus had healed many sick Jews in Bethsaida, He went with the disciples to Peter's, near Capharnaum. The women had preceded Him thither, and crowds of sick were again awaiting Him. There were two deaf men into whose ears Jesus put His finger. Two others were brought forward, who could scarcely walk, besides which their arms were perfectly stiff and their hands swollen. Jesus laid His hand on them and prayed; then grasping them by both hands, He swung their arms up and down, and they were cured. The swelling did not, however, disappear at once, but only after a couple of hours. He exhorted them for the future to use their hands for the glory of God, for it was sin that had reduced them to this state. He cured many others, and then went into the city for the Sabbath.

The concourse of people at Capharnaum was very great. The possessed had been released from their place of confinement and ran crying out along the streets to meet Jesus. He commanded them to be silent and delivered them; whereupon, to the astonishment



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of the multitude, they followed Him quietly to the synagogue and listened to His instruction. The Pharisees, and among them those fifteen from the other cities, sat around His chair, forced to treat Him with respect and hypocritical reverence. They gave Him the Scriptures, and He taught from *Isaias* 49, that God had not forgotten His people. He read aloud: "If even a woman should forget her child, yet would not God forget His people"; and then explained from the following verses that the impiety of men could not restrain God, could not hinder Him from realizing His thoughts of mercy. The time of which the Prophet speaks, that the eyes of God are always on the walls of Sion, had now come, now should the destroyers flee and the builders commence their labor. The Lord would gather together nations to ornament His sanctuary. There will be so many good and pious souls, so many benefactors and leaders of the poor nations that the sterile synagogue will say: Who has begotten to me so many children? The Gentiles shall be converted to the Church, the kings of the earth shall serve her! The God of Jacob shall snatch from the enemy, from the perverted synagogue, her children; and they that like murderers lay hands on the Saviour, shall rage against one another, and choke one another. (*Isaias* 50:1 *et seq.*) Jesus explained this as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, since it would not receive the Kingdom of grace. God demands whether He has separated from the Synagogue, whether He has given her a bill of divorce, whether He has sold His people. Yes, on account of their sins, have they been sold! On account of her transgressions, has the Synagogue been abandoned! He has called, He has warned, and no one has heeded. But He is the mighty God, He can cause Heaven and earth to tremble, Jesus applied all to His own time. He showed that all had been led astray, those that had been forsaken by the synagogue. And then, as if speaking

to Himself, He uttered the words of this passage of Isaias: "The Lord hath given me a learned tongue, that I should know how to uphold by word him that is weary: He hath opened His ears to Him in the morning to hear His commands, and He hath not resisted." The Pharisees took these words as foolish self-praise, though they were ravished by His preaching, and said to one another at the end of it: "Never before has any Prophet so taught!" They whispered, nevertheless, some malicious remarks into one another's ears, Jesus went on with the explanation of this passage: "I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them," applying it to the persecutions that He had already endured and to what He had still to suffer. He spoke of the ill-treatment He had received at Nazareth, saying: "Let him who can condemn Me, come forward!" His enemies, He said, would grow old and come to naught in their vain teachings, the Judge would come upon them. The godly would hear His voice, while the ignorant, the unenlightened should call to God and hope in Him. The Day of Judgment would come, and they that had kindled the fire would go to ruin. (*Is.* 1:11). This passage, also, Jesus explained of the destruction of the Jewish people and Jerusalem.

The Pharisees had not a word to reply. They listened in silence, transported by His words, though occasionally whispering a jeering remark into their neighbor's ear. Jesus then explained something from Moses as He always did at the termination of His sermons, and added a parable, which He addressed more particularly to the disciples and to the faithless young Scribe of Nazareth. The parable was that of the talent put out at interest, for the young Scribe was vain of his acquirements. He was humbled interiorly by it, but not improved. Jesus related the parable in terms similar to, though not quite the same as those given in the Gospel.



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In front of the synagogue, Jesus cured the sick on the streets, and then went with His disciples to Peter's outside the city gate. Nathaniel Chased and the bridegroom, also Thaddeus, had come hither from Cana for this Sabbath. Thaddeus was often in Capharnaum, for he travelled a great deal throughout the country, dealing in fishing nets, sailcloth, and tackling. That night the house was again full of sick persons, and separated from the rest were several women afflicted with a flow of blood. Some women, completely enveloped, were brought on portable beds by their friends. They were pale and emaciated, and had already sighed long after Jesus' help. This time I saw that He imposed hands on the sufferers, and blessed them. Then He commanded those on the beds to throw off their covers and arise. They obeyed, one helping the other. Jesus exhorted them and bade them adieu. During the night, He retired to pray.

The spying Pharisees had not spoken openly in Capharnaum of the object of their mission; even the Centurion Zorobabel had been questioned only secretly. They had sufficient pretexts to account for their presence: The Jews were in the habit of going from one place to another for the celebration of the Sabbath, especially if a distinguished Doctor was expected to preside; it was customary, besides, for crowds to retire into the country of Genesareth, to rest from business and enjoy the beauty and luxuriance that everywhere abounded.

On the following day Jesus went very early to Capharnaum. There was an innumerable concourse gathered before the synagogue, among them crowds of sick, of whom He healed many. When He entered the synagogue wherein the Pharisees were assembled, some possessed who were present began to cry out after Him. One in particular, more noisy than his fellows, went running toward Him crying: "What have we to do

with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Thou hast come to destroy us! I know that Thou art the



Holy One of God!" Jesus commanded the demon to be silent and to go out of the man. The latter, tearing himself, ran back among his companions, but the devil, uttering great cries, went out of him. The man then became perfectly calm, and cast himself at Jesus' feet. Many of those present, and especially the disciples, said in the hearing of the Pharisees, who were scandalized at what they saw: "What kind of a new doctrine is this? Who can this Teacher be? He has power over the impure spirits!"

The crowd was so dense, there were so many sick in and around the synagogue, that Jesus had to take His stand on a spot to be seen and heard not only from within, but also from the court, which was crowded. The Pharisees stood around Him inside, while Jesus turned toward the court to address the people. Sometimes He turned toward the interior of the synagogue, and again toward those outside. The halls around the building were open for the accommodation of the immense throng of hearers, who filled not only the court, but mounted the steps leading to the flat roofs of the buildings that enclosed it. Below were the cells and oratories reserved for penitents and those that came to pray. There were some places specially reserved for the sick.

Jesus again clearly and energetically expounded Isaias, applying all to their own time and to Himself. The times, He said, were fulfilled and the Kingdom was near. They had always longed after the fulfillment of the Prophecies, they had sighed for the Prophet, the Messiah, who would relieve them of their burdens. But when He would come, they would not receive Him, because He would fail to realize their erroneous notions of Him. Then taking the signs of the coming of the Prophet for whose accomplishment they always sighed, those signs that were still read from the Scriptures in their synagogues and for which they prayed,

He proved that they had all been fulfilled. He said: "The lame shall walk, the blind

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see, the deaf hear. Is there not something of this now? What mean these gatherings of the Gentiles to hear instruction? What do the possessed cry out? Why are the demons expelled? Why do the cured praise God? Do not the wicked persecute Him? Do not spies surround Him? But they will cast out and kill the Son of the Lord of the vineyard, and how shall it be with them? If ye will not receive salvation, yet shall it not be lost. Ye cannot prevent its being given to the poor, the sick, to sinners and publicans, to the penitent, and even to the Gentiles in whose favor it shall be taken from you." Such was the substance of Jesus' discourse. He added: "That John whom they have imprisoned ye acknowledge to be a Prophet! Go to him in his prison and ask him for whom did he prepare the ways and of whom did he bear witness?" While Jesus spoke, the rage of the Pharisees increased, and they whispered and muttered together.

During Jesus' discourse, four distinguished men of Capharnaum, sick of an unclean malady, were carried by eight others less sick to the synagogue and placed in such a position in the court that Jesus could see them and they could hear His teaching. On account of their sickness, they were allowed to enter only by one particular gate, but that being just at present obstructed by the crowd, the eight semi invalids had to lift them in their beds to a place over a wall and force their own way through the crowd, which at once retreated before the unclean sickness. When the Pharisees saw the newcomers, they became angry and began to snarl at them as public sinners suffering from an unclean malady. They spoke aloud against them, asking what kind of irregularity was this, that such people should venture into their vicinity? When their remarks ran through the crowd and reached the objects of them, the poor sick men became sad and frightened lest Jesus, being informed of their sins, should refuse to cure them. They were

full of contrition, and had long sighed for Jesus' assistance. But when Jesus heard the murmuring of the Pharisees, He turned on the instant to where the sick men were lying in fear and anxiety, addressed His discourse to the crowd in the court and, casting a look full of earnestness and love on the sufferers, cried out to them: "Your sins are forgiven you!" At this the poor men burst into tears, while the Pharisees, highly exasperated, growled out: "How does He dare say so? How can He forgive sins!" Jesus said: "Follow Me down there, and see what I am going to do! Why are ye offended at My doing the will of My Father? If ye do not want salvation yourselves, yet should you not grudge it to the repentant! Ye are angry that I cure on the Sabbath? Does the hand of the Almighty rest on the Sabbath day from doing good and punishing evil? Does He not feed the hungry, cure the sick, and shed around His blessings on the Sabbath? Can He not send sickness on the Sabbath? May He not let you die on the Sabbath? Be not vexed that the Son does the will and the works of His Father on the Sabbath!" When He reached the sick men, He ordered the Pharisees to stand in a row at some distance, saying: "Stay here, for to ye these men are unclean, though to Me not, since their sins have been forgiven them! And now, tell Me. Is it harder to say to a contrite sinner, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' than to say to a sick man, 'Arise, and carry thy bed hence?'" The Pharisees had not a word to answer. Then Jesus approached the sick men, laid His hands on them one after the other, uttered a few words of prayer over them, raised them up by the hand, and commanded them to render thanks to God, to sin no more, and to carry away their beds. All four arose. The eight who had carried them and who were themselves half-sick, had become quite vigorous, and they helped the others to throw off the covers in which they were wrapped. These latter appeared to be only a little fatigued and embarrassed. Putting

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together the poles of their portable beds, they shouldered them, and all twelve went off through the wondering and exulting crowd joyfully intoning the song of thanksgiving: "Praised be the Lord God of Israel! He has done great things to us. He has had mercy on His people, and has cured us by His Prophet!"

But the Pharisees, full of wrath and deeply mortified, hurried away without taking leave of the Saviour. Everything about Jesus exasperated them: His actions and His manner of performing them, that He was not of the same opinion with them, that He did not esteem them just, wise, and holy, that He associated with people whom they despised. They had a thousand objections to make to Him; namely, that He did not keep the fasts strictly, He associated with sinners, pagans, Samaritans, and the rabble at large, that He was Himself of mean extraction, that He gave too much liberty to His disciples and did not keep them in proper respect—in a word, everything in Him displeased them. Still they could bring no special charge against Him. His wisdom and His astonishing miracles they could not deny; consequently, they took refuge in ever-increasing rage and calumny. When one considers the life of Jesus in detail, the priests and people of His time are found to be pretty much the same as they are nowadays. If Jesus actually returned to earth, from many Doctors of the Law, from many politicians, He would have to endure still worse things.

The sickness of the lately cured consisted in a discharge of impure humors. They were, before their cure, quite exhausted and motionless, as if they had had an apoplectic stroke. The eight others were partially lame on one side. The beds consisted of two poles with feet, a crosspiece in the middle, on which a mat was stretched. They rolled the whole together, and carried them on their shoulders like a couple of

poles. It was a touching sight—those men going through the crowd singing!

## **9. Jesus Cures Peter's Mother-in-Law. Peter's Great Humility**

Jesus now went without delay with the disciples out of the city gate and along the mountain to Peter's in Bethsaida. They had urged Him to do so, for they thought that Peter's mother-in-law was dying. Her sickness had very much increased, and now she had a raging fever. Jesus went straight into her room. He was followed by some of the family; I think Peter's daughter was among them. He stepped to that side of the bed to which the sick woman's face was turned, and leaned against the bed, half-standing, half sitting, so that His head approached hers. He spoke to her some words, and laid His hand upon her head and breast. She became perfectly still. Then standing before her, He took her hand and raised her into sitting posture, saying: "Give her something to drink!" Peter's daughter gave her a drink out of a vessel in the form of a little boat. Jesus blessed the drink and commanded the invalid to rise. She obeyed and arose from her low couch. Her limbs were bandaged, and she wore a wide nightdress. Disengaging herself from the bandages, she stepped to the floor and rendered thanks to the Lord, the entire household uniting with her.

At the meal that followed, she helped with the other women and, perfectly recovered, served at table. After that, Jesus, with Peter, Andrew, James, John, and several of the other disciples, went to Peter's fishery on the lake. In the instruction He gave them, He spoke principally of the fact that they would soon give up their present occupations and follow Him. Peter became quite timid and anxious. He fell on his knees before Jesus, begging Him to reflect upon his ignorance and weakness, and not to insist on his undertaking anything so important, that he was entirely unworthy, and quite unable to instruct others. Jesus replied that His disciples should have no





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worldly solicitude, that He who gave health to the sick would provide for their subsistence and furnish them with ability for what they had to do. All were perfectly satisfied, excepting Peter who, in his humility and simplicity, could not comprehend how he was for the future to be, not a fisherman, but a teacher of men. This, however, is not the call of the Apostles related in the Gospel. That had not yet taken place. Peter had nevertheless already given over a great part of his business to Zebedee. After this walk by the lake, Jesus again went to Capharnaum and found an unusual number of sick around Peter's house outside the city. He cured many, and taught again in the synagogue.

As the concourse of people continued to increase, Jesus, without being noticed, disengaged Himself from the crowd, and went alone to a wild but very pleasant ravine which extended to the south of Capharnaum, from Zorobabel's mansion to the dwellings of his servants and workmen. In it were grottos, bushes, and springs, numerous birds, and all kinds of tame, rare animals. It was a skillfully cared-for solitude belonging to Zorobabel, besides being a part of that garden of pleasure, Genesareth, thrown open to the public. Jesus spent the night alone and in prayer, the disciples being ignorant of His whereabouts.

Early next morning, He left the wilderness, but not to return to Capharnaum. He ordered Peter and another of the disciples who had come to seek Him to send Parmenas, Saturnin, Aristobolus, and Tharzissus to a certain place where He would meet them, and thence go to the Baths of Bethulia. He went around the height of the valley on which lay Magdalum, which He passed a couple of hours eastward to the left. On the south side of this height was the city of Jetebatha.

## **10. Jesus at the Baths of Bethulia And in Jetebatha**

At first I thought that Jesus was going to Gennabris, situated among the mountains, about three hours west of Tiberias. But He did not go there, but to the north side of the valley where was the fountain of Bethuel. A great many wealthy and distinguished people from Galilee and Judea owned villas and gardens here, which they occupied in the beautiful season of the year. On the south side of the lake, formed by the northern declivity of the heights of Bethuel, were rows of houses and warm baths, those toward the east being the warmer. The baths had one large reservoir in common, around which were private apartments formed by tents; in them were tubs sunk to a greater or lesser depth in the water, according to the convenience of the bathers. These private apartments communicated with the reservoir. There were many inns in the neighborhood of the baths. A private house and garden could also be hired for the season with everything else free. The revenues belonged to the city of Bethulia, and were used principally to keep up the baths. The waters of the lake were uncommonly pure, clear as a mirror to the very bottom, which was paved with beautiful, little white pebbles. It was fed by a stream from the east which flowed from the baths in the valley of Magdalum. The lake swarmed with little pleasure boats, which in the distance looked like ducks. On the north side of the lake, but facing south, were dwellings for the accommodation of female visitors at the baths. Their walks and pleasure grounds, however, were near the brook that flowed through those of the men. Both sides of the valley formed a gentle declivity toward the lake. From the dwellings and baths there ran around the lake, crossing and opening into one another, shady avenues, embowered walks with wide-stretching trees and luxuriant

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foliage, among which lay meadows of very high and beautiful grass, orchards, vegetable gardens, and grounds for riding and games. The view was enchantingly beautiful—hills and mountains, all teeming with the most exuberant fertility, rich especially in grapes and fruits. The second harvest of the year was now ripe.

Jesus remained on the side of the lake by which He had come, and put up at a traveler's inn. People soon gathered around Him, and He taught them with great sweetness outside the inn. Many women were among His hearers. Next morning I saw a number of little boats coming over from the south side of the lake where the bathers were. It was a deputation of the most distinguished men come to invite Jesus courteously to return with them and preach. Jesus ferried across with them and went to an inn where they presented Him with a little luncheon. He taught in the cool of the morning and evening under shady trees, on a hill not far from the inn. Most of His hearers stood around Him, the women on one side veiled. The order observed was truly pleasing. The people were, for the most part, well-bred and well-inclined, cheerful and good-humored. As there were no factions among them, one did not fear to give vent to his feelings before the others, consequently they were all most reverential and attentive to Jesus. They were perfectly carried away and rejoiced by His very first discourse. He taught of purification by water, of the union, equality, and the feeling of confidence that reigned among them, of the mystery of water, of the washing away of sin, of the bath of baptism as administered by John, of the charity and good understanding that ought to unite the baptized, the converted, etc. He borrowed, moreover, subject matter and graceful similitudes from the lovely season, from the country around, the mountains, trees, fruit, and herds, in short from everything they saw about them. I saw His audience around

Jesus in a circle, and at times exchanging places with newcomers to whom He repeated the substance of His last discourse.

I saw some gouty invalids moving slowly about. They were mostly government officials and officers who were enjoying a vacation. I recognized them by the uniforms they wore when leaving for their different garrisons around the country. During their stay at the baths, all were dressed alike with nothing to distinguish them from other people. The men wore fine, yellow woolen stuff made into tunics of four separate skirts, one above the other, the lower one wrapped into a kind of trousers down to the knees; some went barefoot, others wore sandals. The upper part of the body was covered with a scapular open at the sides and bound at the waist by a broad girdle. The shoulders were covered with an arm flap that reached halfway to the elbow; the head was uncovered. They played at games, fighting with little sticks and armed with shields made of leaves. They attacked one another in rows and also singly, aiming at pushing their opponents from their places. They ran toward a goal for a wager, jumped over ropes, sprang through hoops upon which all sorts of glittering things were hanging. These they were not to touch in passing through, otherwise they tinkled and fell off. The contestant for the prize lost in proportion to the number thus displaced. The prizes consisted of fruit which I saw lying ready for the winners. I saw some playing on reed flutes; others had long, thick reeds through which they gazed into the distance and into the lake. Sometimes they blew balls or little arrows through them, as if they were shooting after fishes. I saw that these reeds were flexible; they could be bent to form a ring and then hung on the arm. I saw them also sticking glass globes of different colors on the ends of the reeds and waving them to and fro, thus reflecting the light of the sun. The whole landscape was mirrored in the globes, but



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in an inverted position. When the globes were revolved, the whole lake appeared to be passing overhead. This greatly diverted the beholders.

The fruits, and especially the grapes, were truly magnificent. I saw some persons very respectfully and courteously bringing some of the finest to Jesus.

The dwellings of the women were on the opposite side of the valley; but their baths were on this side, more toward the east and out of sight of those of the men. On the banks of the stream that flowed into the lake, I saw little boys in short, white woolen tunics with willow switches of various colors in their hands, driving flocks of different kinds of aquatic birds. The water from the stream and lake was conducted up to the inns on the height and also to the baths. It was received in channels from which it was raised to higher reservoirs, and from them to others, and so on. I saw the women also playing at different games on the green. They were very modestly clothed in fine, white woolen wrappers that fell around them in numerous folds and were girded twice, over the breast and again at the waist. The wide sleeves could be raised or lowered by means of buckles. Around the wrists they had large, stiff frills with many folds, like the tail of a peacock. Their headdress consisted of a cap of circular puffs graduated lower and narrower, wound with silk or small feathers of natural whiteness. It looked like a snail's shell made of feathers. It was tied behind and a long point made of tassels hung down the back. They wore no veil, but over the face were two sections of finely plaited, white, transparent stuff like half fans, which reached to below the nose, and had holes for the eyes. They could lower them in part if they wished to guard against the sun, or throw them entirely back. Before men they were lowered.

I saw the women amusing themselves lustily at the following game.  
Each had a girdle ending in a ring, or a loop, around her waist. They  
formed a circle,

each holding her neighbor fast by the loop with one hand, the other being free. A trinket was concealed in the grass and they turned round here and there in a circle until one of the players spied it. When she stopped to pick it up, the others in the circle gave a sudden jerk; those following likewise stooped after the treasure, each one trying not to fall. Sometimes they tumbled over one another amid shouts of laughter.

Bethulia was situated on a plateau in a mountainous region, solitary and wild. It was an hour and a half south of the lake. Above it was a great, rough looking tower and many ruined walls and towers. Once upon a time, the city must have extended much further and been very strongly fortified. Trees were now growing on those walls, upon which vehicles could be driven, and I saw the visitors at the baths promenading on them. The city lay high up around the mountain. Here it was that Judith became illustrious. The camp of Holofernes stretched from the lake through the ravine of Jetebatha around to Dothan, a couple of hours to the south of Bethulia. From Jetebatha also there were visitors at the baths. They did not wait to hear Jesus' instructions but, returning to Jetebatha, spread the news of His presence in Bethulia. Jetebatha was situated about an hour and a half to the southeast, built in the bosom of the mountains as in an immense cave. Before it rose a mountain from which the descent into the city was over deep, wild ditches. It appeared to be built in a deep quarry, the mountain hanging high over it. To the north of this mountain, not quite two hours distant, was Magdalum, on the edge of a deep dale, with its surroundings of avenues, gardens, and towers of all kinds stretching off into the middle of it. Between the mountain and Magdalum were still standing the remains of the channel of an aqueduct through whose arches one could look far off into the country. The channel was now overgrown by vines



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and foliage. Southward from Jetebatha rose another wild mountain pierced right and left by broad ravines. It was a region full of wonderful hiding places. There were numerous Herodians in Jetebatha. In a wall of the fortifications they had a secret meeting place. The sect was composed of shrewd, intelligent people ranged under a secret superior. They had signs whereby they recognized one another, and the chiefs could also tell (how, I do not now know) if a member had betrayed anything. Secret enemies of the Romans, they were plotting a revolution in favor of Herod. Although in reality followers of the Sadducees, yet in the exterior they conformed to the Pharisees, thinking in this way to draw over both parties to their designs. They knew indeed that the time had come for the appearance of the Messiah, the King of the Jews, and they resolved to make use of the general belief for the furtherance of their ends. Exteriorly and through motives of cunning, they were very bland and tolerant, though really treacherous sneaks. They had, properly speaking, no religion at all; but under the cloak of piety, they labored at the founding of an independent kingdom of this world, and Herod supported them in their intrigues.

When the synagogue of Jetebatha heard of Jesus' presence in the neighborhood, they sent two Herodians to the baths of Bethulia, to find out what sort of a person He was and to invite Him to Jetebatha. Jesus, however, gave them no decided answer as to whether He would go or not. About seven of the disciples that had journeyed with Him a couple of weeks before met Him here again. Two of them were John's disciples, some relatives of his who also were disciples, from the country of Hebron, and one was a cousin from Lesser Sephoris. They had been seeking Him in Galilee, and had now found Him, During those days, I saw Jesus speaking confidentially with several of the guests at the baths. There must have been some of His own followers among them.



When the Herodians returned to Jetebatha, one of them set about preparing the people in case Jesus should come to their city. He told them that Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, who was now nearby at the Baths of Bethulia, would probably visit their city for the coming Sabbath. He was the one who had made a great uproar in Capharnaum on the preceding Sabbath and on the Sabbath before that in Nazareth. He warned them not to be seduced by Him, not to applaud Him, not even to let Him speak for any length of time, but to interrupt Him with murmurs and contradictions whenever He said anything singular or unintelligible; and so the people were prepared for Jesus' coming.

Jesus delivered at the Baths of Bethulia another discourse full of beauty and simplicity. Numbers of men formed around Him a circle in which He moved about among them. At a distance in the background, several men lame with the gout were timidly standing. They had come to make use of the baths, but had not yet ventured to approach Jesus. Jesus repeated what He had taught yesterday and the day before, exhorting His audience to purification from sin. All hearts were touched and turned to Him. Many exclaimed: "Lord, who could hear Thee and resist Thy words!" Jesus replied: "Ye have heard much about Me, and now ye listen to My words. Who do ye think I am?" Some said: "Lord, Thou art a Prophet!" Others answered: "Thou art more than a Prophet! No Prophet ever taught such things as Thou dost teach. None has ever done the things that Thou hast done!" But others, again, kept silence. Jesus, penetrating the thoughts of these last, pointing to them, said: "These men's thoughts are the right ones." Someone then said: "Lord, Thou canst do all things! Is it not so? They said that Thou hast even raised the dead, the daughter of Jairus. Is it so?" The speaker alluded to that Jairus who dwelt in a city not far from Gibeat, where Jesus had at an

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earlier period instructed the poor, depraved inhabitants. Jesus answered the question addressed to Him by a simple "Yes!" and then His questioner went on to inquire why Jairus still remained in so disreputable a place. Thereupon Jesus began to speak of fountains in the desert, applying the similitude to the necessity of the weak for a powerful leader. Jesus' hearers were full of confidence and they questioned Him with simplicity. Then He asked them: "What do ye know of Me? What evil do men say of Me?" Some answered: "They complain that Thou dost not discontinue Thy works on the Sabbath day and that Thou healest the sick on that day." Then Jesus, pointing to a little neighboring field near a pond, in which shepherd boys were guarding tender lambs and other young cattle, said: "See those young shepherd boys and their tender lambs! If one of the little animals should fall into the pond on the Sabbath and bleat for help, would not all the others stand around the brink bleating piteously also? Now, the poor little shepherds could not help the lamb out. But supposing the son of the master of the flocks were passing by—supposing he had been charged to look after the lambs and see to their pasture—would he not be touched with pity at the sound of the poor little thing's bleating? Would he not hasten to draw it out of the mire?" Here all raised their hands like children at catechism, and cried out: "Yes, yes! He would!" Jesus went on: "And if it were not a lamb, if it were the fallen children of the Heavenly Father, if it were your own brethren, yes, if it were yourselves! Should not the Son of the Heavenly Father help you on the Sabbath?" All cried out again: "Yes! Yes!" Then Jesus pointed to the men sick of the gout standing afar off, and said: "Behold your sick brethren! Shall I not help them if they implore My assistance on the Sabbath day? Shall they not receive pardon of their sins, if they bewail them on the Sabbath day? If they confess them on

the Sabbath and cry to their Father in Heaven?" With uplifted hands, they all cried out: "Yes, yes!"

Then Jesus motioned to the gouty patients, and they moved slowly and heavily into the circle. He spoke a few words to them on faith, prayed for awhile, and said: "Stretch out your arms!" They stretched out their afflicted arms toward Him. Jesus passed His hand down them, breathed for an instant on their hands, and they were cured, were able to use their limbs. Jesus commanded them to bathe, and warned them to abstain from certain drinks. They cast themselves at His feet giving thanks, while the whole assembly sang canticles of praise and glory.

Jesus wanted to depart, but they begged Him to remain with them. They were full of love and good intentions, they were very much impressed. He told them that He had to proceed further and fulfill His mission. They accompanied Him a part of the way with the disciples. He dismissed them with His blessing, and went on to Jetebatha about an hour and a half to the east.

It was afternoon when Jesus arrived at His destination. He washed His feet and took a luncheon at an inn outside the city. The disciples went before Him into Jetebatha to the chief of the synagogue, and requested the key for their Master, who wished to teach. The people hurriedly gathered in crowds, and the Doctors of the Law and the Herodians were all expectancy to ensnare Him in His doctrine. When He had taken His place in the synagogue, they put to Him questions upon the approach of the Kingdom, the computation of time, the fulfilling of the weeks of Daniel, and the coming of the Messiah. Jesus answered in a long discourse, showing that the Prophecies were now fulfilled. He spoke, too, of John and his Prophecies, whereupon they took occasion to warn

Him hypocritically to be careful as to what He said in His instructions, not to set aside the Jewish customs, and to take a lesson from John's

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imprisonment! What He said of the fulfillment of the weeks of Daniel, of the near coming of the Messiah, and of the King of the Jews, was excellent and quite in accordance with their own ideas. But, as He told them, *they* might seek where they would, they would still nowhere find the Messiah. Jesus had, though rather vaguely, applied the Prophecies to Himself. They understood Him well enough, but they pretended that such things could not happen to anyone, and that they had failed to catch His meaning. In reality they wanted to force Him to speak out more clearly, so that they might get something of which to accuse Him. Jesus said to them: "How ye play the hypocrite! What turns ye away from Me? Why do ye despise Me? Ye lay snares for Me, and ye seek to form new plots with the Sadducees, as ye did in Jerusalem at the Pasch! Why do ye caution Me, citing John and Herod?" Then He cast into their face Herod's shameful deeds, his murders, his dread of the newborn King of the Jews, his cruel massacre of the Innocents, and his frightful death, the crimes of his successors, the adultery of Antipas, and the imprisonment of John. He spoke of the hypocritical, secret sect of the Herodians who were in league with the Sadducees, and showed them what kind of a Messiah and what sort of a Kingdom of God they were awaiting. He pointed to different places in the distance, saying: "They will be able to do nothing against Me until My mission is fulfilled. I shall twice traverse Samaria, Judea, and Galilee. Ye have witnessed great signs wrought by Me, and seeing still greater, ye shall remain blind." Then He spoke of judgment, of the death of the Prophets, and of the chastisement that was to overtake Jerusalem. The Herodians, that secret society, seeing themselves discovered, blanched with rage when Jesus referred to Herod's misdeeds and laid open the secrets of the sect before the people. They were silent and, one by one, left the synagogue, as

did also the Sadducees who here had charge of the schools. There were no Pharisees in Jetebatha.

Jesus now found Himself alone with His seven disciples and the people. He continued to teach some time longer, and many were very much impressed. They declared that they had never listened to such instructions, and that He taught better than their own teachers. They reformed their lives, and followed Him later. But a large part of the people, instigated by the Sadducees and Herodians, murmured against Him and raised a tumult. Jesus therefore left the city with the disciples and went southward through the valley, and then up for a couple of hours into a harvest field between Bethulia and Gennabris. Here He put up at a large farmhouse, whose occupants were well known to Him. The holy women had often stayed here overnight on their journeys to Bethania, and the messengers between them and the Saviour used to put up at the same place.

### **11. Jesus in the Harvest Field of Dothain and in Gennabris**

Jesus in the harvest field of Dothain taught of reaping, gleaning, and binding into sheaves. This was the field in which later on He and the disciples plucked the ears of wheat. He went around the field, here and there, talking of seeds and stony soil, for such was the character of this region. He said that He was come to gather the good ears, and explained the parable of rooting up the tares at the harvest. He likened the harvest to the Kingdom of God. He instructed at intervals during the work and while going from one field to another.

The stalks remained standing high, the ears only having been cut off and bound together in the form of a cross.



In the evening after the harvest, Jesus from a hilltop delivered a long discourse before the laborers.

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Borrowing a similitude from a brook that flowed in their vicinity, He applied it to the life, gentle and beneficent, of some men; He spoke of the flowing waters of grace, and of the conducting of those waters to our own field, etc. He sent John's two disciples to Ennon with a commission to say to His own disciples there that they should go to Machaerus and calm the people, for He knew that an insurrection had broken out in that place. Aspirants to baptism had crowded to Ennon; immense caravans had arrived. But when they found out that the Prophet had been arrested, they proceeded to Machaerus, their numbers increasing on the way. They raged and shouted, crying for John to be released, that he might instruct and baptize them. They even threw stones at Herod's palace, all the approaches to which the guards hastily closed. Herod pretended that he was not at home.

That evening Jesus put up near Gennabris in another farmhouse, and taught again of the grain of mustard seed. The master of the house complained to Him of a neighbor who for a long time had encroached upon his field and in many ways infringed his rights. Jesus went to the field with the owner, that he might point out to Him the injury done. As the present state of affairs had lasted some time, the damage was considerable, and the owner complained that he could not do anything with the trespasser. Jesus asked whether he still had sufficient for the support of himself and his family. The man answered, yes, that he enjoyed competency. Upon hearing this, Jesus told him that he had lost nothing, since properly speaking nothing belongs to us, and so long as we have sufficient to support life, we have enough. The owner of the field should resign still more to his importunate neighbor, in order to satisfy the latter's greed after earthly goods. All that one cheerfully gives up here below for the sake of peace, will be restored to him in the Kingdom of his



Father. That hostile neighbor, viewed from his own standpoint, acted rightly, for his kingdom was of this world, and he sought to increase in earthly goods. But in Jesus' Kingdom, he should have nothing. The owner of the field should take a lesson from his neighbor in the art of enriching himself, and should strive to acquire possessions in the Kingdom of God. Jesus drew a similitude from a river which wore away the land on one side and deposited the debris on the other. The whole discourse was something like that upon the unjust steward, in which worldly artifice and earthly greed after enrichment should furnish an example for one's manner of acting in spiritual affairs. Earthly riches were contrasted with heavenly treasures. Some points of the instruction seemed a little obscure to me, though to the Jews, on account of their notions, their religion, and the standpoint from which they viewed things, all was quite plain and intelligible. To them all was symbolical.

The field in which lay Joseph's Well was in this neighborhood, and Jesus took occasion from the circumstance just related to refer to a somewhat similar struggle recorded in the Old Testament. Abraham had given far more land to Lot than the latter had demanded. After relating the fact, Jesus asked what had become of Lot's posterity, and whether Abraham had not recovered full propriety. Ought we not to imitate Abraham? Was not the kingdom promised to him, and did he not obtain it? This earthly kingdom, however, was merely a symbol of the Kingdom of God, and Lot's struggle against Abraham was typical of the struggle of man with man. But, like Abraham, man should aim at acquiring the Kingdom of God. Jesus quoted the text of Holy Scripture in which the strife alluded to is recorded, (*Gen. 13:7 et seq.*) and continued to talk of it and of the Kingdom before all the harvest laborers.

The unjust husbandman likewise was present with his followers. He listened in silence and at a distance.

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He had engaged his friends to interrupt Jesus from time to time with all kinds of captious questions. One of them asked Him what would be the end of His preaching, what would come of it all. Jesus answered so evasively that they could make nothing out of His words. They were, however, something to this effect: If His preaching seemed too long to some, to others it was short. He spoke in parables of the harvest, of sowing, of reaping, of separating the tares from the good grain, of the bread and nourishment of eternal life, etc. The good husbandman, the host of Jesus, listened to His teaching with a docile heart. He ceased to accuse his enemy, later on gave over all he possessed into the treasury of the rising Church, and his sons joined the disciples.

There was much talk here of the Herodians. The people complained of their spying into everything. They had recently accused and arrested here at Dothain and also in Capharnaum several adulterers, and taken them to Jerusalem where they were to be judged. The people of Dothain were well pleased that such persons should be removed from among them, but the feeling of being continually watched was very distasteful to them. Jesus spoke of the Herodians with perfect freedom. He told the people to beware of sin, also of hypocrisy and criticizing others. One should confess his own delinquencies before sitting in judgment upon his neighbor. Then Jesus painted the ordinary manner of acting among the Herodians, applying to them the passage from the Prophet Isaias read in the synagogue on the preceding Sabbath, which treats of dumb dogs that do not bark, that do not turn away from evil, and that tear men in secret. He reminded them that those adulterers were delivered over to justice while Herod, the patron of their accusers, lived in the open commission of the same crime, and He gave them signs by which they might recognize the Herodians.

There were in several of the huts nearby some men who had received injuries during their labor. Jesus visited them, cured the poor creatures, and told them to go to the instruction and resume their work. They did so, singing hymns of praise.

Jesus sent some shepherds from Dothain to Machaerus with directions to John's disciples to induce the people to disperse, for their rebellion, He said, might render John's imprisonment more rigorous, or even give occasion for his death.

Herod and his wife were in Machaerus. I saw that Herod caused the Baptist to be summoned to his presence in a grand hall near the prison. There he was seated surrounded by his guard, many officers, Doctors of the Law, and numerous Herodians and Sadducees. John was led through a passage into the hall and placed in the midst of guards before the large, open doors. I saw Herod's wife insolently and scornfully sweeping past John as she entered the hall and took an elevated seat. Her physiognomy was different from that of most Jewish women. Her whole face was sharp and angular, even her head was pointed, and her countenance was in constant motion. She had developed a very beautiful figure, and in her dress she was loud and extreme, also very tightly laced. To every chaste mind she must have been an object of scandal, as she did everything in her power to attract all eyes upon her.

Herod began to interrogate John, commanding him to tell him in plain terms what he thought of Jesus who was making such disturbance in Galilee. Who was He? Was He come to deprive him (Herod) of his authority? He (Herod) had heard indeed that he (John) had formerly announced Jesus, but he had paid little attention to the fact. Now, however, John should disclose to him his candid opinion on the subject,

for that Man (Jesus) held wondrous language on the score of a Kingdom,  
and uttered parables in which He called Himself a King's Son, etc.,  
although He was only the



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son of a poor carpenter. Then I heard John in a loud voice, and as if addressing the multitude, giving testimony to Jesus. He declared that he himself was only to prepare His ways; that compared with Him, he was nobody; that never had there been a man, not even among the Prophets, like unto Jesus, and never would there be one; that He was the Son of the Father; that He was the Christ, the King of Kings, the Saviour, the Restorer of the Kingdom; that no power was superior to His; that He was the Lamb of God who was to bear the sins of the world, etc. So spoke John of Jesus, crying in a loud voice, calling himself His precursor, the preparer of His ways, His most insignificant servant. It was evident that his words were inspired. His whole bearing was stamped with the supernatural, so much so that Herod, becoming terrified, stopped his ears. At last he said to John: "Thou knowest that I wish thee well. But thou dost excite sedition against me amongst the people by refusing to acknowledge my marriage. If thou wilt moderate thy perverse zeal and recognize my union as lawful before the people, I shall set thee free, and thou canst go around teaching and baptizing." Thereupon John again raised up his voice vehemently against Herod, rebuking his conduct before all the assistants, and saying to him: "I know thy mind! I know that thou recognizest the right and tremblest before the judgment! But thou hast sunk thy soul in guilty pleasures, thou liest bound in the snares of debauchery!" The rage of the wife at these words is simply indescribable, and Herod became so agitated that he hastily ordered John to be led away. He gave directions for him to be placed in another cell which, having no communication outside, would prevent his being heard by the people.

Herod was induced to hold that judicial examination because of his anxiety, excited by the tumult raised by the aspirants to baptism and the news brought him by the Herodians of the wonders wrought

by Jesus.

The whole country was discussing the execution in Jerusalem of certain adulterers from Galilee who had been denounced by the Herodians. They dwelt upon the fact that sinners in humble life were brought to justice while the great ones went free; and that the accusers themselves, the Herodians, were adherents of the adulterous Herod who had imprisoned John for reproaching him with his guilt. Herod became dispirited. I saw the execution of the adulterers mentioned above. Their crimes were read to them, and then they were thrust into a dungeon in which was a small pit. They were placed at its edge. They fell upon a knife which cut off their heads. In a vault below waited some jailers to drag away the lifeless trunks. It was some kind of a machine into which the condemned were precipitated. It was in this same place that James the Great was executed at a later period.

On the following day Jesus was again teaching among the harvesters when Andrew, James, and John arrived. Nathanael was at his house in the suburbs of Gennabris. Jesus informed His disciples that He would next go through Samaria to the place of baptism on the Jordan. The well of Dothain, at which Joseph was sold, was not far from the field in which Jesus was then teaching.

The people of the place asked whether or not they did rightly in supporting the poor, crippled laborers that could no longer work. Jesus answered that in acting thus they acquitted themselves of a duty, but they should not pride themselves upon it, otherwise they would lose their reward. Then He entered the huts of the sick, cured many of them, bade them attend the instruction and return to their work. They obeyed, praising God.

Jesus then went to the synagogue in Gennabris for the Sabbath.  
Gennabris was as large as Munster, and about one hour's distance from  
the mountain

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upon whose heights lay the harvest field in which Jesus had last taught. It was situated toward the east on a slope covered with gardens, baths, and pleasure resorts. On the side by which Jesus arrived, it was defended by deep ditches of standing water. After half an hour Jesus and the disciples reached the walls and tower gates of the city precincts, where were gathered many disciples from the country around. With about twelve of them, Jesus entered the city, where numbers of Pharisees, Sadducees, and especially Herodians had assembled for the Sabbath. They had undertaken with crafty words to entrap Jesus in His speech. They said among themselves that such a project would be more difficult to carry out in small places, since in such Jesus was more daring, but among them the thing could be easily managed. They congratulated themselves beforehand, quite sure of the success of their plans. The crowd present, having been intimidated by these enemies of Jesus, held their peace and made no manifestation upon Jesus' arrival. He entered the city quietly, and the disciples washed His feet outside the synagogue. The Doctors of the Law and the people were already assembled inside. They received Him coolly, though with some hypocritical demonstrations of respect, and permitted Him to read aloud and interpret the Scriptures. He opened at *Isaias* 54, 55, 56, from which He read and explained some sentences, treating of God's establishing His Church, of what it cost Him to build it, of the obligation of all to drink of her waters and, though without money, to go and eat of her bread. Men, said Jesus, sought earnestly to satisfy their hunger in the synagogue, but no bread was there to be found. The Word come forth from the mouth of God—namely, the Messiah—should accomplish His work. In the kingdom of God, that is, in the Church, strangers and Gentiles should, if they had faith, labor and bear fruit; Jesus called the Gentiles eunuchs because, unlike the Patriarchs,

they had not concurred in the lineage of the Messiah. He applied numerous texts of the Prophet to His Kingdom, to the Church, and to Heaven. He compared the Jewish teachers of His own day to dumb dogs which, instead of keeping guard, think but of fattening themselves, of eating and drinking immoderately. By these words He meant the Herodians and Sadducees who, lurking in secret, attack people without barking, yes, even assault the pastors of the flock. Jesus' words were very sharp and incisive.

Toward the close of His discourse, He read from *Deuteronomy* 11:29, of the blessing upon Garizim and the curse upon Hebal, and of many other things connected with the Commandments and the Promised Land. These different passages Jesus applied to the Kingdom of God.

One of the Herodians stepped up to Him and very respectfully begged Him to say a word upon the number of those that would enter His Kingdom. They thought to entrap Him by this question, because on the one side, all by circumcision had a share in the Kingdom; and on the other, while rejecting many of the Jews, He had spoken even of Gentiles and eunuchs as having a part in it. Jesus did not give them a direct answer. He beat around and at last struck upon a point that made them forget their former question. To another question put to Him, His answer consisted of a series of interrogations: How many of those that had wandered in the desert entered the land of Canaan? Nevertheless, had not all gone through the Jordan? How many really entered into possession of the land? Had they conquered it entirely, or were they not obliged to share it with the Gentiles? Would they not one day be chased out of it? Jesus added, moreover, that no one should enter into His Kingdom excepting by the narrow way and the gate of the Spouse. I understood that by this were signified Mary and the Church. In the

Church we are regenerated by Baptism; from

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Mary was the Bridegroom born, in order that through her He might lead us into the Church, and through the Church to God. He contrasted entrance by the gate of the Spouse with entrance through a side door. It was a similitude like unto that of the Good Shepherd and the hireling (*John 10:1 et seq.*). He added that entrance is permitted only by the door. The words of Jesus on the Cross before He died, when He called Mary the Mother of John and John the son of Mary, have a mysterious connection with this regeneration of man through His death.

Not having succeeded that evening in ensnaring Jesus, His enemies resolved to postpone further attempts until the close of the Sabbath. It is indeed wonderful! When Jesus' enemies were concocting their schemes, they could boast of how they would catch Him and pin Him down in His doctrine; but as soon as He presented Himself before them, they could bring nothing against Him; they were amazed and almost persuaded of the truth of His words, though at the same time full of rage.

Jesus quietly left the synagogue. They conducted Him to a repast with one of the Pharisees, where, too, they could neither attack nor surprise Him. He spoke here a parable of a feast to which the master of the house had invited the guests at a certain hour, after which the doors were closed and tardy corners were not admitted.

The repast over, Jesus went with the disciples to sleep at the house of another Pharisee, an upright man and an acquaintance of Andrew. He had honestly defended those disciples, among them Andrew, who, in consequence of what had happened at the Pasch, had been brought before the court of justice. He had lately become a widower. He was still young, and soon after he joined the disciples. His name was Dinocus, or Dinotus. His son, twelve-years-old, was called Josaphat.

His house was to the west and outside the city. Jesus had come to Gennabris from the



south. He had descended the cultivated neighboring heights of Dothain, which lay more to the south than Gennabris, and then secretly turned back to the latter city. The Pharisee's house was on the west side, as I have said, while Nathanael's was on the north toward Galilee.

I saw today that Herod, after John's judicial hearing, sent officers to the tumultuous people. They were commissioned to deal very gently with them, to tell them not to be disquieted on John's account, but peaceably to return to their homes. The officers assured them that John was very well and kindly treated. They said, moreover, that Herod had indeed changed his prisoner's cell, but it was only that he might have him nearer to himself. In disobeying the orders given them to disperse quietly, they might cast suspicion upon their master and render his imprisonment more painful. They should therefore go home at once, for he would soon resume his work of baptizing. The messengers from Jesus and John arrived just as Herod's officers were haranguing the crowd, and they too having delivered similar messages, the people scattered by degrees. But Herod was a prey to the greatest anxiety. The execution of the adulterers in Jerusalem had reminded the public of his own adulterous marriage. They murmured loudly over John's imprisonment for having spoken the truth and maintained the Law, according to which those poor criminals had been put to death in Jerusalem. Herod had moreover heard of Jesus' miracles and discourses in Galilee, and it had also reached his ears that He was now coming down to the Jordan to teach. He was in great dread lest the excited populace might thereby be still more stirred up. Under the influence of these feelings, I saw him calling a meeting of the Pharisees and Herodians, to deliberate upon some means of restraining Jesus. The result of the conference was that he sent eight of the members to give Jesus to understand in the most delicate



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manner possible that He should confine Himself, His miracles, and His teaching to Upper Galilee and the far side of the lake; that He should not enter Herod's dominions in Galilee, and still less that part of the country around the Jordan under his jurisdiction. They were to intimidate Him with the example of John, since Herod might easily feel himself constrained to make Him share John's captivity. This commission started for Galilee that same day.

Next morning Jesus again taught in the synagogue and without much contradiction, for His enemies had resolved to wait for the afternoon instruction when they might attack Him all together. He again chose His texts alternately from *Isaias* and *Deuteronomy*. Occasion offered to speak of the worthy celebration of the Sabbath, and He dwelt upon it at length. The sick of Gennabris had been so intimidated by the threats of the Herodians that they did not dare to implore Jesus to help them.

Jesus spoke also in the synagogue of the embassy sent by Herod to lie in wait to catch Him in His speech. "When they come," said He, "ye may tell the foxes to take word back to that other fox not to trouble himself about Me. He may continue his wicked course and fulfill his designs in John's regard. For the rest, I shall not be restrained by him. I shall continue to teach wherever I am sent in every region, and even in Jerusalem itself when the time comes. I shall fulfill My mission and account for it to My Father in Heaven." His enemies were very much incensed at His words.

In the afternoon Jesus and the disciples left the house of Dinotus the Pharisee, to take a walk. When they reached the gate near which was Nathanael's house, Andrew went in and called him out. He came and presented to Jesus his cousin, a very young man to whom he intended to

resign his business, in order to follow Jesus uninterruptedly. I think he attached himself to Jesus irrevocably at that time.

After their walk, they entered the city at the side upon which the synagogue was situated. About twelve poor day laborers, sick from hard work and privation, having heard of the cure of cases like their own effected by Jesus in the harvest field, had dragged themselves from the country to the city in the hope of receiving a similar favor. They had stationed themselves in a row outside the synagogue, ready to cry to Jesus for help as He passed. Jesus approached, and said to them in passing some words of comfort. To their entreaties to help them, He bade them have patience. Close behind Him followed the Doctors of the Law, who were enraged that these strangers had dared petition Jesus for a cure since up to this time they had succeeded in restraining the sick of the city from a similar proceeding. They roughly repulsed the poor, miserable creatures, telling them under cloak of a good intention that they must not excite trouble and disturbance in the city; that they must take themselves off right away, for Jesus had important questions to treat with themselves; there was now no time for Him to busy Himself with them. And as the poor men could not retire quickly enough to suit their wishes, they had them removed by force.

In the synagogue Jesus taught chiefly of the Sabbath and its sanctification. The Commandment to that effect was contained in the passage from Isaias read on that day. After teaching some time, He pointed to the deep moats around the city near which their asses were grazing, and asked: "If one of those asses should fall into a moat on the Sabbath day, would ye venture to draw it out on the Sabbath day in order to save its life?" They were silent. "Supposing it was a human being that fell in, would ye venture to help him out?" Still they were silent, "Would ye allow salvation of body and soul to be meted out to yourselves on the Sabbath day? Would ye permit a work of mercy to be performed on the Sabbath day?" Again they were silent. Then said Jesus: "Since ye



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are silent, I must take it for granted that ye have nothing to oppose to My doctrine. Where are those poor men who implored My help outside the synagogue? Bring them hither!" As they whom He addressed showed no inclination to obey, Jesus said: "Since ye will not execute My orders, I shall have recourse to My disciples." At these words, His enemies changed their minds, and sent messengers to seek for the sick men. Soon the poor creatures made their appearance, dragging in slowly. It was a pitiful sight. There were about twelve of them, some lame, and some so frightfully swollen with dropsy that even their puffed-up fingers stood wide apart from one another. They entered rejoicing and full of hope, although they had shortly before departed very sad, on account of the rebuff received from the Doctors of the Law.

Jesus commanded them to stand in a line, and it was touching to see the less afflicted placing those worse than themselves in front, that Jesus might cure them first. Jesus descended a couple of steps and called the first up to Him. Most of them were paralyzed in the arms. Jesus silently prayed over them, His eyes raised to Heaven, and touched their arms, gently stroking them downward. Then He moved their hands up and down, and ordered them to step back and give thanks to God. They were cured. The dropsical could scarcely walk. Jesus laid His hand on their head and breast. Their strength instantly returned, they were able to retire briskly, and in a few days the water had entirely disappeared.

During this miraculous healing the people began to press forward in crowds, among them many other poor, sick creatures who, uniting their voices with those of the cured, proclaimed aloud the praises of God. The concourse was so great that the Doctors of the Law, filled with shame and rage, had to give place to the people, and some of them even left the synagogue. Jesus went on instructing the multitude





until the close of the Sabbath. He spoke to them of the nearness of the Kingdom, of penance and conversion. The Scribes with all their opposition and cunning had not another word to say. It was extremely ridiculous to see those men, who had so loudly boasted to one another, not once daring to open their mouths. They could not in even the least thing carry their point against Jesus, they could not answer even His simplest question.

After the Sabbath, a great banquet was spread in one of the public pleasure resorts of the city. It was intended to celebrate the close of the harvest, and Jesus with His disciples was invited. The guests were made up of the most distinguished citizens of the place, also many visitors to the city, and even some rich peasants. At several tables, laden with the products of the harvest, all kinds of fruit and grain and even poultry were eaten. Whatever had yielded an abundant crop was here represented with profusion. The flocks also yielded their share to the entertainment. Some of the animals were roasted ready to be eaten, while others were slaughtered and ready for cooking, as symbols of abundance.

The first places had been assigned to Jesus and His disciples, notwithstanding which, a haughty Pharisee had put himself foremost. When Jesus went to the table, He asked him in a low voice how he had come by the place that he occupied. The Pharisee replied: "I am here because it is the praiseworthy custom of this city for the learned and distinguished to sit first." Jesus responded: "They that strive after the first places upon earth, shall have no place in the Kingdom of My Father." The Pharisee, quite ashamed, resigned the seat for a lower one, though at the same time he tried to make it appear that he did so on an inspiration of his own. During the repast Jesus spoke of some things

regarding the Sabbath, especially of that passage of *Isaias* 58:7: "Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the

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harborless into thy house," and asked whether it was not customary at such feasts, feasts of thanksgiving for a plentiful harvest, to invite the poor as guests and let them take part. He expressed His surprise at their having omitted that custom. "Where," He asked, "are the poor?" "Since," He continued, "ye have invited Me, have given Me the first place, have made Me the Master of your feast, it behooves Me to see about the guests that have a right to be present. Go, call in those people that I cured, and bring all the rest of the poor!" But as they were in no hurry to fulfill Jesus' commands, His disciples hastened out and collected the poor in all the streets. They soon came trooping in, and Jesus and the disciples gave up their seats to them, while the Scribes, one by one, slipped out of the hall. Jesus, the disciples, and some right-minded people among the guests served the poor at table. When their meal was over, they divided among them all that was left, to the great joy of the recipients. Then Jesus and His followers returned to the house of Dinotus the Pharisee on the west side of the city, and there rested.

The next day crowds of sick from Gennabris itself and from the country around came to the house at which Jesus was staying, and He devoted the whole morning to their cure. They were mostly paralyzed in their hands and dropsical. The son of the Pharisee Dinotus, at whose house Jesus was stopping, was about twelve years old, and was named Josaphat. When his father gave up all to follow Jesus, he accompanied him. The Jewish boys wore a long tunic gored on both sides, buttoned in front and laced down to the feet. When more grown, they exchanged the long tunic for a shorter one like those of their elders, and bound their limbs in something like pantaloons. When the boys' tunic was girded at the waist, it hung in gathers; but it was usually worn flowing like a loose shirt, though often it was tucked up a little. When Jesus took leave of Dinotus, He pressed



him to His Heart, and the man shed many tears.

Jesus with Nathanael, Andrew, James, Saturnin, Aristobolus, Tharzissus, Parmenas, and about four other disciples, went between two to three hours southward through the valleys. They spent the night under an empty shed belonging to the harvesters, on a declivity between two cities. The one on the left was called Ulama; that to the right was, I think, named Japhia. The distance between Ulama and Tarichaea was about the same as between Gennabris and Tiberias. The city to the right was less elevated than Bethulia, and was at a good distance from it, but to one far away, the mountain between them not being visible, Bethulia appeared to rise above and directly behind Japhia. The locality seemed to lie quite near to Jesus' route as He journeyed along, but the road soon made a bend that hid it from sight.

That field in which Jesus instructed the harvesters was the very same in which Joseph met his brethren with their herds, and the long four-cornered well the same into which he was let down.

## **12. Jesus in Abelmahula**

Next morning Jesus left the shed under which He had passed the night, and journeyed with His disciples about five hours to the south. It was almost two o'clock when they reached the little city Abelmahula, where the Prophet Eliseus was born. It lay on one of the heights of Mount Hermon, its towers rising to the summit of the mountain ridge. It was only a couple of hours from Scythopolis, and to the west ran the valley of Jezrael. With the city of Jezrael itself, Abelmahula lay in a straight line. Not far from Abelmahula, and nearer the Jordan, was the town of Bezech. Samaria was several hours to the southwest. Abelmahula was

in or upon the confines of Samaria, but inhabited by Jews.

Jesus and His disciples sat down on the resting

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place outside the city, as travelers in Palestine were accustomed to do. Hospitable people from the city used then to take them to their houses for entertainment. And thus it happened now. Some people going by recognized Jesus. They had seen Him once before when He was journeying through these parts at the feast of Tabernacles. They hurried into the city and spread the news. Soon out came a well-to-do peasant with his servants, bringing to Jesus and the disciples bread and honey and something to drink. He invited them into his house, and they followed him. They having arrived there, he washed their feet and provided them with fresh garments while their own were being shaken and brushed. Then he ordered a repast straightaway to be prepared, and to it he invited several Pharisees with whom he was on good terms. They soon made their appearance. The host showed himself hospitable and friendly to a degree, though he was a rascal in disguise. He wanted to be able to boast before the people of the city that he had entertained the Prophet in his house, and to offer to the Pharisees an opportunity to sound Jesus. They thought they could do that better when alone with Him at table than in the synagogue before the people.

But hardly was the table set when all the sick of the place, all that were able to be moved, appeared before the house and gathered together in the courtyard—to the great displeasure of the owner, as well as of the Pharisees. The former hurried out to drive them away, but Jesus, turning from the table with the words: "I have other food after which My soul hungers," followed, His disciples after Him, and began curing the sick. There were among them several possessed who set up a shout after Jesus. He cured them with a glance and a word of command. Many others were lame in one or both hands. Jesus passed His hand down their arms and raised them up and down. On the head and breast of the dropsical He laid His





hand. Others were consumptive, others were covered with small, though not infectious sores. Some He ordered to bathe. To others He commanded certain works, and told them that they would be perfectly well in a few days. Far in the background, and leaning against the wall for support, stood several women afflicted with an issue of blood. They were veiled and, in their shame, ventured only now and then to cast a sidelong glance toward Jesus. When they raised a fold of their veil for this purpose, the countenance disclosed bore signs of suffering. At last Jesus approached them, touched and cured them, and they cast themselves at His feet.

The whole crowd set up shouts of joy and intoned hymns of thanksgiving. The Pharisees inside had closed all the doors and windows of the house. They sat down to table vexed and disappointed, but jumped up from time to time to peep through the lattice. The work of healing went on for so long that, when they wanted to go home, they were forced to pass through the courtyard filled with the sick, the cured, and the exulting crowd. The sight stabbed them to the very heart. The crowd became at last so great that Jesus had to take refuge in the house until they had dispersed.

It was already dusk when five Levites presented themselves to invite Jesus and the disciples to pass the night in the schoolhouse over which they presided. The guests of the pharisaical peasant took leave of him with thanks for his hospitality. Jesus gave him a short exhortation before leaving, and made use of an expression similar to those He had used among the Herodians, something about foxes. But the man preserved his friendly exterior. Jesus and the disciples partook of a little luncheon in the schoolhouse. They slept in a long corridor on which carpets had been spread, their couches separated from one another by

movable screens. There was a boys' school in one part of the building,  
and in another, young

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pagan girls desirous of embracing Judaism received thorough instruction. This school was in existence even in Jacob's time. When Jacob was persecuted in diverse ways by Esau, Rebecca sent him secretly to Abelmahula where he owned herds and servant, and dwelt in tents. Rebecca established there a school for the young Canaanite girls and other Gentile maidens. Like Esau, his children, his servants, and others of Isaac's family intermarried with these Gentiles. Rebecca, who held such alliances in abhorrence, had the young girls that desired it instructed in this school in the customs and religion of Abraham. The ground on which the school was built belonged to her.

Jacob long remained hidden at Abelmahula. When Rebecca was questioned as to his whereabouts, she used to answer that he was far away herding flocks for strangers. At times he returned secretly to see her, but on Esau's account she had to keep him hidden. Jacob dug a well near Abelmahula, the same by which Jesus had been seated before entering the city. The people held it in great reverence and always kept it covered. He had also made a cistern in the neighborhood. It was long, four-cornered, and had a flight of steps leading down into it. Later on, Jacob's abode became known. Rebecca noticed that, like Esau, her younger son was likely to espouse a Canaanite wife, so she and Isaac sent him to her native place to his Uncle Laban, where he served for Rachel and Lia.

Rebecca had established the school so far from her own home in the land of Heth because Isaac had so many quarrels with the Philistines, who did all in their power to ruin him. She had confided the direction of the school to a man from her own country, Mesopotamia, and to her nurse who, I think, was his wife. The young girls dwelt in tents and were instructed in all that a wife in a migratory household of the

pastoral times ought to know. They

learned the religion of Abraham and the special duties of wives of his race. They had gardens in which they planted all kinds of running vines, such as gourds, melons, cucumbers, and a kind of grain. They had very large sheep whose milk was used for food. They were taught also to read, but this as well as writing came very hard to them. The writing of those days was done in a very strange way on thick brown tablets, not on rolls of skin as in later times, but upon the bark of trees. I saw them peeling it off, and burning the letters into it. They had a little box full of zigzag compartments, which I saw shining on the surface, and filled with all kinds of metal signs. These the writer heated in a flame and burnt one after another into the bark tablet. I saw the fire in which they heated the metal. It was the same as that used for boiling, roasting, and baking, also for giving light. Upon seeing it used in this last way, I thought: "They do indeed place their light here under a bushel." In a vessel, whose form reminded me of the headdress that many of the pagan idols wore, there burned a black mass. A hole was bored in the middle of it, for the passage of air, perhaps. The little round towers encircling the vessel were hollow, and into them some part of the cooking could be placed. Over the pan of coals, something like a cover was turned upside down. It was tapering toward the top and pierced by a number of holes. On this, too, was a circle of little towers in which things could be warmed. All around this bushel-like cover were openings with sliding screens. When they wanted light, all they had to do was to open one of these little windows and the glare from the flame shone forth. They always opened them toward the quarter from which no draught came, a precaution very necessary in tents. Below the coal pan, was a little place for ashes in which they could bake flat cakes, and on top of the whole arrangement water could be boiled in shallow vessels. This they drew

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off for bathing, washing, and cooking. They could also broil and roast on these stoves. They were thin and light, could be carried on journeys, and easily moved from place to place. It was over such stoves that the metal letters were heated before being burnt into the tablets of bark.

The people of Canaan had black hair and were darker than Abraham and his countrymen, who were of a ruddy, olive complexion. The costume of the Canaanite women was different from that of the daughters of Israel. They wore a wide tunic of yellow wool down to the knee. It consisted of four pieces which could be drawn together by a running string below the knee, thus forming a kind of wide pantalet. It was not bound around the upper part of the limbs like that of the Jewish women, but its wide folds fell front and back from the waist to the knee. The upper part of the body was covered with a similarly doubled lappet that fell over the breast and back. The pieces were bound together on the shoulders, forming a sort of wide scapular, likewise open on both sides and fastened around the waist with a belt, above which it hung loose like a sack. The whole costume from shoulder to knee looked like a wide sack bound at the waist and ending abruptly below the latter. The feet were sandaled and the lower limbs wound crosswise with straps, through the openings of which the skin could be seen. The arms were covered with pieces of fine, transparent stuff which, by several shining metal rings, were formed into a sleeve. They wore on the head a pointed cap of little feathers, from the top of which hung something like the crest of a helmet ending in a large tuft. These people were beautiful and well-made, but much more ignorant than the Children of Israel. Some of them had long mantles also, narrow above and wide below. The women of Israel wore over a kind of bandage wrapped around the body a long tunic, and lastly a long gown fastened in front with buttons.

They wound their heads in a veil or with several rows of ruffs, such as are worn nowadays around the neck.

I saw that they studied in Rebecca's time the religion of Abraham: the creation of the world, about Adam and Eve and their entrance into Paradise, Eve's seduction by Satan, and the Fall of the first man and woman by their violation of the abstinence commanded them by God. By the eating of the forbidden fruit arose sinful appetites in man. The young girls were taught also that Satan had promised our first parents a divine illumination and knowledge, but that after sin they were blinded. A film was drawn over their eyes; they lost the gift of vision they had possessed. Now they had to labor in the sweat of their brow, bring forth children in pain, and with difficulty acquire the knowledge of which they had need. They learned, too, that to the woman a son was promised who should crush the serpent's head. They were taught about Abel and Cain and the latter's descendants, who became degenerate and wicked. The sons of God, seduced by the beauty of the daughters of men, formed unions with them from which sprang a mighty, godless race of giants, powerful in enchantment and the art of magic, a race that discovered and taught to others all kinds of pleasure and false wisdom, all that buried the soul in sin and tore it away from God, a race that had so seduced and corrupted men that God resolved to destroy them all with the exception of Noe and his family. This people had fixed their principal abode on a high mountain range up which they ever pressed higher and higher. But in the Deluge that mountain was submerged, and a sea now covers its site. They (the scholars of Rebecca's school) learned also all about the Deluge, about Noe's escape in the ark, about Sem, Cham, and Japhet, about Cham's sin, and the reiterated wickedness of men at the Tower of Babel. They were told of the building of that Tower,





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of its destruction, of the confusion of tongues, and of the dispersion of men now become enemies to one another. All this recalled to the youthful minds of the scholars the impiety of the giants on that high mountain, those wicked, powerful men, those dealers in witchcraft, and they saw the fatal consequences of unions forbidden by the Law of God. Necromancy and idolatry were practiced likewise at the Tower of Babel.

By such teachings were the converted Gentile maidens warned against alliances with idolaters, idle efforts after necromancy and the hidden arts, against the seductions of the world, sensual delights, vain adornments—in a word, against all that did not lead to God. They were taught to look upon such things as tending to those sins on whose account God had once destroyed mankind. They were, on the other hand, instructed in the fear of God, obedience, subjection, and in the faithful, simple exercise of all duties devolving upon the pastoral life. They were also taught the Commandments that God gave to Noe, for instance, abstinence from uncooked meat. They learned of God's having made choice of the race of Abraham, to make of his descendants His chosen people from whom the Redeemer was to be born. For this purpose He had called Abraham from the land of Dr, and had set him apart from the infidel races. They were told of God's sending *white men* to Abraham, that is, men who appeared white and luminous. These men had confided to Abraham the Mystery of God's Blessing, owing to which his posterity was to be great above all the nations of the earth. The transmitting of that Mystery they referred to only in general terms, as of a Blessing from which Redemption should spring. They were told also about Melchisedech's being a *white man* like those sent to Abraham, of his sacrifice of bread and wine, and of his blessing Abraham. The chastisement inflicted by God upon Sodom and Gomorrha formed a part of



the instruction given.

When Jesus visited the school, the young girls were computing a chronological table upon the coming of the Messiah. All agreed in their reckoning, which brought the result down to their own time. Just at that moment, in stepped Jesus and His disciples, a circumstance that produced a very powerful impression upon the scholars. Jesus took up the subject then engrossing their attention, and explained to them with the utmost clearness that the Messiah was already come, though not yet recognized. He spoke of the unknown Messiah, and of the signs that were to herald His coming, and that had already been fulfilled. Of the words: "A virgin shall bring forth a son," Jesus spoke only in veiled terms, since those children were too young to comprehend them. He exhorted them to rejoice that they lived in a time after which the Patriarchs and Prophets had so long sighed. He dwelt upon the persecutions and sufferings the Messiah was to endure, and explained some texts of Prophecy to that effect. He told them to be on the watch for what would take place in Jericho at the approaching feast of Tabernacles. He spoke of miracles, and particularly of the curing of the blind. He made for them also a chronology of the Messiah, spoke of John and of the baptism, asked whether they too wanted to be baptized, and, lastly, related to them the parable of the lost drachma.

The girls sat in school cross-legged, sometimes with one knee raised. Each was provided with a kind of table and bench combined. She leaned sideways against the one, and when writing, supported her roll on the other. They often stood while listening to the instruction given them.

In the house at which Jesus put up there was also a boys' school. It was

a kind of orphanage, an institution for the education of children abandoned by their parents. There were some of Jewish parentage who had been rescued from slavery, in which they

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had grown up without instruction in the religion of their forefathers. Both Pharisees and Sadducees taught in the school. Little girls also were received, the youngest of whom received instruction from the larger ones.

At the moment of Jesus' entrance into this school, the boys were making some calculation connected with Job. As they could not readily do it, Jesus explained it and wrote it down for them in letters. He also explained to them something relating to measure, two hours of distance or time, I do not now know which. He explained much of the Book of Job. Some of the rabbis at this period attacked the truth of the history therein contained, since the Edomites, to which race Herod belonged, bantered and ridiculed the Jews for accepting as true the history of a man of the land of Edom, although in that land no such man was ever known to exist. They looked upon the whole story as a mere fable, gotten up to encourage the Israelites under their afflictions in the desert. Jesus related Job's history to the boys as if it had really happened. He did so in the manner of a Prophet and Catechist, as if He saw all passing before Him, as if it were His own history, as if He heard and saw everything connected with it, or as if Job himself had told it to Him. His hearers knew not what to think. Who was this Man that now addressed them? Was He one of Job's contemporaries? Or was He an angel of God? Or was He God Himself? But the boys did not wonder long about it, for they soon felt that Jesus was a Prophet, and they associated Him with Melchisedech, of whom they had heard and of whose origin man knows not. Jesus spoke likewise of the signification of salt. He made it clear by a parable, and related that of the Prodigal Son. The Pharisees arrived during Jesus' instructions, and were highly displeased to find Him applying to Himself all the signs and Prophecies quoted by Him in reference to the Messiah.

That evening Jesus went with the Levites and the children to take a walk outside the city. The little girls followed last, in the charge of the larger ones. Jesus, letting the boys go on ahead, stood still from time to time until these little ones came up, and then instructed them in examples drawn from nature, from all the objects around them, the trees, fruits, flowers, bees, birds, sun, earth, water, flocks, and field labors. In indescribably beautiful words, He next taught the boys about Jacob and the well that he had dug in that locality. He told them that now the living water was about to be poured upon them, and how perfidious a thing it was to fill up, choke up the well, as the enemies of Abraham and Jacob had done. He applied it to those that wanted to suppress the doctrine and miracles of the Prophets, namely, the Pharisees.

When on the following morning Jesus went to the synagogue, He found there all the Pharisees and Sadducees of the place, as also a great concourse of people. He opened the Scriptures and expounded the Prophets. Some of the Pharisees and Sadducees obstinately disputed with Him, but He put them all to shame. A man whose arms and hands were paralyzed had meantime been slowly making his way to the door of the synagogue. He had been so long trying, and had at last succeeded in getting a position by which Jesus must pass on going out. One of the Pharisees eyed the poor creature with displeasure, and ordered him away. As he refused to obey, they tried to push him out. But he supported himself as well as he could against the door and looked piteously at Jesus, who was on a high seat at a considerable distance from the entrance and separated from him by an immense crowd. Jesus turned toward him and said: "What do you desire of Me?" The man answered: "Master, I implore Thee to cure me. Thou canst do it, if Thou wilt!" Jesus replied: "Thy faith hath saved thee. Stretch forth thy hands above the people," and

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in that moment the man was healed at a distance. He raised up his hands praising God. Then Jesus said: "Go home, and raise no excitement!" But the man replied: "Master, how can I be silent on so great a benefit?" and he went out and told it to all that he met. And now crowds of sick gathered before the synagogue, and Jesus cured them as He passed out. After that He dined with the Pharisees who, in spite of their inward displeasure, always treated Him courteously. This was part of their policy, that they might the more easily entrap Him. He performed more cures that evening.

### **13. Jesus Goes From Abelmahula To Bezech**

Next morning found Jesus still at the school of Abelmahula. He was quite surrounded by the little girls who crowded close upon Him, holding on to His garments and clasping His hand. He was unspeakably kind to them, and exhorted them to obedience and the fear of God. The larger ones stood back. The disciples present were somewhat annoyed and uneasy. They were anxious for their Master to take His departure. According to their Jewish notions, such familiarity with children was not becoming in a Prophet, and they feared it would injure His reputation.

Jesus did not trouble Himself about their thoughts. After He had instructed all the children, addressed some exhortations to the larger ones, and encouraged their teachers in their good resolutions, He directed one of the disciples to give the little girls a present, and each in effect received two small coins fastened together. I think they were two drachmas. Then Jesus blessed them all in general and left the place with the disciples, starting eastward toward the Jordan.

During the journey Jesus taught in a field before some huts where a crowd of laborers and shepherds



had gathered. About four o'clock that afternoon, they reached the neighborhood of Bezech about two hours east of Abelmahula and near the Jordan. It was like two distinct cities, lying as it did on both sides of a stream that flowed into the Jordan. The country around was hilly and rugged, the houses stood somewhat scattered. Bezech was less a city than two united villages. The inhabitants lived to themselves with very little intercourse with strangers. They were chiefly engaged in husbandry, and they leveled their rugged and hilly farmlands with great labor. They also manufactured agricultural implements for sale, and wove coarse carpets and canvas for tents.

About an hour and a half from this place, the Jordan made a bend toward the west, as if about to flow straight to Mount Olivet. It turned back, however, thus forming a kind of peninsula on its eastern bank, upon which stood a row of houses. In coming from Galilee to Abelmahula, Jesus had to cross a little river. Ennon was on the opposite side of the Jordan, about four hours, perhaps, from Bezech.

Jesus taught in an inn outside the city, the first of those erected for His and the disciples' accommodation that He had met on this journey since leaving Bethania. It was in the charge of a pious, upright man, who went out to meet the travelers, washed their feet and gave them refreshments, after which Jesus entered the city. The superintendents of the school came out into the street to receive Him, and He visited several houses and cured the sick.

There were now thirty disciples with Jesus. Those from Jerusalem and its environs had arrived with Lazarus, and several of John's disciples had come. Some of the latter were just from Machaerus with a message to Jesus from their master, a pressing request to reveal Himself more

clearly and to say only that He was the Messiah. Among these messengers of John was the son of the widower Cleophas. I think he was Cleophas of Emmaus, a relative of

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Cleophas, the husband of Mary's eldest sister. Another of these disciples was Judas Barsabas, related to Zachary of Hebron. His parents, though living now in Cana, had once dwelt in Nazareth. Among these disciples of John, I still recall others. The sons of Mary Heli, the eldest sister of the Blessed Virgin, were John's disciples. They were born so long after their sister Mary Cleophas that they were scarcely older than her sons. They clung to the Baptist until he was beheaded, and then joined the disciples of Jesus.

The married couple who directed the inn at Bezech were good, devout people. They observed continence by virtue of a vow, although they were not Essenians. They were distant relatives of the Holy Family. During His stay here, Jesus had several private interviews with these good people.

All the friends and disciples ate and slept with Jesus in the newly erected inn. They found ready for them, thanks to the forethought of Lazarus and the holy women, table furniture, covers, carpets, beds, screens, and even sandals and other articles of clothing. Martha had near the desert of Jericho a house full of women whom she kept busy preparing all these things. She had gathered together many poor widows and penniless girls, who were striving to lead a good life. There they lived and worked together. All was carried on quietly and unknown to the public. It was no little thing to provide for so many inns and so many people and to superintend them constantly—above all, to send messengers around to them, or give them personal attention.

Next morning Jesus delivered a long and magnificent discourse on a hill in the middle of the city, where the inhabitants had erected for Him a teacher's chair. The crowd was great, and among them were about ten

Pharisees, who had come from the places around with the intention of catching Jesus in His words. His teaching here was mild and full of love, for the people, who were well disposed, had profited

by John's visit and instructions, and especially by the baptism which many of them had received. Jesus exhorted them to remain contented with their humble condition, to be industrious, and to show mercy to their neighbor. He spoke of the reign of grace, of the Kingdom, of the Messiah, and more significantly than ever of Himself. He alluded to John and his testimony, to his imprisonment and the persecution directed against him. He spoke likewise of the royal adulterer for the denunciation of whom John had been cast into prison, though in Jerusalem certain men guilty of the same crime, but who had carried on their evil doings less openly than Herod, had been condemned and executed. Jesus spoke significantly and to the point. He gave particular admonitions to each condition, age, and sex. A Pharisee having asked whether He was going to take John's place, or whether He was the one of whom John had spoken, Jesus answered indirectly and reproached the questioner with his evil intention to entrap Him.

After that Jesus gave a very touching instruction to the boys and girls. He counseled the boys to bear with one another. If one should strike a companion or throw him down, the ill-treated party should bear it patiently and think not of retaliating. He should turn away in silence, forgiving his enemy, and his love should become twice as great as it was before, yes, for they should show affection even to enemies. They should not covet the goods of others. If a boy wanted the pen, the writing materials, the plaything, the fruit belonging to his neighbor, the latter should relinquish not only the object coveted, but give him still more if allowed to do so. They should fully satisfy their neighbor's cupidity if permitted to give the things away, for only the patient, the loving, and the generous should have a seat in His Kingdom. This seat Jesus described to them in childlike terms as a beautiful throne.

He spoke of earthly goods which a man must give

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up in order to attain those of Heaven. Among other admonitions to the girls, He warned them not to seek to excel others, not to envy others for their fine clothes, but to be gentle and obedient, to love their parents and fear God.

At the close of the public instruction, Jesus turned to His disciples, consoled them with more than ordinary tenderness, and exhorted them to bear all things with Him and not to be preoccupied with the cares of this world. He promised that they should be richly rewarded by their Father in Heaven and, with Himself, should possess the Kingdom. He spoke to them of the persecutions that He and they would have to suffer, and said plainly: "If the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Herodians should love or praise ye, it would be a sign that ye had wandered from My teachings and were no longer My disciples." He mentioned those sects with significant nicknames. Then He praised the people of the place, particularly for their charitable compassion, for they often took poor orphans from the school at Abelmahula into their service. He congratulated them on the new synagogue they had built by contribution, in which some of the devout souls of Capharnaum also had joined. Then He cured many of their sick, took a repast with all the disciples at the inn, and in the evening when the Sabbath began, went to the synagogue.

Jesus taught in the synagogue from *Isaias* 51:12, "I myself will comfort you." He spoke against human respect, telling them that they should not fear the Pharisees and other oppressors, but remember that God had created them and preserved them till the present. He explained the words: "I have put My words in thy mouth," to mean that God had sent the Messiah, that this Messiah was God's Word in the mouth of His people, that this Messiah gave utterance to God's Word, and that they

themselves were God's people. Jesus applied all this so clearly to Himself that the Pharisees whispered among themselves



that He was palming Himself off for the Messiah. Then He said that Jerusalem should awaken from her intoxication, for the hour of wrath had passed and that of grace had dawned. The unfruitful synagogue had given birth to not one that could lead and raise up the poor people, but now should sinners, hypocrites, and oppressors be chastised and oppressed in their turn. Jerusalem should arise, Sion should awaken! Jesus applied all in a spiritual sense to the pious and holy, to the penitent, to those that through the Jordan—that is, through Baptism—should go into the Promised Land of Canaan, into the Kingdom of His Father. The uncircumcised, the impure, the licentious, the sinful should no longer corrupt the people. He taught of Redemption and of the Name of God, which should now be announced among them. Then from *Deuteronomy* 16, 17, and 18, He spoke of judges and public officers, of prevarication and bribery, and inveighed vehemently against the Pharisees. After that He cured many sick outside the synagogue.

The next day Jesus again taught in the synagogue, taking His texts from *Isaias* 51 and 52, and from *Deuteronomy* 16-21. He spoke of John and the Messiah. He gave signs by which the latter might be recognized, and they were different from those by which He usually designated Him. He said plainly that He Himself was the Messiah, for many of His hearers were already, through the teaching of John, well prepared for the announcement. Jesus based this part of His discourse upon *Isaias* 52:13-15. He said: "The Messiah will gather ye together. He will be full of wisdom, He will be exalted and glorified. Many of ye have shuddered at the thought of Jerusalem's being laid waste and desolate under the rule of the Gentiles, and in like manner will your Redeemer be persecuted and despised by men. He will be a man without repute among other men. And yet He will baptize, will purify the Gentiles. He will



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teach kings, who will be silent before Him, and they to whom He has not been announced will both hear of Him and see Him." Then Jesus recounted all that He had done, all the miracles He had wrought since His baptism, the persecution He had undergone at Jerusalem and Nazareth, the contempt He had endured, the spying and scornful laughter of the Pharisees. He alluded to the miracle at Cana, to the healing of the blind, the dumb, the deaf, the lame, and to the raising from the dead of the daughter of Jairus of Phasael. Pointing in the direction of Phasael, He said: "It is not very far from here. Go and ask whether I say the truth!" Then He continued: "Ye have seen and known John. He proclaimed himself the precursor of the Messiah, the preparer of His ways! Was John an effeminate man, one given to the softness and delicacy of high life? Was he not rather reared in the wilderness? Did he dwell in palaces? Did he eat of costly dishes? Did he wear fine clothing? Did he make use of flattering words? But he called himself the precursor—then did not the servant wear the livery of his Lord? Would a king, a rich, a glorious, a powerful king such as ye expect your Messiah to be, have such a precursor? And yet ye have the Redeemer in your midst, and ye will not recognize Him. He is not such as your pride would have Him, He is not such as ye are yourselves, therefore ye will not acknowledge Him!"

Jesus then turned to *Deuteronomy* 18:18-19: "I will raise them up a prophet out of the midst of their brethren ... " "And he that will not hear his words, which he shall speak in my name, I will be the revenger," and He delivered a powerful discourse upon these texts. No one dared oppose a word to His teaching. He said: "John lived solitary in the desert. He mingled not with men, and ye blamed the life he led. I go from place to place, I teach, I heal, and that too ye blame! What kind of a Messiah do ye want? Each one would like to have a Messiah according to his



own ideas! Ye resemble children running in the streets. Each makes for himself the instrument he likes best. One brings forth low, bass notes from the horn he has twisted out of bark, and another screeches high on his flute of reeds." Then Jesus named all kinds of playthings used by children, saying that His hearers were like the owners of those toys. Each wanted to sing upon his own note, each was pleased with his own toy alone.

Toward evening, when Jesus left the synagogue, He found a great crowd of sick waiting for Him outside. Some were lying on litters over which awnings had been stretched. Jesus, followed by His disciples, went from one to the other, curing them. Here and there appeared some poor possessed, raging and crying after Him. He delivered them as He passed, and commanded them to be silent. There were paralytics, consumptives, the deaf, the dumb, and the dropsical with tumors or scrofulous swellings on their neck. Jesus healed all, one after the other, by the imposition of hands, though His manner and touch were different in different cases. Some were entirely cured at once, a little weakness alone remaining; others were greatly relieved, the perfect cure following quickly according to the nature of the malady and the dispositions of the invalid. The cured moved away chanting a Psalm of David. But there were so many sick that Jesus could not go around among them all. The disciples lent their aid in raising, supporting, and disembarassing them of their wrappings and covers. At last Jesus laid His hands on the head of Andrew, of John, and of Judas Barsabas, took their hands into His own, and commanded them to go and, in His name, do to some of the sick as He had done. They instantly obeyed and cured many.

After that, Jesus and the disciples returned to the inn, where they took a

repast at which no stranger was present. Jesus blessed the food. A great part of

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it was left, and this He sent to the poor heathens encamped outside Bezech and to the other poor. The disciples had instructed the pagans belonging to the caravans.

Immense multitudes had assembled in Bezech from both shores of the Jordan. All that had heard John were now eager to hear Jesus. The heathen caravans, though on their way to Ennon, had come hither to hear Him. Bezech was about three-quarters of an hour from the Jordan, on a swiftly flowing stream which divided the city into two parts.

**14. Jesus Leaves Bezech and Goes to Ennon. Mary of Suphan**

Jesus still taught and cured in the country around the inn. The neophytes, the pagan caravan, and many others took their way to the Jordan with the intention of crossing. The ferry was an hour and a half to the south of Bezech, below a city called Zarthan, which was one hour's distance from the first named, and lower down on the Jordan. On the opposite side of the river, between Bezech and Zarthan, was a place called Adam. It was near that city of Zarthan that the Jordan had ceased to flow while the children of Israel were crossing. Solomon once had some vases cast here. That industry was still carried on. West of the bend that the Jordan makes in this neighborhood was a mountain extending off to Samaria, and in it was a mine from which was obtained a metal something like that which we call brass. Jesus taught all along the route. When questioned as to whether He intended to teach in Zarthan, He answered: "There are other localities that need it more. John was often there, so ye may ask the people whether he feasted and lived on dainty fare." The Jordan was here crossed by a great ferry, just below which began the detour of the river toward the west. After crossing, Jesus and His followers went on for about two





hours eastward and along the northern bank of a little stream that flowed into the Jordan somewhere below the ferry. Then they crossed another stream near which lay Socoth to their left, looking as if they had just stepped over it. They rested under tents between Socoth and Ennon, which places may have been about four hours apart. If they had again crossed the river and gone up a little distance, they could have seen Salem, which was hidden from them by the hilly bank. It was opposite Ennon, and somewhat below the middle of another bend of the Jordan westward.

Crowds innumerable were collected at Ennon. The pagans were encamped between the hill upon which it was built, and the Jordan. There were ten Pharisees present, some from Ennon, some from other places, among them the son of Simeon of Bethania. Some of them were reasonable enough and animated by upright intentions.

The little city of Ennon lay on the north side of the hill, as if built up entirely of beautiful villas. On this side and beyond the city was the source of the basin destined for Baptism, which was on the east side of the hill. The stream was conducted through the hill in metal pipes, which could be closed and opened when needed. There was a springhouse over the source.

The Pharisees, among them the son of Simon the Leper, came out to this place to meet Jesus and the disciples. They welcomed them cordially and politely, led them into a tent, washed their feet, brushed their garments, and presented them refreshments of honey, bread, and wine. Jesus congratulated them on the good dispositions of many among them though, as He said, it grieved Him that they belonged to that sect. He accompanied them to the city where He soon came to a

court in which a crowd of sick of all kinds, some natives of the city, some strangers, were awaiting His arrival. Some were lying under tents, others

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were in the halls that opened into the court. Many could walk, and Jesus helped them one after another with imposition of hands and words of admonition. The disciples assisted in bringing the sick forward, in raising them and freeing them from their covers, etc. The Pharisees and many others were present. Several women stood at a distance, pale and enveloped in their mantles. They were afflicted with an issue of blood. When Jesus had finished with the rest, He approached them, laid His hands upon them, and cured them. Among the sick were paralytics and dropsical; consumptives, some with abscesses on their necks and other parts of the body (though not such as to render them unclean); the deaf and the dumb; in a word, sufferers of all kinds.

At the extremity of this court was a large portico opening into the city. I saw in it many spectators, Pharisees and women. To the Pharisees of Ennon, since there were upright souls among them and also because they had received Him frankly and respectfully, Jesus showed a certain indulgence that He had not exhibited in other places. He wished thereby to make void the reproach that He associated only with publicans, sinners, and vagrants. He wanted to show them that He would pay them due honor if they demeaned themselves properly and with upright intentions. They showed great activity in preserving order among the people on this occasion, and Jesus allowed them to do it.

While Jesus was busy curing the sick, a beautiful woman of middle age and in the garb of a stranger entered the large portico by the gate leading from the city. Her head and hair were wound in a thin veil woven with pearls. She wore a bodice in shape somewhat like a heart, and open at the sides, something like a scapular thrown over the head and fastened together around the body by straps reaching from the back. Around the neck and breast it was ornamented with cords and pearls.

From it fell, in

folds to the ankle, two deep skirts, one shorter than the other. Both were of fine white wool embroidered with large, colored flowers. The sleeves were wide and fastened with armlets. To the shoulder straps that connected the front and back of the bodice was attached the upper part of a short mantle that fell over the arms. Over this flowed a long veil, of the whiteness of wool.

The woman, ashamed and anxious, entered slowly and timidly, her pale countenance bespeaking confusion and her eyes red from weeping. She wanted to approach Jesus, but the crowd was so great that she could not get near Him. The Pharisees keeping order went to her, and she at once addressed them: "Lead me to the Prophet, that He may forgive my sins and cure me!" The Pharisees stopped her with the words: "Woman, go home! What do you want here? The Prophet will not speak to you. How can He forgive you your sins? He will not busy Himself with you, for you are an adulteress." When the woman heard these words, she grew pale, her countenance assumed a frightful expression, she threw herself on the ground, rent her mantle from top to bottom, snatched her veil from her head and cried: "Ah, then I am lost! Now they lay hold of me! They are tearing me to pieces! See, there they are!" and she named five devils who were raging against her, one of her husband, the other four of her paramours. It was a fearful spectacle. Some of the women standing around raised her from the ground, and bore her wailing to her home. Jesus knew well what was going on, but He would not put the Pharisees of this place to shame. He did not interfere, but quietly continued His work of healing, for her hour had not yet come.

Soon after, accompanied by the disciples and Pharisees, and followed by the people, Jesus went through the city to the hill upon which John had formerly taught. It was in the center of moss-covered ramparts



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and there were some buildings around. On the side by which they approached was a half-ruined castle, in one of whose towers Herod took up his abode during John's teaching. The whole hill was already covered with the expectant crowd. Jesus mounted to the place where John had taught. It was covered with a large awning open on all sides. Here He delivered a long discourse in which He spoke of the mercy of God to men, particularly to His own people. He ran through the entire Scriptures, showed God's guidance of His chosen nation, His promises to them, and proved that they were all being realized in the present. Jesus did not, however, say so openly at Ennon as He had done at Bezech that He was Himself the Messiah. He spoke also of John, his imprisonment and his mission. One crowd of listeners was at intervals supplanted by another, that all might hear His words. Jesus questioned some of them as to why they wanted to receive Baptism, why they had put it off till the present, and what they thought the ceremony to be. He divided them into classes, some of which were to be baptized at once, and others only after further instruction. I remember the answer of one group of neophytes to the question why they had delayed till now. One of the number said: "Because John constantly taught that a Man was to come who would be greater than himself. We waited consequently in order to receive still greater grace." At these words, all that approved the response raised their hands. They formed a special class to receive more particular instructions as preparation for Baptism.

The discourse ended at about three o'clock in the afternoon. Then Jesus and the disciples went with the Pharisees down the hill and into the city, where a great entertainment had been prepared for Him in one of the public halls. But when He drew near the hall, He stopped short, saying: "I have another kind of hunger," and He asked (though He already

knew) where that woman lived whom they had sent away from Him in the morning. They pointed out the house. It was near the hall of entertainment. Jesus left His companions standing where they were, while He went forward and entered the house through the courtyard.

As Jesus approached, I saw the fearful torture and affliction of the woman inside. The devil, who had possession of her, drove her from one corner to another. She was like a timorous animal that would hide itself. As Jesus was traversing the court and drawing near to where she was, she fled through a corridor and into a cellar in the side of the hill upon which her house was built. In it was a vessel like a great cask, narrow above and wide below. She wanted to hide herself in it, but when she tried to do so, it burst with a loud crash. It was an immense earthen vessel. Jesus meantime halted and cried: "Mary of Suphan, wife of ... " (here He pronounced her husband's name, which I have forgotten) "I command thee in the Name of God to come to Me!" Then the woman, enveloped from head to foot, as if the demon forced her still to hide in her mantle, came creeping to Jesus' feet on all fours, like a dog awaiting the whip. But Jesus said to her: "Stand up!" She obeyed, but drew her veil tightly over her face and around her neck as if she wanted to strangle herself. Then said the Lord to her: "Uncover thy face!" and she unwound her veil, but lowering her eyes and averting them from Jesus as if forced to do so by an interior power. Jesus, approaching His head to hers, said: "Look at Me!" and she obeyed. He breathed upon her, a black vapor went out of her on all sides, and she fell unconscious before Him. Her servant maids, alarmed by the loud bursting of the cask, had hurried thither and were standing nearby. Jesus directed them to take their mistress upstairs and lay her on a bed. He soon followed with two of the disciples that had accompanied Him, and found her weeping



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bitter tears. He went to her, laid His hand on her head, and said: "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" She wept vehemently and sat up. And now her three children entered the room, a boy about twelve years old, and two little girls of about nine and seven. The girls wore little short-sleeved tunics embroidered in yellow. Jesus stepped forward to meet the children, spoke to them kindly, asked them some questions, and gave them some instruction. Their mother said: "Thank the Prophet! He has cured me!" whereupon the little ones fell on the ground at Jesus' feet. He blessed them, led them one by one to their mother, in order of age, and put their little hands into hers. It seemed to me that, by this action, Jesus removed from the children the disgrace, and thus legitimized them, for they were the fruits of adulterous unions. Jesus still consoled the woman, telling her that she would be reconciled with her husband, and counseling her thenceforth to live righteously in contrition and penance. After that He went with the disciples to the entertainment of the Pharisees.

This woman was from Suphan in the land of Moab. She was a descendant of Orpha, the widow of Chelion, and daughter-in-law of Noemi, who upon the latter's advice did not go with her to Bethlehem, though Ruth, the widow of Orpha's other son Mahalon, accompanied Noemi thither. Orpha, the widow of Chelion, who was the son of Elimelech of Bethlehem, married again in Moab, and from that union sprang the family of Mary the Suphanite. She was a Jewess and rich, but an adulteress. The three children that she had with her at the time of her conversion were illegitimate. Her legitimate children had been retained by their father when he repudiated his unfaithful wife, their mother. She was living at this time in a house of her own at Ennon. For a long time she had conceived sentiments of sorrow for her disorders and had done penance, her conduct being so reserved and proper that she had



won the esteem of even the most respectable women of Ennon. The Baptist's preaching against Herod's unlawful connection had strongly affected her. She was often possessed by five devils. They had again seized upon her when, as a last resource, she had gone to the court where Jesus was curing the sick. The rebuff of the Pharisees and their words, which in her deep dejection she had taken as true, had driven her to the brink of despair. Through her descent from Orpha, Ruth's sister-in-law, she was connected with the House of David, the ancestral line of Jesus. It was shown me how this stream, deviating in her from its course and troubled by her abominable sins, was purified anew in her by the grace of Jesus and flowed once more in its direct course toward the Church.

Jesus went into the entertainment hall in which were the Pharisees and the rest of the disciples, and took His place with them at table. The Pharisees were somewhat displeased that Jesus had left them and gone to seek the woman whom they had so harshly repulsed that morning before so many people. But they said nothing, fearing to receive a reproof themselves. Jesus treated them with much consideration during the meal, and taught in numerous similitudes and parables. Toward the middle of the entertainment, the three children of the Suphanite entered in their holiday dresses. One of the little girls bore an urn full of odoriferous water, the other had a similar one of nard, and the boy carried a vessel. They entered the hall by the door opposite the unoccupied side of the table, cast themselves down before Jesus, and set their presents on the table in front of Him. Mary herself followed with her maids, but she dared not approach. She was veiled, and carried a shining crystal vase with colored veins like marble in which, surrounded by upright sprays of delicate green foliage, were various kinds of costly aromatics. Her children had



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offered similar vases, but smaller. The Pharisees cast forbidding glances upon the mother and children. But Jesus said: "Draw near, Mary!" and she stepped humbly behind Him, while her children, to whom she had handed it, deposited her offering beside the others on the table. Jesus thanked her. The Pharisees murmured as later on they did at Magdalen's present to Jesus. They thought it a great waste, quite opposed to economy and compassion for the needy; however, they only wanted something to bring against the poor woman. Jesus spoke to her very kindly, as also to the children, to whom He presented some fruit which they took away with them. The Suphanite remained veiled and standing humbly behind Jesus. He said to the Pharisees: "All gifts come from God. For precious gifts, gratitude gives in return what it has the most precious, and that is no waste. The people that gather and prepare these spices must live." Then He directed one of the disciples to give the value of them to the poor, spoke some words upon the woman's conversion and repentance, restored her to the good opinion of all, and called upon the inhabitants of the city to treat her affectionately. Mary spoke not a word, but wept quietly under her veil the whole time. At last she cast herself in silence at Jesus' feet, rose, and left the dining hall.

Jesus took this occasion to give some instruction against adultery. Which among them, He asked, felt himself free from spiritual adultery. He remarked that John had not been able to convert Herod, but that this poor woman had of her own accord turned away from her evil life, and then He related the parable of the sheep lost and found. He had already consoled the woman in her own house, assuring her that her children would turn out well, and holding out to her the hope that she should one day join the women under Martha's supervision and work for the benefit of the inns. I saw the disciples after the entertainment

giving abundantly of what was left to the poor. Jesus then went down to the west side of the hill of Ennon where the camp of the heathens lay at some distance. There was also, I think, a tent inn on this side. There Jesus instructed the heathens. Ennon was in the dominion of Herod, but it belonged, like a property across the boundary, to the Tetrarch Philip. Many soldiers of Herod were again there trying to find out news for their master.

### **15. Jesus in Ramoth-Galaad**

From Ennon Jesus went with twelve disciples to the Jabok and the neighboring places. Andrew, James, John, and some other disciples remained at Ennon, in order to baptize at the pool of Baptism east of the hill. The water ran from the hill into the baptismal basin, formed a little lake behind it, watered some meadows as a little brook, and then fell into a reservoir on the north of Ennon from which it could be turned at pleasure into the Jordan.

I saw Jesus with the disciples teaching in a city about one hour east of Socoth and on the south side of the Jabok. Among the numerous sick that He healed was a man who since his birth had one eye closed, Jesus moistened it with His saliva. The eye opened, and the man enjoyed perfect sight.

Jesus crossed the Jabok, which flows through a valley, and turned to the east until He came into the vicinity of Mahanaim, a nice, clean city in two sections. He sat down by the well outside, and soon out came the Elders of the synagogues and the chief men of the city with goblets, food, and drink. They bade Jesus welcome, washed His and the disciples' feet, poured ointment on Jesus' head, gave Him and the

disciples a little luncheon, and conducted Him with great love and simplicity into the city. Jesus delivered a short discourse upon the Patriarch Jacob and of all that had happened to him in those parts.

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Most of these people had been baptized by John. A patriarchal simplicity reigned in all the cities around this region, and many of the ancient customs were still observed. Jesus did not tarry long here, only time enough to receive the honors paid Him on His route.

From Mahanaim He went along the northern bank of the Jabok for about an hour eastward to the place where Jacob and Esau met. The valley here sinks deep. During the whole way Jesus taught His disciples. After some time they recrossed to the southern bank not far from where two little streams united to form the Jabok. Then they continued their journey for about a mile to the east with the desert of Ephraim on their right.

After traversing the valley they found, upon a mountain ridge to the east of the forest of Ephraim, Ramoth-Galaad, a beautiful city, clean and regularly built. In it the heathens had their own quarter and temple. The sacred services were celebrated by Levites. One of the disciples went on ahead to announce Jesus' approach. The Levites and others of distinction were already awaiting Him in a tent near the well outside the city. They washed the newcomers' feet, gave them the usual refreshments as a pledge of hospitality, and conducted them into the city. There they found a crowd of poor sick gathered on an open square to implore Jesus' help. He cured many of them. That evening He taught in the synagogue, for it was the beginning of the Sabbath that commemorated the sacrifice of Jephthe's daughter, which in this city was celebrated as a mourning and national festival. There were crowds of young maidens and other people from the country around.

Jesus and the disciples took a repast with the Levites and stayed overnight in a house near the synagogue. There were in these parts no



special inns prepared for Jesus. In Ennon, Kamon, and Mahanaim they were hired in advance, and the number of guests

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limited. Ramoth was built in terraces on a hill behind which, in a little vale flanked by a steep, rocky wall, was the quarter of the city inhabited by the pagans. They had a temple. One could always recognize their abodes by the figures erected on the roofs. On the roof of this temple was a whole group. The central figure wore a crown and stood in a reservoir or fountain, holding a basin in its hand. Around it were several figures of children dipping up the water and pouring it from one to another until at last it fell into the basin held by the middle finger.

The cities in this region were more beautiful, more neatly built than the old Jewish ones. The streets were laid off in the form of a star, all verging to a central point, and the extremities were rounded, thus making the circumference assume something of a zigzag form, as did also the city walls. Ramoth-Galaad was formerly a city of refuge for criminals. (*Deut.* 4:43, *Jos.* 20:8). There was a large solitary building in which they were lodged, but at the time of Jesus' visit it had fallen to ruin and appeared to be no longer used. They made tapestry here, embroidered with figures of all kinds of animals and flowers, partly for trade, and partly for the use of the temple. I saw numbers of women and young maidens working at it in long tents. The costume of the people resembled more the patriarchal style, and they were very clean. Their clothing was of fine wool.

Jesus assisted at a solemn memorial feast of the sacrifice of Jephthe's daughter. He went with His disciples and the Levites to a beautiful open square outside the city to the east where preparations for the festival had been made. The inhabitants of Ramoth-Galaad were already assembled and ranged in large circles. Here were still the hill and the altar upon

which Jephthe's daughter was immolated. In front of it was a semicircle of grassy seats for the maidens, and nearby were seats for the Levites and magistrates of the city. All went in a long and orderly

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procession to their places. The young girls of Ramoth and many from the neighboring cities assisted at the feast in robes of mourning. One young girl, clothed in white and veiled, personated Jephthe's daughter herself. A troop of others clad in somber robes, their faces veiled to the chin and wearing black, fringed sashes on the forearm, represented her lamenting companions. Tiny girls scattering flowers and playing on little flutes mournfully headed the procession in which three lambs were led. The ceremonies were long and of the most touching nature. They comprehended different parts, chanting, religious instructions, and representations of the sad drama, while Psalms and songs commemorative of it were sung. The maiden that personated Jephthe's daughter was comforted and lamented in chorus by her companions, though she herself was sighing only after death. Among the Levites also in some of the choirs of singers, there seemed to be held a conference upon the heroine's fate; but she presented herself before them and in earnest words begged to be allowed to accomplish the vow. They made use of different rolls of writing in the different scenes, some parts being recited from memory, others read from the rolls.

Jesus took an active part in the celebration. He personated the supreme Judge, or High Priest, and besides the speeches assigned His role, He delivered instructions before and during the ceremonies. Three lambs were sacrificed in memory of Jephthe's daughter, their blood sprinkled around the altar, and the roasted flesh given to the poor. Jesus gave the young maidens some words of instruction on the danger of yielding to vanity. I understood from it that Jephthias would have been liberated had she not been so vain.

The feast lasted until afternoon. During the whole celebration, the maidens successively replaced one another in personating Jephthias. As

soon as one finished

her part, the next in order rose from the stone seat upon which she had been sitting in the midst of the circle, retired with her into a tent nearby, and assumed the costume of the victim, that worn by her at the moment of immolation.

The tomb of the young heroine was on a neighboring hill, and on it the lambs were sacrificed. It was a four-cornered sarcophagus opening on top. When the fat of the lambs and the other portions to be sacrificed were almost consumed, what was left of the victims was introduced slantingly into the opening, that with the ashes it might fall into the tomb. When the lambs were slaughtered, I saw the blood sprinkled around the altar, and the maidens putting, with a little rod, a drop of it on the end of the long, narrow veil hanging over their shoulder. Jesus said: "Jephtias! Thou shouldst have thanked God in the retirement of thine own home for the victory He had granted thy people. But becoming vain and seeking praise as a hero's daughter, thou didst with frivolous ornaments and festive sounds go forth boasting before the other daughters of the land."

When the festive ceremonies were ended, all retired to a pleasure garden nearby where arbors and tents had been erected and an entertainment prepared. Jesus took part in it. He placed Himself at the table at which the poor were fed, and related a parable. The maidens ate in the same tent, but separated from the others by a screen about three feet high. Lying at table, one could not see over it, though to one standing, it did not obstruct the view. After the meal Jesus with the Levites, the disciples, and many others returned to the city, where numbers of sick were patiently awaiting His coming. He cured them, as well as some lunatics and others afflicted with melancholy. He taught in the synagogue, taking for His subject Jacob and Joseph and the selling

of the latter to the Egyptians. He said: "One day another also shall be sold by one of His brethren. But He

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will pardon His penitent brethren and in the time of famine feed them with the Bread of Eternal Life." On that same evening, some of the pagans outside the city accosted the disciples very humbly, asking them whether they too might hope to share in the great Prophet's teachings. The disciples informed Jesus of their desire, and He promised to go to them in the morning.

Jephte was the natural son of an idolatrous mother. Driven by his father's legitimate children from Ramoth, called also Maspha, he lived in the neighboring land of Tob. He joined some military adventurers and led a life of brigandage. His pagan wife died young, leaving him an only daughter, who was beautiful and extraordinarily talented, but rather given to vanity. Jephte was an exceedingly rash, absolute, and determined man, eager for victory, and strongly wedded to his own word. He was more like a pagan hero than a Jew. He was an instrument in the hand of God. Fired with desire to conquer and rule the land from which he had been expelled, he made that solemn vow to offer to the Lord as a holocaust the first one that should come out of his own house on his victorious return. He dreamed not that it would be his only daughter; as for the rest of his family, he had no love for them.

Jephte's vow was not pleasing to God; nevertheless He permitted it, decreeing that its fulfillment should be a chastisement upon both father and daughter and cut off the posterity of the former from Israel. His daughter would perhaps have been perverted by the success and elevation of her father; but as it was, she did penance during two months and died for God. It is probable that she also influenced her father to a better way of thinking and made him more faithful to God. The daughter went out followed by a long train of maidens with songs and flutes and timbals to meet her father. It was at a whole hour's

distance from the city that she met



him, still she was the first whom he saw belonging to his own family. When she discovered her misfortune, she entered into herself and asked for a reprieve of two months, that she might retire into solitude to prepare by penance for her sacrifice, and to mourn with her companions over her virginal death, which would deprive her father of posterity in Israel. With several of her young companions she went into the mountains opposite the valley of Ramoth, where for two months she dwelt under a tent in prayer, fasting, and sackcloth. The maidens of Ramoth took turns in staying with her. She mourned especially her vanity and thirst for glory. The rulers held council as to whether she could be freed from death, but it was not possible since her father had sworn a solemn oath. It was consequently a vow that could in nowise be commuted. I saw too that the daughter herself desired its fulfillment, and petitioned for it in words both wise and touching.

Her sacrifice was accompanied by every mark of grief, her companions chanting songs of mourning around her. She was seated on the same spot upon which the memorial feast was celebrated. Here again a council was held for the purpose of delivering her from death, but stepping forward, she expressed her wish to die, just as I had seen at the feast. She was clothed in a long, white garment that closely enveloped her from the breast to the feet; but from her head to her breast she wore a transparent, white veil through which could be seen her face, neck, and shoulders. She walked courageously to the altar. Her father hurried from the scene without bidding her adieu. Then she drank something red from a vessel presented her. I think it was something to render her unconscious. One of Jephthe's warriors was deputed to give the deathblow. His eyes were bandaged as a sign that he did not incur the guilt of murder, since he would not see the blow that was to kill the victim. She was then laid on his left arm, and he pierced



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her throat with a short, sharp weapon. She had no sooner drunk the red liquid than it produced its effect, for she was perfectly unconscious when laid on the warrior's arm. Two of her young companions, who also were in white and appeared to act as bridesmaids, caught the blood in a dish and poured it on the altar. She was afterward enveloped by her companions in a winding sheet and laid at full length on the altar, the upper surface of which was grated. A fire was kindled below and, when her garments were burned and the whole looked like a blackened mass, some men raised the grate with the corpse upon it. They rested the grate upon the edge of an open tomb nearby, and then gently raising the grate, let the body slide down into it. The tomb was then closed. It was still to be seen even in Jesus' time.

The companions of Jephthias and many of the assistants steeped their veils and handkerchiefs in her blood, while others gathered up the ashes of the holocaust. Before Jephthias made her appearance in her sacrificial habiliments, her young companions had retired with her into a tent where she bathed and was prepared for the ceremony.

It was to the north of Ramoth, over two hours' distance in the mountains that Jephthias and her companions met her father. They were mounted upon little asses adorned with ribands and hung with tinkling bells. One rode in front of Jephthias, one on either side, and the rest followed with songs and music. They sang the canticle of Moses upon the defeat of the Egyptians. As soon as Jephthias descried his daughter, he rent his garments and became inconsolable. Jephthias herself did not give way to grief, but learned with calmness the fate that awaited her.

When she and her companions left her father's house for the wilderness, taking with them such food only as was allowed for a fast, Jephthias spoke

to his daughter for the last time. This was in a certain manner the beginning of the sacrifice. At the moment

of parting, he laid his hand, as was customary in offering sacrifice, upon his daughter's head with the simple words: "Go forth! Thou wilt never have a spouse!"—to which she responded: "No, I shall never have a spouse!"—and he never again spoke to her. After his daughter's death, Jephth had a beautiful monument erected in Ramoth and a little temple built over it. He ordered a memorial festival to be annually celebrated on the anniversary of his daughter's immolation as a remembrance of his sad vow and a warning to others against such rashness. (*Judges* 11:39-40).

Jephth's mother was a pagan who had been converted to Judaism. His wife was the daughter of a man born from the illicit union of a Jew with an idolatress. On his expulsion from his native place, his daughter did not accompany him. She remained in Ramoth where, meanwhile, her mother died. When, in time of danger, Jephth was recalled to Tob by his compatriots, he did not return into the city of his birth. He assembled the people and concerted measures with them in the camp outside of Maspha. His own home and his only daughter he did not see. When he made that vow, he never thought of her, but of his other relatives who had repudiated him, and therefore God punished him.

The feast lasted four days. Jesus with His disciples visited also the pagan quarters in Ramoth. The people met Him with marks of reverence at the head of their street. Not far from their temple was an open-air space used for public discourses. Several of the sick and aged had been brought thither, the former of whom Jesus healed. They that had solicited a visit from Him appeared to be learned men, priests, and philosophers. They knew about the journey of the Three Kings, and of their having seen the birth of the King of the Jews in the stars, for they, too, had a similar expectation and were likewise engaged in the

observation of the stars. Not far from here

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was a kind of observatory similar to that in the land of the holy Three Kings, and from it they gazed at the stars. They had long sighed for instruction, and now they received it from Jesus Himself. He spoke to them of very profound mysteries, even of the Most Holy Trinity. I heard these words that especially astonished me: *“There are three that give testimony: the water, the spirit, and the blood, and these three are one.”* He spoke of the Fall of man, of the promised Redeemer, of the guidance of mankind, of the Deluge, of the passage through the Red Sea and the Jordan, and of Baptism. He told them that the Jews had not obtained entire possession of the Promised Land, that many heathens still dwelt therein, but that He was now come to take possession of all that remained and unite it to His Kingdom—not, however, by the sword, but by charity and grace. His words made so deep an impression upon many of His hearers that He sent them to Ennon to be baptized. Seven aged men that could no longer travel, Jesus allowed to be baptized at once by two of the disciples. A basin was brought and placed before them while they stood up to the knees in the water in a bathing cistern near at hand. Above the basin was placed a railing upon which they could lean. Two of the disciples laid their hands on the neophyte's shoulders while Mathias, a disciple of John, poured on their heads, one after another, water from a shell at the end of which was a handle. Jesus dictated to the disciples the form of words they should use. The old men were clothed in beautiful white garments, all very neat and clean.

Then Jesus gave an instruction to the people in general, taking for His subject chastity and marriage. To the women He spoke especially of obedience, of humility, and the education of their children. These people were well-disposed. They conducted Jesus most affectionately back to the Jewish quarter, where He went to the synagogue and healed the





sick that He found before it. The Levites were not well pleased at Jesus' having visited the heathens. In the synagogue, where Jephthe's festival was still being celebrated, Jesus taught of the call of the Gentiles. He said that many of them would rank higher in His Kingdom than the children of Israel, and that He was come to unite with the rightful possessors of the Promised Land, by grace, instruction, and Baptism, the idolaters whom the Israelites had not expelled. He spoke also of Jephthe's victory and vow.

While Jesus was preaching in the synagogue, the maidens were celebrating their feast at the monument that Jephthe had erected to his daughter. It had been rebuilt, and every year at the recurrence of the festival was beautified by the contributions of the young girls. It stood in a round temple with an opening in the roof. In the center of this temple was a smaller one of the same form. It consisted of a kind of cupola supported by columns, in one of which was concealed a staircase leading up to it. Around the cupola wound a spiral walk upon which was a representation of the triumphal procession of Jephthias, the figures being the height of a child. This piece of workmanship was of light material, but shining like polished metal. The base supporting it was of open work, through which the figures appeared to be gazing down into the little temple. The top of the cupola was crowned by a circular, metal platform from which a kind of ladder, consisting of a pole with projecting rods on either side, led up to the roof of the exterior temple. From this roof the view over the city and surrounding country was very extended. The platform at the top of the ladder was wide enough to allow two girls holding on to the pole to make a turn around it hand in hand. A pedestal in the center of the smaller temple supported a white marble figure of Jephthe's daughter seated on a chair of the same material, just as she appeared before her immolation. Her head reached to the first coil of the spiral shaped



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cupola. Around the base of the statue, there was space enough for three men to walk abreast.

The columns surrounding the little temple were connected together by beautiful grates. The exterior was of stone veined in different colors. The coils of the cupola varied in degrees of whiteness from bottom to top, the upper ones of the purest white.

In the temple around this monument, the young girls now celebrated Jephthias' feast. The maiden's statue held a handkerchief to the eyes with one hand as if shedding tears, while the other hanging listlessly at her side held a flower or broken branch. The young girls' celebration was conducted with order. Sometimes they stretched curtains from the outer circle of the temple to the interior of the monument and took their places in little groups apart to pray and sigh and mourn in silence, their eyes fixed on the statue. Sometimes they sang together in chorus, sometimes in alternate choirs. Again, they passed two by two before the statue, strewing flowers, adorning it with wreaths and, as if to console Jephthias, chanting hymns on the shortness of life. I remember the expressions: "Today for me! Tomorrow for thee!" Then they sang the praises of Jephthias' fortitude and resignation, lauding her highly as the price of their victory. Then they mounted in groups by the serpentine walk up to the top of the cupola where they sang triumphal songs. Some went up to the roof of the exterior temple, looked out over the country as if to catch a glimpse of the conquering hero, and pronounced the fearful vow. The procession then returned lamenting to the monument, mourned over the young virgin, and consoled her on the privation of the privileges of maternity. The exercises were interspersed with canticles of thanksgiving to God and reflections upon His justice, the various scenes being accompanied by very touching pantomimes, expressive by

turns of joy, grief, and devotion. A grand entertainment was prepared for

the young girls in the temple. I saw them not reclining at one table, but sitting in tiers of three, one above another, all around the temple, with little round tables at their side. They sat cross-legged. They had all kinds of wonderful dishes and viands made up into figures—for instance, that of a lamb lying on its back and filled with fruit and other eatables.

### **16. Jesus Leaves Ramoth and Goes to Arga, Azo, and Ephron**

After assisting at an entertainment given Him by the Levites, Jesus with seven disciples and some people belonging to Ramoth went northward and crossed the Jabok. After climbing the mountains westward for about three hours, they arrived at the ancient kingdom of Basan and reached a city with two very steep mountains on one side and a long one on the other. It was called Arga and belonged to the district Argob, in the half-tribe Manasses. An hour and a half or two hours eastward from Arga, near the source of the brook Og, was situated a great city named Gerasa. To the southeast of this and on an elevated site one could see Jabesch-Galaad. The country around was stony. At a distance one might think there were no trees in these parts, but many sections were covered with low, green bushes. The kingdom of Basan commenced here, and Arga was its first city. The family of the half-tribe of Manasses extended a little farther to the south. About an hour northward of the Jabok, I saw a boundary marked off by stakes.

Jesus stayed overnight with His companions about half an hour from the city in a public inn situated on a grand highway that ran from the east toward Arga. The disciples had food with them. In the night when all were asleep, Jesus arose and went alone into the open air to pray. Arga was a large, populous,

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and extraordinarily clean city. Like most of the cities in these parts where pagans form a portion of the population, it was built in the form of a star, the streets wide and straight. The mode of life was quite different from that observed in Judea and Galilee, the customs being much better. Levites were sent hither from Jerusalem and other localities to teach in the synagogue. They were changed from time to time, for if those sent did not give satisfaction, the people had the right to complain, and thus get others. People of bad conduct were not allowed to go at large. They were sent to a place of punishment and there detained. The inhabitants did not carry on private housekeeping, that is, they did not prepare their food in their own houses. They had large public kitchens where all was cooked and whither they went either to get their food and carry it to their homes, or to partake of it in halls adjoining. They slept on the roofs of their houses under tents. There were large dyeing establishments in this city, for they were skillful in the art of coloring, producing especially beautiful violets. The manufacture and embroidery of large carpets were also carried on here with more skill and to a greater extent than in Ramoth. Between the city and the wall ran tent after tent where women sat and worked at long strips of stuff stretched before them. On account of the delicate nature of their employments, the people of Arga were famed of old for their exceedingly great cleanliness. Quantities of oil of superior quality were produced around Arga. The olive trees grew in long rows neatly tied to trellises. Down in the valleys toward the Jordan, the people had numbers of camels and excellent pasture grounds. There grew also in this region a precious wood, which was used in the building of the Ark of the Covenant and the table of showbread. The bark of the tree that produced it was smooth and beautiful, the branches hung like those of the willow, the leaves were like pear leaves, though

very much larger, green on one side and on the other covered with some gray-colored stuff. It bore berries like the fruit of the dog rose, though larger. The wood was exceedingly hard and tough, and could be split into very fine strips like bark. When dry and bleached, it became firm and beautiful and almost indestructible. The tree contained a very fine pith, which was extracted by incisions so as to leave in the center of the inmost plank only a delicate, reddish vein. The wood was made into little tables, and used for all kinds of inlaid work. They dealt also in myrrh and other spices, although these did not grow there. They obtained them from the caravans that often unloaded their camels and rested here for weeks at a time. They pressed the spices into balls and prepared them to be used by the Jews in embalming the dead. The cows and sheep of Arga were very large.

When on the following morning Jesus and His disciples went toward Arga, the Levites and chief men of the city met Him with every mark of respect, conducted Him to a tent, washed His feet, and presented Him refreshments. Some of the disciples had gone on before Jesus to apprise the townspeople of His coming. He taught in the synagogue, after which He cured a great many sick, among them numbers of consumptives. He went likewise to many of the sick in their homes. Toward three o'clock a dinner was spread. Jesus dined with the Levites in a public hall, the dishes having been brought thither from the eating house. In the evening, He taught again in the synagogue, for it was the commencement of the Sabbath. Next morning He gave another discourse, speaking at length of Moses in the wilderness on Mounts Sinai and Horeb, of the construction of the Ark of the Covenant, of the table of showbread, etc. As the ancestors of His hearers had sent offerings for the same, Jesus alluded to them as symbolical. He exhorted them now, in the time of





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their fulfillment, to bring heart and soul as an offering by penance and conversion, and He showed them the connection between that offering of their forefathers and their own present condition. But I do not remember it. The substance of this discourse was as follows:

While Jesus was speaking, I had an extended and circumstantial vision of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. I saw that Jethro, the father-in-law, and Sephora, the wife of Moses, dwelt in Arga with the two sons and a daughter of the latter. I saw Jethro with the wife and children of Moses journeying to join him on Mount Horeb. Moses received them most joyfully, and related all the miracles wrought by God for the deliverance of His people from Egypt, whereupon Jethro offered sacrifice. I saw too that Moses at this time settled the disputes of all the Israelites himself, but Jethro counseled him to nominate subordinate judges. He then returned home, leaving Sephora and her sons with Moses. I saw Jethro recounting in Arga all the wonders he had seen, and many were thereby roused to great reverence for the God of the Israelites. Then Jethro sent Moses presents and offerings on camels, to which the Argites had contributed. The presents consisted of fine oil, which was afterward burned before the tabernacle; very fine, long strands of camel's hair for spinning and weaving into covers and curtains; and most beautiful setim wood, which was afterward made into the poles of the Ark of the Covenant and the table for the showbread, I think, too, they sent a species of grain out of which the showbread was made. It was made from the pith of a reed like plant, from which long before I saw Mary making pap.

On the Sabbath Jesus taught in the synagogue from *Isaias* and from *Deuteronomy* 21:26. He spoke also of Balac and the Prophet Balaam. I saw many things connected with both, but I cannot now recall



them. That evening in the Sabbath instructions, He related from the Law of Moses, which had previously been read, the history of Zambri and the Madianite stabbed by Phineas (*Num. 25:7*).

(Here Anne Catherine repeated in an admirable manner, although she had never heard nor read them, a number of the Laws of Moses as set forth in *Deuteronomy 21:26*. They were those that especially corresponded to her own position in childhood and the ideas peculiar to the occupations connected with it; for instance, the law forbidding one that has found a bird's nest to take the parent birds as well as the young; that which commands the gleanings of the harvest to be left for the poor; that which prohibits pledges to be taken from the poor, or borrowing from them, etc. Jesus touched upon all these points, dwelling at length upon the law that forbids defrauding laborers of their wages, because the people of Arga lived by labor, Sister Emmerich was rejoiced when told that all those laws could be found in the Bible, and she wondered at having heard them so correctly.)

The Sabbath over, Jesus went to an inn belonging to the pagans who had sent Him, by the disciples, a most pressing invitation to that effect. He was received with great humility and affection. He instructed them upon the call of the heathens, telling them that He was now come to gain over those that had not been conquered by the Israelites. They questioned Him upon the fulfillment of the prophecy that the scepter should be taken away from Juda at the time of the Messiah, and He gave them an answer full of instruction. They knew the story of the Three Kings, and begged for Baptism. Jesus explained what the ceremony meant, that it was to be for them a preparation for their sharing in the Kingdom of the Messiah. These good pagans were travelers, and had been a couple of weeks at Arga, awaiting the arrival

of a caravan. They numbered five families, about

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thirty-seven souls in all. They could not go to the Baptism at Ennon, for fear of missing the caravan. They asked Jesus where they should take up their future residence, and He indicated to them the place. I never heard Him speaking to the heathens of circumcision, but He always insisted on continence and the obligation of having but one wife.

These heathens were at once baptized by Saturnin and Judas Barsabas. They stepped into a bathing cistern, and bowed over a large basin in front of it which Jesus had blessed. The water was thrice poured over their head.

All were clothed in white. After the ceremony they presented to Jesus golden bracelets and earrings for the money box of the disciples. Those articles formed the principal part of their commerce. They were changed into money, which by Jesus' orders was distributed to the poor. Jesus taught again in the synagogue, cured the sick, and dined with the Levites.

After the meal, accompanied by several people, Jesus went a couple of hours farther on to the north to a little place named Azo, where were many people gathered for the celebration of a feast commemorative of Gideon's victory begun that evening. Jesus was received outside the city by the Levites. They washed His feet and offered Him to eat, after which He went into the synagogue and taught.

In Jephthe's time, Azo was a fortified city, but was destroyed during the war that called him from the land of Tob. It was in Jesus' time a very clean little place, the houses in one long row. There were no heathens in it, and the inhabitants were singularly good, industrious, and well-behaved. They had many olive trees skillfully planted on terraces

outside the city, and which they carefully tended. Stuffs were also fabricated and embroidered here. The manner of living was the same as at Arga. The people of Azo looked upon themselves as Jews of exceptional purity, since they lived entirely apart from the pagans. Everything

was very clean in Azo. The road led down through a gently sloping valley, in which lay the city flanked on the west by a mountain.

When Deborah ruled in Israel and Sisara was slain by Jahel, there lived for a long time at Maspha a woman disguised as a man. She was descended from a woman who had survived the destruction of the tribe of Benjamin to which she belonged. This descendant assumed male attire and knew so well how to conceal her sex as to arouse the suspicion of no one. She had visions, she prophesied, and often served the Israelites in quality of spy. But whenever they employed her in that way, they met with defeat. The Madianites were encamped at that time near Azo, and that woman went out to them in the dress of a distinguished military officer. She called herself Abinoem after one of the heroes present at the defeat of Sisara. She passed unperceived through several quarters of the camp, spying as she went. At last she entered the general's tent and expressed her readiness to deliver all Israel into his hands. She had been accustomed to abstain from wine and to conduct herself with great reserve and circumspection. But upon this occasion she became intoxicated, and her sex was discovered. They nailed her hand and foot to a plank, and cast her into a pit with the words: "May even her name be here buried with her!"

It was from Azo that Gedeon went out against the camp of the Madianites. Gedeon was a very handsome, powerful man of the tribe of Manasses. He dwelt with his father near Silo. Israel was in a critical condition at that time. The Madianites and other idolatrous tribes overran the country, laid waste the fields, and carried off the harvest. Gedeon, a son of Joas the Ezrite, dwelling in Ephra, was very brave and liberal. He often threshed his wheat before his neighbors and generously divided it among the needy. I saw him going out at early

morn before daybreak,



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while the dew still lay on the ground, to a very large tree with spreading branches under which his threshing floor lay concealed. The oak covered with its broad branches the wide rocky basin in which it stood. This basin was surrounded by a mound-like wall that reached to the branches of the tree, so that a person standing at the foot of the oak was as if in a large vaulted cave and could not be seen from without. The trunk was, as it were, formed of many single branches wound together. The soil was firm and rocky. Around in the walls were large cavities in which the grain was stored in casks of bark. The threshing was done with a cylinder that revolved on wheels around the tree, and on it were wooden hammers that fell upon the grain. High up in the tree was a seat from which one could see around. The Madianites pitched their tents from Basan down across the Jordan, and even to the very field of Esdrelon. The valley of the Jordan swarmed with grazing camels, which circumstance greatly served Gedeon's purpose. He reconnoitered for several weeks, and with his three hundred men, moved slowly toward Azo. I saw him slipping unperceived into the camp of the Madianites, and listening to what was said in one of the tents. Just at that moment, a soldier exclaimed to one of his companions: "I have been dreaming that a loaf of bread fell down the mountain and crushed our tent." The other answered: "That is a bad omen! Gedeon will certainly fall upon us with his Israelites." On the following night, Gedeon and his handful of warriors, with lighted torches in one hand and the trumpets upon which they were blowing in the other, pressed into the camp. Other bands did the same from opposite sides. The enemy became panic-stricken. They turned their swords against one another, while being slain and routed on all sides by the Children of Israel. The mountain from which the bread rolled down, as seen in the soldier's dream, was directly back of Azo and

it was from there that Gedeon made his attack in person.

The annual commemoration of Gedeon's victory was now being celebrated in Azo. Outside the city was a large oak on a hill and at its foot an altar of stone. Between this tree and the mountain from which the soldier had seen the bread rolling down, the disguised prophethess lay buried. This tree was different from our oaks. It bore a large fruit with a green husk, under which was an exceedingly hard kernel in a little cup like our acorns. The Jews of Azo used these kernels for the tops of their walking sticks. For the accommodation of the large concourse of people, there was from that tree down to the city a whole row of tabernacles made of foliage and adorned with all kinds of fruit.

Jesus and the disciples went with the Levites in procession to the Ark. Five little he-goats, their necks adorned with red wreaths, were led in advance of the cortege. When they reached the oak, they were shut up in little grated caverns cut out of the side of the hill around the tree. Little cakes were also carried thither for sacrifice, and trumpets were blown. Different passages of Gedeon's life were read from rolls, and canticles of victory sung. Then the goats were slaughtered and cut up, several pieces along with some of the cakes being laid upon the altar around which the blood was sprinkled. A Levite blew fire from a tube into the wood lying under the grating of the altar, in memory of the angel's having enkindled Gedeon's sacrifice with a rod. (*Jgs.* 6:21).

Jesus delivered a discourse to the assembled crowd, and thus the morning passed. In the afternoon He went with the Levites and the principal citizens to a valley south of the city where, around a little fountain, were a public bathing place and pleasure garden. In a garden apart were the women and maidens playing at games and enjoying

themselves. An entertainment had been prepared here and, according to

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an ancient custom, the upper tables were assigned to the poor. Jesus took His place at one of them. He related the parable of the Prodigal Son and told of the calf that his father commanded to be slaughtered for him. He passed the night under a tent on the roof of the synagogue, for the people of this place were accustomed to sleep on the roofs.

The feast was continued during the next day. The tabernacles of foliage were intended for the Feast of Tabernacles also, which was to begin in about fourteen days. Next morning Jesus delivered an instruction in the synagogue, and outside the school cured many blind, many consumptives, and several harmless possessed. After that He partook of a dinner and then left the city, accompanied by the Levites and others, about thirty in all.

The road led first over that mountain from which the soldier had seen the barley loaf rolling down into the camp of the Madianites. (*Jgs. 7:13*). Then the travelers climbed by a defile over another mountain narrow, long, and high, on the opposite side of which they journeyed northward through the valley for about an hour. They reached at last a pleasant little lake near which rose some buildings belonging to the Levites of Azo. A brook flowed through it and down through the valley into the Jordan. About six hours northeastwardly from this point was Betharamphtha-Julias built around a mountain.

Jesus partook of a luncheon by the lake. It consisted of roasted fish, honey, bread, and a beverage of balm from a little jug, all of which the party had with them. The lake was about three hours' distance from Azo. All along the route, Jesus had related parables of the sower and the stony soil, for it was over such they were then journeying. He also related another of fishes and how to catch them. There were some little

boats on the lake fishing with draw nets, the capture being intended for the poor.

An hour and a half distant was Ephron. It could

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not be seen from here, though the high mountains in its vicinity were distinctly visible. Jesus now took leave of those that had accompanied Him from Azo, and proceeded to Ephron. Azo was the best place He had met on His way in these parts. Jesus was as usual received outside of Ephron by the Levites of the place, and here too were found already waiting for Him a crowd of sick. They lay in wooden chests to which handles were attached for convenience in carrying. Jesus cured them all. Ephron lay on the southern height of a narrow pass through which flowed a stream down into the Jordan. The latter could be seen far away through the defile. The stream of which I speak was often dried up. Opposite Ephron rose a narrow but lofty mountain. It was upon it that Jephthe's daughter with her maids awaited the signal of her father's victory, namely, the rising of a column of smoke. The moment she descried it, she hurried back to Ramoth whence with great pomp she set out to meet her father. Jesus instructed and cured many here.

The Levites of this place belonged to an ancient sect called Rechabites. Jesus reproached them for the hardness and severity of their opinions, and advised the people not to observe many of their prescriptions. In His instruction He alluded to the punishment of those Levites of Bethsames that had irreverently (too curiously) gazed upon the Ark of the Covenant which had been brought back by the Philistines. (3 Kgs. 6:15 *et seq.*). The Rechabites were descended from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. In early times they lived under tents, carried on no husbandry, and abstained from the use of wine. They exercised the office of chanters and gatekeepers in the Temple. Those men that near

Bethsames had, contrary to orders, gazed upon the returning Ark and had for so doing been punished with death, were Rechabites who there dwelt under tents. Jeremias tried once, but in vain, to make them drink wine in

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the Temple. He afterward held up to Israel as an example the obedience of these men to their laws. In Jesus' time they no longer dwelt under tents, though they still preserved many of their peculiar customs. They wore a hairy ephod (a scapular) as a cilicium [hair shirt] next their skin, and over that a garment made from the skins of beasts. Their outer robe was white, beautiful and clean, and was confined by a broad girdle. One of the points in which they differed from the Essenians was in their better mode of dressing. Their rules relating to purity were excessively strict, and they had very singular customs with regard to marriage. They passed judgment after examining blood drawn from the candidate for marriage. According to this test they decided whether he should marry or not, enjoining it upon some of their sect and forbidding it to others. In early times they were to be found in Argob, Jabesch, and in Judea. They offered no opposition to the words of Jesus, but took His instructions and His reproaches alike humbly and in good part. He reprehended them most of all for their unmerciful severity to adulterers and murderers to whom they granted no quarter. There were on this mountain many foundries and forges. They made pots and gutters, also water pipes. These last were formed of two pieces soldered together.

### **17. Jesus in Betharamphtha-Julias. Abigail, the Repudiated Wife of Philip the Tetrarch**

From Ephron, Jesus went with His disciples and several of the Rechabites about five hours to the north to Betharamphtha-Julias, a beautiful city situated on a height. On the way He gave an instruction near a mine from which was obtained the copper that was wrought in Ephron. There were some Rechabites in

Betharamphtha, and among them priests. Those of Ephron appeared to me to be under their jurisdiction.

The city was large and extended far around a mountain. The western part was inhabited by Jews, the eastern and a portion of the heights by idolaters. The two quarters were separated by a walled in road and a pleasure garden full of shady walks. High on the mountain arose a beautiful castle with its towers, its gardens, and trees. It was occupied by a divorced wife of the Tetrarch Philip, who had settled upon her all the revenues of this part of his territory. She was descended from the kings of Gessur, and had with her five daughters already well grown. She was named Abigail and, although tolerably advanced in years, was still active and beautiful. Her disposition was full of goodness and benevolence.

Philip was older than Herod of Pera and Galilee. He was a pagan of peaceable inclinations, but a lover of pleasure. He was half-brother of the other Herod, born of a different mother, and had first married a widow with one daughter. When Abigail's husband was dispatched by Philip to a war or to Rome, I know not which, he left his wife behind. She meanwhile was seduced by Philip, who married her, whereupon her husband died of grief. When after some years Philip's first wife, whom he had repudiated for the sake of Abigail, was about to die, she begged him on her deathbed to have pity at least on her daughter. Philip, who had by this time grown tired of Abigail, married his step-daughter, and banished Abigail and her five daughters to Betharamphtha, called also Julias in honor of a Roman empress. Here she occupied herself in doing good. She was favorably disposed toward the Jews, and cherished a great desire after truth and salvation. She was, however, under the watchful guardianship of some of Philip's officers, who had to render an



account of her. Philip had one son, and his present wife was much younger than

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himself.

Jesus was received cordially and hospitably in Betharam. The morning after His arrival He cured many sick Jews, and taught that evening in the synagogue, as also on the next morning, His instructions turning upon the tithes and the offering of the firstborn, and the sixtieth of Isaias. (*Deut.* 26-30, *Is.* 60).

Abigail was held in esteem by the inhabitants of Betharamphtha. She sent gifts down from her castle to the Jews for the more honorable entertainment of Jesus and His disciples. On the first of the month of Tisri the new year was celebrated, which fact was announced from the roof of the synagogue by all kinds of musical instruments, among them harps and a number of large trumpets with several mouthpieces. I saw again one of those wonderful instruments I had formerly seen on the synagogue of Capharnaum. It was filled with wind by means of a bellows. All the houses and public buildings were adorned on this feast day with flowers and fruit. The different classes of people had different customs. During the night many persons, most of them women clothed in long garments and holding lighted lanterns, prayed upon the tombs. I saw too that all the inhabitants bathed, the women in their houses and the men at the public baths. The married men bathed separate from the youths, as also the elder women from the maidens. As bathing was very frequent among the Jews and water not abundant, they made use of it sparingly. They lay on their back in tubs and, scooping up the water in a shell, poured it over themselves; it was often more like a washing than a bath. They performed their ablutions today at the baths outside the city, in water perfectly cold. Mutual gifts were interchanged, the poor being largely remembered. They commenced by giving them a good entertainment, and on a long rampart were deposited numerous gifts for

them,

consisting of food, raiment, and covers. Everyone that received presents from his friends bestowed a part of them upon the poor. The Rechabites present superintended and directed all things. They saw what each one gave to the poor and how it was distributed. They kept three lists, in which they secretly recorded the generosity of the donors. One of these lists was called the Book of Life; another, the Middle Way; and the third, the Book of Death. It was customary for the Rechabites to exercise all such offices, while in the Temple they were gatekeepers, treasurers, and above all, chanters. This last office they fulfilled on today's feast. Jesus also received presents in Betharamphtha of clothing, covers, and money, all of which He caused to be distributed among the poor.

During the feast Jesus went to visit the pagans. Abigail had pressed Him earnestly to come to see her, and the Jews themselves, upon whom she bestowed many benefits, had begged Him to have an interview with her. I saw Jesus with some of His disciples crossing the Jewish quarter of the city to that of the pagans. He reached the public pleasure grounds, pleasant and shady, that lay between the two quarters, and where the Jews and pagans usually met when necessary. Abigail was already there with her suite, her five grown daughters, many other heathen maidens, and some pagan followers. Abigail was a tall, vigorous woman of about fifty years, almost the same age as Philip. She wore an expression of sadness and anxious yearning. She sighed after instruction and conversion to a better life, but she knew not how to set about its attainment, for she was not allowed to act freely and was jealously watched by her wardens. She cast herself at Jesus' feet. He raised her up and, walking up and down, instructed her and her companions. He spoke of the fulfillment of the Prophecies, of the vocation of the Gentiles, and of Baptism. From all the places at which Jesus had



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been since He left Ennon proceeded caravans of Jews and Gentiles thither in uninterrupted succession, to receive Baptism from the disciples left there for that purpose. Andrew, James the Less, John, and the disciples of John the Baptist were all busy administering Baptism. Messengers were constantly going and coming between them and the imprisoned Baptist.

Jesus received from Abigail the customary marks of honor. She had appointed Jewish servants to wash His feet and to offer Him the refreshments usually extended to strangers as tokens of welcome. She very humbly begged His pardon for desiring an interview with Him, but, as she said, she had so long sighed after His instructions. She begged Him to take part in an entertainment she had prepared in His honor. Jesus was very condescending toward all, but especially toward Abigail herself. His every word and glance made a strong impression on her soul. She was full of anxiety, and was not without some glimmering of the truth. This instruction to the pagans lasted till nearly afternoon. Then at Abigail's invitation Jesus passed to the east side of the city not far from the pagan temple. There were many baths in the vicinity and a kind of public feast going on, for the heathens also celebrated the new moon today with special magnificence. In coming hither Jesus took the road that separated the two quarters of the city, the Jewish from the heathen. In the abodes formed in the walls were many poor, sick pagans lying in chests full of straw and chaff. The destitute among the heathens were numerous. As yet Jesus cured none of their sick.

On the pleasure grounds of the heathens, where the entertainment was prepared, Jesus taught for a long time, sometimes walking around, and again during the meal. He made use of all kinds of parables relating to animals, in order to illustrate to them their own vain and fruitless lives.

He spoke of the unwearied and often useless labor of the spider, of

the active industry of the ant and wasp, and placed before them as a contrast the beautifully ordered work of the bee. The viands of the entertainment, at which Abigail assisted in person, reclining at the table, were for the most part distributed at Jesus' request to the poor. There were also on this day great solemnities in the pagan temple, a very magnificent building with large open porticos on five sides through which was afforded a view into the interior. It was capped by a high cupola. There were many idols in the different halls of the temple, the principal one being named Dagon. The upper part of its body was like a human being, the lower part like a fish. There were others in the form of animals, but none so beautiful as the idols of the Greeks and Romans. I saw young maidens hanging wreaths on and around the idols, then singing and dancing before them, while the pagan priests burnt incense on a little three-legged table. On the cupola was a very wonderful and ingenious piece of mechanism which revolved the whole night. It was a brilliant globe covered with stars. As it slowly revolved, it could be seen from the interior of the temple as well as from without. It represented something connected with the course of the stars and the new moon, or the new year. The globe revolved slowly. When it had reached one of the extreme points in its orbit, the songs and rejoicings in the temple ceased on the opposite side, to be taken up on that to which the globe had turned.

Not far from the festive scene where Jesus had been entertained was a large pleasure garden, and in it were the young girls amusing themselves at various games. Their robes were slightly raised and their lower limbs strapped with bands. They were armed with bows, arrows, and little spears wreathed with flowers. A kind of race course had been ingeniously formed of branches, flowers, and decorations of all kinds, along which the girls ran, shooting their arrows





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at the same time after the birds that were fastened here and there for that purpose, and darting their spears at the different animals, the kids and little asses, that were fenced in around the course. On this festal race course was a horrible idol with broad, open jaws like a beast, and hands hanging before it like a human being. It was hollow, and under it blazed a fire. The animals killed by the girls were placed in its jaws, where they were consumed, their ashes falling into the fire below. Those that had escaped the darts of the young huntresses were set aside and regarded as sacred. The priests laid upon them the sins of the people and set them free. It was something like the Jewish scapegoat. Were it not for the torture of the animals, so painful to behold, and the horrible idol, the fleetness and skill of the young girls would have been a very pleasing sight. The feast lasted till evening and, when the moon rose, animals were offered in sacrifice. When night closed, the whole temple and Abigail's castle were ablaze with torches.

Jesus taught again after the repast. Many of the heathens were converted and went to Ennon for Baptism. That evening Jesus went up the mountain by torchlight and had an interview with Abigail in the portico of her castle. Near her were some of Philip's officers, who watched her constantly. Her every action was on that account one of constraint, and she gave the Lord to understand her embarrassing position by the look she cast upon those men. Jesus, however, knew her whole interior and the bonds that held her captive. He had compassion upon her. She asked whether she might hope for pardon from God. One thing in particular constantly harassed her, namely, her infidelity to her lawful husband and his death. Jesus comforted her, saying that her sins would be forgiven her, she should continue her good works, persevere and pray. She was of the race of Jebusites. These heathens were accustomed to allow their



deformed children to perish, and were very superstitious about the signs that accompanied their birth.

In all the places through which Jesus had passed lately, preparations were busily going forward for the Feast of Tabernacles. They were transporting lathwork from place to place and putting up light tents and huts made of foliage here and there on the roofs of Betharamphtha. The maidens were busied with plants and flowers which they put into water and set in the cellars to keep fresh. There were so many fast days before the feast, and so much was needed on account of the entertainments given upon it, that everything had to be prepared some time before. Such cares were entrusted to many of the poor, who received food and money in return for their services. When all was over they were entertained at a grand feast and again recompensed. In all these places no open shops were to be seen. Outside the Temple in Jerusalem, there were some places around upon which stood shops; in other cities, here and there, but chiefly at the gate, was a tent in which covers were sold. One never saw in Palestine people sitting together in the public houses. Here and there in the corner of a wall might be seen a man standing with a leathern bottle or pitcher. The traveler in passing got his little jug replenished, but rarely did he sit down to drink. A drunkard was never seen on the streets. The water vendors carried a pole across the shoulder on which were hung two leathern bottles, one in front, the other behind. As for dishes and vessels of iron, to procure them a man had to mount his ass and go to where they were fabricated.

On the following day Jesus cured, on the walled in road between the Jewish and the heathen quarters, all the poor, sick pagans who were lying so miserably in the cavities of the wall, and the disciples distributed alms among them. After that until the time of His departure,

Jesus taught in the synagogue. As the feast then celebrated was likewise

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commemorative of the sacrifice of Isaac, Jesus spoke of the true Isaac, but His hearers did not understand Him. In all these places, He alluded very significantly to the Messiah, though without saying in express terms that it was Himself.

### **18. Jesus in Abila and Gadara**

Jesus with the disciples and accompanied by the Levites went three hours to the northwest toward a deep dale through which the brook Karith flowed to the Hieromax. In this dale lay the beautiful city of Abila built around the source of the brook Karith. The Levites accompanied Him to a mountain that stood halfway on the road, and then went back to Betharam. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the Levites of Abila, among whom were several Rechabites, received Jesus outside the city. Three of the disciples from Galilee were with the Levites awaiting His arrival. They conducted Him at once into the city and to a very lovely fountain, the source of the brook Karith. The beautiful little edifice, supported by columns that had been built over the source, formed the central point, to which ran colonnades connecting it with the synagogue and other public buildings. The city was built on both sides of the gently rising height. The streets ran from these central buildings in the form of a star so that from everyone of them the fountain could be seen. It was at this fountain that the Levites washed the feet of Jesus and the disciples, and offered them the customary refreshments. In the neighboring gardens and on the buildings around were men and maidens busily preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles.

From here Jesus accompanied the Levites northward about half an hour outside the city into the valley to where a broad, stone bridge was built over the stream. On it, in memory of Elias, was a low pedestal, or

column, surmounted by a cupola resting

on eight pillars. The pedestal supported a pulpit to which the teacher mounted by steps. Both banks of the narrow stream were cut in tiers to afford seats for the audience, and both were now crowded with people. In addressing them Jesus turned from side to side that all might hear.

Today was a feast in this city commemorative of Elias, of something that had happened to him here by the stream. The instruction was followed by a banquet at the baths and pleasure garden outside the city. The festival ended with the Sabbath, because on the following day a fast was kept in remembrance of the murder of Godolias. (4 Kgs. 25:22-25). The sound of trumpets was still heard during the day.

On the declivity of the mountain west of the city of Abila I saw a very beautiful sepulcher in front of which was a little garden. In the latter were assembled the women belonging to three families of Abila. They were celebrating a solemnity in honor of the dead. They sat on the ground closely veiled, wept, uttered lamentations, and frequently prostrated with the face to the earth. They killed several birds of very beautiful plumage, plucked them, and burned the lovely, shining feathers on the tomb. The flesh was afterward given to the poor. The tomb was that of an Egyptian woman from whom the mourners had descended. Before the departure of the Children of Israel, there lived in Egypt an illegitimate relative of the Pharaoh then reigning. She was very favorably disposed toward Moses, and rendered great services to the Israelites. She was a prophetess, and she it was that had discovered Joseph's mummy to Moses on the last night of his stay in Egypt. Her name was Segola, and she was the mother of Aaron's wife, from whom, however, he separated and married Elizabeth, the daughter of Aminadab of the tribe of Juda. The repudiated wife also was connected in some way with Aminadab, but how I do not now know. She had by



her mother Segola, as well as by

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Aaron himself, been richly dowered. Taking with her large treasure, she accompanied the Israelites on their departure and married a second time during their stay in the desert. She afterward attached herself to the Madianites, especially to the family of Jethro. Her descendants settled near Abila where they dwelt under tents, and it was here that she was buried. After the time of the Prophet Elias, Abila was built, and it was then that those descendants settled there. I did not see the city in Elias' time; it may have been destroyed before him. There were still three families of those descendants in Abila, and they were celebrating today the anniversary of the death of their ancestress, Segola's daughter, whose mummy had been transported hither from the desert and entombed. The women made an offering of their earrings and other trinkets to the Levites in memory of their deceased relative, Jesus praised her from the pulpit of Elias and spoke of the goodness of Segola, her mother. The women listened attentively from where they stood behind the men. There were numbers of poor at the banquet in the bathing garden, and every guest was obliged before partaking of the viands to give something from his own plate to his poor neighbor.

I saw the Levites conducting Jesus next day into a great court all around which were cells. Here were found about twenty patients, some of them deaf and dumb, others blind from their birth, who were cared for by attendants and two physicians. It was a kind of hospital. The deaf and dumb were exactly like children. Each had a little garden in which he amused himself and raised flowers. Soon all gathered around Jesus, laughing and pointing with their finger to their mouth. Jesus stooped and wrote all kinds of signs in the sand with His finger. They watched Him attentively and, at every mark He made, pointed around them to this or that object. It was in this way that He made them understand something about



God. I know not whether He formed letters or figures, or whether the mutes had ever before been instructed in that way. After that Jesus put His finger into their ears and touched them under the tongue with His thumb and forefinger. They shuddered as if a shock thrilled through their whole being, they gazed around, they heard, they wept, they stammered, they talked, they cast themselves down at Jesus' feet, and broke forth into a most touching, monotonous chant of a few words, It sounded almost like that sweet singing I heard in the caravan of the holy Three Kings.

Then Jesus turned to the blind men who were standing still in a row. He prayed and laid His two thumbs on their eyes. They opened their eyes, fixed them upon their Saviour and Redeemer, and mingled their songs of praise with those of the once deaf and dumb, but who could now extol His goodness and listen to His words. Oh, what a charming, what a joyous scene! No words can describe it! The whole city crowded in joy and jubilation to hail Jesus as He came forth from the court surrounded by the miraculously cured, whom He had ordered to bathe.

After that, Jesus, with the disciples and Levites, traversed the city to the pulpit of Elias. The excitement throughout the city was great. At the news of the miracles just wrought, several possessed had been set at large. On a corner of one of the streets some women, poor simpletons, ran after Jesus, chattering and repeating the words: "Jesus of Nazareth! Prophet! Thou art a Prophet! Thou art Jesus! Thou art the Christ! The Prophet!" They were harmless fools. Jesus commanded them to be silent, and they became quiet. He laid His hand on their heads, and they fell on their knees in tears. Silent and confused, they allowed themselves to be quietly led away by their friends. Then several possessed pressed raging through the crowd as if to tear Jesus to pieces.

He cast upon them a single glance, and they fell like whining dogs at

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His feet. With a word of command, He drove the devil forth. They sank down unconscious, a dark vapor escaped from them, and then they arose weeping and thanking and were led to their homes by their friends. Jesus generally ordered such persons to perform certain purifications. He again taught from the pulpit on the brook, alluding in the course of His instruction to Elias, to Moses, and to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. He spoke of the cures that had just been effected in their midst, and of the Prophecies which declared that in the Messiah's time the dumb would speak and the blind see. He also made allusion to those that saw these signs and yet would not acknowledge them.

I saw on that occasion many things connected with Elias. He was a tall, spare man with hollow, reddish cheeks, a bright, piercing glance, a long, thin beard, and a bald head with only a circle of hair around the back. On the top of his head were three large protuberances almost of the form of bulbs, one in the middle, two somewhat toward the forehead. He wore a garment made of two skins fastened together on the shoulder, open at the sides, and bound around the waist with a cord. Over his shoulders and around his knees hung the hair of the beast's skin. He carried a staff in his hand. His shins were far darker than his face. He was nine months in Abila, and two years and three months in Sarepta with the widow. While at Abila, he dwelt in a cave on the eastern slope of the valley not far from the brook. I saw how the bird brought him food. At first there arose a little dark figure like a shadow out of the earth, holding in its hand a thin cake. It was neither man nor beast, it was the evil one come to tempt the Prophet. Elias would not touch the bread, but bade the tempter be gone. Then I saw a bird coming to the vicinity of his cave with bread and other food, which it hid under the leaves, as if for itself. It must have been a waterfowl, for it was web-footed. Its head was somewhat



broad, and by the side of the beak hung bags something like pockets, and under the beak hung a craw. It made a cracking noise with its bill, like a stork. I saw that this bird was quite at home with Elias, so much so that on a sign from the Prophet it came and went. I saw him pointing to it right and left. I have often seen the same kind of bird with the hermits, also with Zozimus and Mary of Egypt.<sup>2</sup> When Elias was with the widow of Sarepta, besides the oil and meal that never decreased, other food was sometimes brought him by ravens.

Jesus went with the Levites to the cave of Elias. On the eastern declivity of the valley under a broad, overhanging cliff was a narrow rocky bank upon which Elias, under shelter of the upper rock, used to sleep on a couch overgrown with moss. When the Sabbath, on the fourth of the month Tisri, began, and the fast was over, there was an entertainment in the bathing gardens, at which again the poor were fed.

Next morning, after Jesus had again taught and cured the sick in the synagogue, He went with the disciples, the Levites, the Rechabites, and some of the citizens to the western heights of the mountain. There making a circuit of about an hour, He went through the vineyards giving instructions. On this mountain range, as far as Gadara, were numerous rocky projections like mounds. Some had been raised by nature, others formed by the hand of man, and around them vines were planted, the vine stocks as thick as one's arm. They were planted far apart and threw out their branches to a great distance. The bunches of fruit were often as long as one's arm, while the single grapes were large as plums. The leaves were larger than those of our vines, though small when compared with the fruit. The Levites



2. The Hebrew word which is translated as "raven" ("corous," 3 Kings 17) signifies, according to the interpreters of Holy Scripture, various kinds of birds, among them a *corvus aquaticus* with colored feathers and a long beak. See Calmet, *Diction. S. Script.* S. V. *corvus*.

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put many questions to Jesus upon different portions of the Psalms that treated of the Messiah. They said: "Thou art certainly the greatest Prophet after the Messiah! Thou canst explain these points to us." Among other things there was question of the words: "*Dixit Dominus Domino meo,*" and of him that with blood-besprinkled garments trod the wine press alone. (*Is.* 63:3). Jesus explained all to them with its profound signification and applied it to Himself. During this little instruction they sat around one of the vine hills eating grapes. The Rechabites, however, would not touch the fruit, because they were forbidden to drink wine. But Jesus challenged them upon their abstinence and commanded them to eat, saying that if they sinned by so doing, He would take the guilt upon Himself. When they brought forward their Law as an excuse for not complying, I heard them saying that Jeremias, on the command of God, had once forbidden it and they had obeyed. But now that Jesus ordered otherwise, they hearkened to His word. Toward evening they returned to the city, and assisted at another entertainment to which the poor were admitted. Then Jesus taught in the synagogue and afterward went to the house of the Levites, where He passed the night on the roof under a tent.

Attended by the Levites, Jesus went from Abila to Gadara and reached the small Jewish quarter of the city in the evening. It was separate from the larger pagan quarter which had as many as four idolatrous temples. I knew at once that Gadara was a heathen city from seeing the idol of Baal standing under a large tree. Jesus was well received here. There were Pharisees and Sadducees among the inhabitants, also a Sanhedrim for the country around, although the male Jews of the place numbered from three to four hundred only. Jesus found some Galilean disciples awaiting Him in Gadara. They were Nathanael (Chased), Jonathan, Peter's half-brother, and I think



Philip. Jesus put up at the inn outside the Jewish quarter, where already a great number of arbors had been erected for the Feast of Tabernacles.

Next morning when Jesus went to the synagogue to preach He was met by a great crowd of sick, who had assembled outside to wait for Him, and also by several raging possessed. The Pharisees and Sadducees, though apparently well-disposed, wanted to drive these people away. They should not be so importunate, they said, it was not the time for that. But Jesus very graciously interposed, "Let them remain," He said, "for it was for them that I came," and He cured many of them.

The Jewish Sanhedrim of Gadara were meantime deliberating whether or not they should allow Jesus to teach, since so much was said against Him. They unanimously resolved to permit Him to do so, for they had heard Him very well spoken of, especially after the cure of the son of the Centurion of Capharnaum.

The disciples lately arrived spoke to Jesus of another person at Capharnaum who greatly needed His assistance.

In the synagogue Jesus taught of Elias, of Achab and Jezabel, and of the idol of Baal erected in Samaria. In speaking of Elias, Jesus said that he had not received bread from ravens, because he had been disobedient. There was also some allusion made to King Balthazar of Babylon, who had desecrated the sacred vessels and had seen the writing on the wall. Jesus taught long and earnestly from Isaias, most strikingly applying the Prophet's words to Himself and uttering profound thoughts upon His own approaching Passion and victory. He spoke of the wine press, of the red, bloody garments, of the lonely worker, of the nations trodden down in wrath. He had previously spoken of the rebuilding of Sion, of

the watchmen upon the walls of the Holy City, and I felt that He was alluding to the Church. To me His teaching, though so profound and earnest, was so

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clear, and yet the Jewish Doctors, though surprised and deeply affected, failed to understand Him. That night they met together, consulted the Scriptures, weighed and compared various passages. They thought that He must surely be allied to some neighboring nation, and that He would soon return with a powerful army and conquer Judea.

The idol Baal, under a wide-spreading tree outside the entrance of the pagan quarter, was of metal. It had a broad head and an immense mouth. The head went up in a point like a sugarloaf, and around it was a wreath of leaves like a crown. The idol, short, broad, and chunky, looked like an ox sitting upright. In one hand it held a bunch of corn, and in the other some kind of plant, perhaps grapes, or something similar. There were seven openings in its body, and it sat in a kind of cauldron in which a fire could be lighted under it. On its feasts, the idol was clothed.

Gadara was a stronghold. The pagan quarter was tolerably large and somewhat sheltered by the highest peak of the mountain, at whose northern base were warm baths and beautiful buildings.

On the following morning as Jesus was curing numbers of sick outside the city, the priests approached to salute Him. "Why," said He addressing them, "Why were ye so disturbed last night over My teaching of yesterday? Why should ye tremble before an army, since God protects the just? Fulfill the Law and the Prophets! Why then should ye fear?" Jesus again taught in the synagogue as on the preceding day.

Toward noon a pagan woman timidly approached the disciples and implored them to bring Jesus to her house that He might cure her child. Jesus went with several of His disciples into the pagan quarter. The woman's husband met Him at the gate and led Him into the house. The

wife cast herself at Jesus' feet, saying: "Master, I have heard of Thy wonders

and that Thou canst perform greater prodigies than Elias. Behold, my only boy is dying, and our Wise Lady cannot help him. Do Thou have pity on us!" The boy, about three years old, lay in a little crib in the corner. The evening before, the father had taken the child into the vineyard and he had eaten a few grapes. Soon after, the boy became sick, and the father had to take him back home whimpering loudly. The mother had held him all night in her arms, vainly trying to relieve him. He already wore the appearance of death, indeed he looked as if he might really be dead. At this point the mother had hastened to the Jewish quarter to implore Jesus' aid, for the heathens had heard of the cures wrought by Him on the day before. Jesus said to her: "Leave Me alone with the child, and send to Me two of My disciples!" Then came Judas Barsabas and Nathanael the bridegroom. Jesus took the boy from his crib into His arms, laid him on His breast, breast to breast, pressed him to Himself, bowed His face upon the face of the child, and breathed upon him. The child opened his eyes and rose up. Then Jesus held him out in His arms and commanded the two disciples to lay their hands upon the child's head and to bless him. They obeyed, and the child was cured. Jesus then took him to the anxiously waiting parents who, embracing the child, cast themselves down at Jesus' feet. The mother cried out: "Great is the God of Israel! He is far above all the gods! My husband has already told me that, and henceforth I will serve no other god!" A crowd soon gathered and several other children were brought to the Lord. He cured one little boy of a year old by the imposition of hands. Another of seven years was a simpleton and subject to convulsions arising from possession by the evil one. The child did not endure any violent assaults, but he was often paralyzed and speechless. Jesus blessed him and ordered him a bath of three different waters: some from the warm spring of Amathus north of the base of the mountain of



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Gadara, some from the brook Karith near Abila, and lastly some from the river Jordan. The Jews of these parts kept on hand some of the water of the Jordan taken from the point over which Elias had crossed. They preserved it in leathern bottles, and used it in cases of leprosy.

The pagan mothers complained of the frequent illness of their children and of the little assistance they derived from their priestess in such trials. Jesus commanded the priestess to be summoned before Him. She obeyed reluctantly, for she did not want to enter Jesus' presence. She was closely enveloped in veils. Jesus ordered her to draw near. But she would not look at Him, she turned her face away and behaved exactly like the possessed. She was irresistibly forced to turn away from the glance of Jesus, though at His command she approached. Jesus, addressing the pagan men and women before Him, said: "I will show you now what wisdom you reverence in this woman and what is her skill," and He commanded the spirits to leave her. Thereupon a black vapor issued from her and all kinds of figures: noxious insects, snakes, toads, rats, dragons withdrew from her like shadows. It was a horrible sight, Jesus exclaimed: "Behold what doctrine ye follow!" The woman fell upon her knees weeping and sobbing. She was now quite changed, quite tractable, and Jesus ordered her to disclose by what means she had tried to cure the children. With many tears and half reluctantly she obeyed. She told that she had been taught to make the children sick by charms and witchcraft, that she might afterward cure them for the honor of the gods. Jesus then commanded her to accompany Him and the disciples to where the god Moloch was kept, and He directed several of the pagan priests to be called. A crowd had gathered, for the news of the child's cure was soon spread. The place to which Jesus now went was not a temple, but a hill surrounded by tombs. The god was in

a subterranean vault in the midst of them. The vault was closed on top by a cover. Jesus told the pagan priests to call forth their god. When by means of machinery, they had caused the idol to rise into sight, Jesus expressed to them His regret that they had a god that was unable to help himself.

Then turning to the priestess, He commanded her to rehearse the praises of her god, tell how she served him, and what reward he gave her. Like Balaam the Prophet, the woman began to repeat aloud before all the people the horrors of Moloch's worship and the wonders of the God of Israel. Jesus then directed the disciples to upset the idol and to shake it violently. They did as commanded. Jesus said to the pagans: "Behold the god that ye serve! Behold the spirits that ye adore!" and in the sight of all present, there appeared all kinds of diabolical figures issuing from the idol. They trembled convulsively, crept around for awhile, and vanished into the earth among the tombs. The idolaters gazed at the scene in affright and confusion. Jesus said: "If we cast your god down again into his den, he will surely go to pieces." The priests implored Jesus not to destroy their idol, whereupon He allowed them to raise it as before and lower it into its place. Most of the idolaters were deeply touched and ashamed, especially the priests, although some were very indignant. The people were, however, on Jesus' side. He gave them a beautiful instruction and many were converted. Moloch was seated like an ox on his hind legs, his forepaws stretched out like the arms of one who is going to receive something upon them, but by means of machinery he could be made to draw them in. His gaping mouth disclosed an enormous throat, and on his forehead was one crooked horn. He was seated in a large basin. Around the body were several projections like outside pockets. On festival days long straps were hung around his neck. In the basin under him fire was made when sacrifices

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were to be offered. Around the rim of the basin numbers of lamps were kept constantly burning before the god. Once upon a time it was customary to sacrifice children to him, but now they dared no longer do so, and animals of all kinds were offered in their stead. They were consumed in the openings of his body or cast into his yawning jaws. The sacrifice most agreeable to him was an Angora goat. There was also a machine by which the priests and others could descend to the idol in the subterranean vault among the tombs. The worship of Moloch was, however, no longer in great repute. He was invoked chiefly for purposes of sorcery and especially by the mothers of sick children. Each pocket around his person was consecrated to special sacrifices. Children used to be laid on his arms and consumed by the fire under him and in him, for he was hollow. He drew his arms in when the victim was deposited upon them, and pressed it tightly that its screams might not be heard. There was machinery in the hind legs by which he could be made to rise. He was surrounded with rays.

### **19. Jesus in Dion and Jogbeha**

The heathens whose children Jesus had cured asked Him whither they should remove, for they were determined to renounce idolatry. Jesus spoke to them of Baptism, exhorting them in the meantime to remain tranquil and persevere in their good resolutions. He spoke to them of God as of a father to whom we must sacrifice our evil inclinations, and who asks no other offering from us than that of our own heart. When addressing the pagans, Jesus always said to them more plainly than He did to the Jews, that God has no need of our offerings. He exhorted them to contrition and penance, to thanksgiving for benefits received, and to compassion toward the suffering. Returned to the Jewish quarter, He terminated the



exercises of the Sabbath and took a repast, after which began a fast in atonement for the adoration of the golden calf. It was celebrated on the 8th of Tisri because the 7th, the fast day proper, fell this year on the Sabbath.

Jesus left the city the next afternoon. The pagans whose children He had cured thanked Him again outside their own quarter. He blessed them, and with twelve disciples went down through the valley to the south of Gadara. He crossed a mountain and reached a little stream flowing from the range below Betharamphtha-Julias where the mines were. It was three hours from Gadara to the inn near the stream at which Jesus and the disciples put up. The Jews dwelling around that part of the country were engaged in gathering in the fruits. Jesus instructed them. There was also a band of pagans near the stream busy gathering white flowers from a blooming hedge, but it was not the flowers alone that they gathered, but also great, ugly beetles and other insects. When Jesus approached them, they drew back as if in fear. It was shown me that these insects were intended for the idol Beelzebub at Dion. I saw the idol outside the gate of the city, sitting under a large willow. It had a figure something like a monkey with short arms and slender legs, and it was seated like a human being. Its head was pointed and furnished with two little horns bent like a crescent, and the face with its extremely long nose was horrible. The chin was short but projecting, the mouth large and like that of a beast, the body lank, the legs long and thin with clawed toes. It wore an apron. In one hand it grasped a vessel by the stem, and in the other held a butterfly just escaping the larva. The butterfly, which was something like a bird and something like a disgusting insect, shone with variegated colors. Around the head of the idol and just above the forehead was a wreath of loathsome beetles and flying vermin, forming as it were a compact



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mass, one appearing to hold the other fast. Above the forehead and in the center of the pointed head between the horns sat one of those disgusting things larger and more hideous than the others. They were glittering, and they radiated all the colors, but they were horrible, venomous things with long bodies, horns, feelers, and stings. When Jesus drew near to the pagans that were seeking these insects for the idol, the whole crown flew asunder like a dark swarm and hid in the holes and corners around the country, while all kinds of frightful black spirits crept with them, frightened, into the holes. They were the wicked spirits that were honored in Beelzebub with those beetles.

On the following forenoon, Jesus reached Dion, that is the Jewish quarter, which was much smaller than that of the pagans. The latter was beautifully situated on the declivity of a mountain and had several temples. The Jewish quarter was entirely distinct from it. Where Jesus arrived outside the city the arbors were, for the most part, finished. Under one of them He was ceremoniously received by the priests and magistrates of the place, His feet washed, and the customary refreshments offered. Immediately after, He went out among the sick, numbers of whom were lying and standing under the arbors that had been erected from this spot to the city. The disciples assisted and kept order. There were sick of all kinds: lame, dumb, blind, dropsical, and paralyzed. Jesus cured and exhorted many. There were some that stood upright on three-legged crutches, and there were other crutches upon which the invalid could rest without using the feet. These latter were almost like go-carts. At last Jesus came to the sick women. They were lying, leaning, and sitting nearer the city under a long arbor that had been erected over a terraced bank. This bank was covered with beautiful, fine grass that hung like soft, silky hair, and over it was spread a carpet. There were several





women afflicted by an issue of blood. They were closely veiled and remained at a distance. Others were hypochondriacal, their faces wan and sallow, their countenance sad and gloomy. Jesus addressed them graciously and cured them one after another. He gave each at the same time hints and admonitions suited to her case for correcting her several imperfections, for avoiding such and such sins, and He instructed all as to what penances to perform. He also blessed and cured several children presented to Him by their mothers. This work lasted until the afternoon and ended amid general rejoicings. The cured went away singing canticles of thanksgiving, joyously and merrily carrying their beds and crutches. They returned to the city processionally in beautiful order as they had been cured, accompanied by their rejoicing relatives, friends, and attendants. Jesus with the disciples and Levites walked in their midst. The humility and gravity of Jesus on such occasions are inexpressible. The women and children led the procession chanting the fortieth Psalm of David: "*Blessed is He that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor.*" They went to the synagogue and thanked God, after which they took a meal under an arbor. It consisted of fruit, birds, honeycomb, and toasted bread. When the Sabbath began, all went in mourning garments to the synagogue, for the great Feast of Atonement then commenced for the Jews.

Jesus delivered in the synagogue a discourse on penance. He spoke against those that limit themselves to corporal purification without restraining the evil desires of the soul. Some of the Jews disciplined themselves under their wide mantles around the thighs and legs. The pagans of Dion also celebrated a feast with an enormous quantity of incense. The very seats upon which they sat were placed over burning perfumes.

I saw, too, the celebration of the Feast of Atonement

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in Jerusalem, the numerous purifications of the High Priest, his arduous preparations and mortification, the sacrifices, the sprinkling of blood, the burning of incense, also the scapegoat, and the casting of lots for the two goats. One was for sacrifice, the other was chased away into the desert with something containing fire tied to its tail. It ran wildly through the wilderness, and at last plunged down a precipice. This desert, which was once traversed by David, commenced above the Mount of Olives. The High Priest was today violently agitated and troubled; he would have been glad if another could have performed the duties of his office instead of himself. He was full of dread at the moment of entering the Holy of Holies, and he earnestly begged the people to pray for him. The people thought he must have committed some sin, and felt very anxious lest some calamity might befall him in the Holy of Holies. The truth was, his conscience smote him for the share he had had in the murder of Zachary, the father of John. This sin was chastised with interest in the person of his son-in-law, who passed sentence of death on Jesus. I do not think this High Priest was Caiaphas, but his father-in-law.

The Holy Mystery was no longer in the Ark of the Covenant. There were in it only some little linen napkins and the various compartments. This Ark of the Covenant was new and quite different in form from the first. The angels were different. They were seated and surrounded by a triple scarf; one foot was raised, the other hung at the side of the Ark, and the crown was still between them. There were all kinds of sacred things in the Ark, such as oil and incense. I remember that the High Priest burned incense and sprinkled blood, that he took one of the little linen cloths from the Ark, that he mixed some blood (which he either drew from his finger or had on his finger) with water, and then presented it to a row of priests to drink. It was a kind of figure of



Holy Communion. I saw also that the High Priest, chastised by God, was become very miserable and was struck with leprosy. There was great consternation in the Temple. I heard a most impressive lesson read in the Temple from Jeremias and at the same time I saw many scenes in the life of the Prophet and much of the horrors of idolatry in Israel.

I saw also during another reading in the Temple that Elias, after his death, wrote a letter to King Joram. The Jews would not believe it. They explained it in this way: They said that Eliseus, who brought the letter to Joram, had given it to him as a prophetic letter bequeathed to himself by Elias. I began myself to think it very strange, when suddenly I was transported to the East and, in my journey, passed the Mountain of the Prophets, which I saw covered with ice and snow. It was crowned with towers, presenting perhaps the appearance it wore in the time of Joram. I went on then eastwardly to Paradise, and saw therein the beautiful, wonderful animals walking and gamboling around. There, too, were the glistening walls and, lying asleep on either side of the gate, Henoah and Elias. Elias was in spirit gazing upon all that was then going on in Palestine. An angel laid before him a roll of fine, white parchment and a reed pen. Elias sat up and wrote, resting the parchment on his knees. I saw a little chariot something like a chair, or throne, coming over an eminence, or around by some steps from the inside of the garden. It was drawn by three marvelously beautiful white animals. I saw Elias mount it and, as if on a rainbow, journey quickly to Palestine. The chariot stood still over a house of Samaria. I saw Eliseus inside praying, his eyes raised to Heaven. I saw Elias letting the letter fall before him, and Eliseus bearing the same to King Joram. The animals were harnessed to Elias' chariot, one in front and two behind. They were indescribably lovely, delicately formed animals of the size perhaps of a large roe, snow-white,



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with long, white, silken hair. Their limbs were very slender, their head always in motion, and on their forehead was an elegant horn bent somewhat toward the front. On the day that Elias was taken up to Heaven, I saw his chariot drawn by the same kind of animals.

I saw also the history of Eliseus and the Sunamitess. Eliseus performed prodigies even more wonderful than those of Elias, and in his dress and manners there was something more elegant and refined. Elias was wholly a man of God with nothing in his manners modeled after other men. He was something like John the Baptist; they were men of the same stamp. I saw also how Giezi, the servant of Eliseus, ran after the man whom his master had cured of leprosy (Naaman), It was night and Eliseus was asleep. Giezi overtook Naaman at the Jordan and demanded presents from him in the name of his master.

On the next day Giezi was pursuing his work as if nothing had happened (he was making light wooden screens to be used as partitions between sleeping apartments) when Eliseus asked him: "Where hast thou been?" and exposed to him all that had taken place the previous night. The servant was punished with leprosy, which he transmitted to his posterity.

As the idolatry practiced by the human race, the adoration of animals and idols in the early times, the repeated lapsing of the Israelites into the same, and the great mercy of God in sending them the Prophets were shown me, and I was wondering how men could adore such abomination, I had a vision in which I saw that the same abomination still exists on the earth, though in a formless material, more spiritual. I saw innumerable visions throughout the whole world of idolatry infecting even Christianity, and I saw it indeed in almost all the forms

in which it was formerly practiced. I saw priests adoring serpents in presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament,



their different passions assuming the various forms of those serpents. I saw all kinds of similar animals by the side of learned and distinguished men. They adored them while at the same time they *thought themselves above all religion!* I saw toads and all kinds of hateful creatures near poor, low, depraved people. I saw also entire churches in the practice of idolatry, namely, a dark, reformed church in the North with empty, horrible altars upon which stood ravens receiving the adoration of the congregation. The people saw not indeed such animals, but they were adoring them in their own conceits and haughty self sufficiency. I saw ecclesiastics for whom little distorted figures, little pugs, etc., were turning the leaves of their breviary while they recited the Holy Office. Yes, I saw with some even the idols of ancient times, such as Moloch and Baal. They were placed on the table among their books, and held sway over them. I have seen them even presenting morsels of food to those men who despised the holy simplicity of the children of God, and made a mockery of it.

I saw that such horrors are as rife in our own day as in the past, and that the visions of idolatry vouchsafed me were not accidental. If the ungodliness and idolatry of men of our own day could assume a corporeal form, if their thoughts and sentiments could be reduced to exterior acts, we should find the same idols existing now as in days gone by.

When Jesus again left Dion, several heathens from the pagan quarter approached Him very timidly. They had heard of the wonderful cures He had effected in Gadara, and they now brought their children to Him. Jesus cured them and induced the parents to determine to receive Baptism. After that He went with twelve disciples five hours to the south and over the brook that flowed down from the vale of Ephron.

One half-hour to the south of this brook lay Jogbeha, a little, unknown place, quite hidden away in a hollow behind a forest. It was founded by a Prophet, a spy

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of Moses and Jethro, whose name sounds like Malachai. He is not, however, one and the same with the last Prophet, Malachias. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, employed him as a servant. He was exceedingly faithful and prudent, on which account Moses sent him to explore this country. He had come two years before Moses arrived himself, had explored the country for miles around even as far as the borders of the lake, and had given an account of all that he saw. Jethro at that time dwelt near the Red Sea, but upon Malachai's report, he went with the wife and sons of Moses to Arga. Malachai was at last pursued as a spy. They hunted him to kill him. There was no city here in those times, only a few people living in tents. Malachai took refuge in a morass, or cistern, and an angel appeared and helped him. He brought him upon a long strip of parchment the command to continue three years longer reconnoitering the country. The inhabitants, that is those who lived in the tents, provided him with clothes such as they themselves wore, long, red tunics and jackets of the same color. Malachai also explored the country around Betharamphtha. He lived for some time among the tent-dwellers of Jogbeha, and by his superior intelligence rendered them great assistance.

In the hollow in which Jogbeha was hidden was a ditch filled with water and quite covered with reeds, and on the spot in which Malachai lay concealed was a well that had been filled up. It began later on to bubble and cast out quantities of sand with occasional columns of vapor and sometimes pebbles. By degrees was formed around the well a hill, which was soon clothed with verdure. The morass was filled up by earth brought from a neighboring mountain, and buildings were erected upon it. Thus arose around the well, which was covered by a beautiful spring house, the city of Jogbeha, which name signifies: "It will be elevated." The marshy cistern must have been built around in far earlier times,



for lying near were the moss-covered ruins of walls in which were still discernible the holes destined probably for fish. There were other ruins in this locality like the foundation of an ancient tent castle. Malachias taught the inhabitants to use black mineral pitch in building.

Jesus was very graciously received in the isolated city of Jogbeha. Living apart from the other inhabitants was a sect called Karaites. They wore long, yellow scapulars, white garments, and aprons of rough skin. The youths wore shorter clothes and had their limbs wound with strips of stuff. There were about four hundred of these men. Once upon a time they were of far more importance, but suffered much from the oppression of enemies. They were of the race of Esra and a descendant of Jethro. One of their teachers had a great dispute once with a distinguished pharisaical Doctor. They clung strictly to the letter of the Law and rejected oral additions, led a life very simple and plain, and had all their goods in common. If a member withdrew from the community, he had to abandon whatever goods or property he had brought to it. There were no poor among them, for they mutually assisted one another; even strangers were supported by them. They revered old age, and among them were many aged persons, whom the young treated with the greatest deference. They called those holding a distinguished position "ancients." The Karaites were sworn enemies of the Pharisees, who added all sorts of oral traditions to the Law, though in some points they were somewhat similar to the Sadducees. In their manners and customs, however, they were different, being far stricter. One of them belonging to this place had married a woman of the tribe of Benjamin and on that account had been driven from the community. It was at the time of the great strife with that tribe. They suffered nothing in the least resembling an image, and they believed that the souls of

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the deceased passed into other bodies, even into those of the lower animals. They delighted in the thought of the beautiful animals in Paradise. They were in expectation of the Messiah, after whom they earnestly prayed, but they looked for Him to come as a worldly monarch, They regarded Jesus as a Prophet. They observed great cleanliness, but did not adhere to the numerous purifications, the throwing away of dishes, and similar annoying observances not in the Law. They followed the Law religiously, though interpreting it much more freely than did the Pharisees.

They lived here quietly, having little communication with other people, permitting neither luxury nor vanity, and supporting themselves by their modest labor. A great many willow trees grew in these parts, from which they wove baskets and beehives, for there were many bees around here. They also made coarse covers, and light wooden vessels, all working together under long tents. Their arbors for the Feast of Tabernacles now at hand stood already prepared outside the city. They entertained Jesus with honey and bread baked in the ashes. Jesus taught here. He instructed them in all things, and they listened to Him very reverently. He expressed to them the wish that they should live in Judea, and praised the reverence of their children toward their parents, of the scholars for their teachers, and the regard they entertained for age. He also commended their attention to the poor and the sick, for whom they provided in well arranged hospitals.

# FROM THE SECOND FEAST OF TABERNACLES TO THE FIRST CONVERSION OF MAGDALEN

## 1. Jesus in Ennon and Socoth. Mary of Suphan. Conversion of an Adulteress

From Jogbeha, Jesus went through Socoth to Ennon, a distance of about an hour along a pleasant road, enlivened by the camps of the caravans and the pilgrims going to Baptism. It was already lined with long rows of tents covered with foliage, and the people were still busied with preparations, because with the close of the coming Sabbath, the Feast of Tabernacles began. Jesus taught at intervals on the way. Just outside Ennon they had erected a beautiful tent, and a solemn reception was prepared for Jesus by Mary the Suphanite. The most distinguished personages of the city were present, also the priests, and Mary with her children. The men washed the feet of Jesus and His disciples, and costly refreshments were offered them, according to custom. Mary's children and others of their age presented the viands. The women, closely veiled, prostrated before Jesus, their faces on the ground. He saluted and blessed them graciously. Mary, with tears of joy and gratitude, invited Jesus to repair to her house. When He entered the city, Mary's children, two girls and a boy, and others of their age with long garlands of flowers and scarves of woolen stuff walked before Him and at His side.

Jesus, accompanied by His disciples, entered the

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courtyard of Mary's house, passing under a flowery arch erected for the occasion. Mary again cast herself at His feet, weeping and thanking, her children following her example. Jesus caressed the little ones. Mary told Him that Dina the Samaritan had been there, and that the man with whom she had been living up to that time had received Baptism. Mary knew Dina, since her own husband and three legitimate children lived in Damascus. She and the Samaritan had together sounded Jesus' praises. She was radiant with joy, and showed Jesus many costly robes for the use of the priests, and a high miter which she herself had made for the Temple, for she was incredibly skillful at such work, and rich in money and property. Jesus was very gracious toward her. He spoke to her of her husband, advising her to go back to him, to be reconciled with him, for her presence near him would prove of use, and her illegitimate children could be provided for elsewhere. He directed her also to send a messenger to her husband to request him to come to her. On leaving her house Jesus went to the place of Baptism, where He mounted the pulpit and taught the people.

Lazarus, Joseph of Arimathea, Veronica, Simeon's sons, and some disciples from Jerusalem had come hither for the Sabbath. Andrew, John, and some of the Baptist's disciples were still here, but James the Less had gone back. The Baptist had again sent messengers to Jesus urging Him to go to Jerusalem and to say openly before the whole world who He was. John was now so impatient, so anxious, because though so powerfully impelled to announce Jesus, he was unable to do so.

When the Sabbath began, Jesus taught in the synagogue, taking for His subjects the creation of the world, the waters, and the Fall of man. He alluded very significantly to the Messiah, commenting in the most



striking manner upon *Isaias* 42:5-43, and applying the same to Himself and the Jewish people. After

the Sabbath, there was an entertainment given to Jesus at the public banqueting hall. It had been prepared by Mary of Suphan. The tables, as well as the hall, were beautifully decorated with foliage and flowers and lamps. The guests were numerous and among them were many whom Jesus had cured. The women sat on one side behind a screen. During the meal Mary went forward with her children and placed costly perfumes on the table. She then poured a flask of odoriferous balm over Jesus' head, and cast herself down before Him. Jesus received these attentions graciously, and related parables. No one found fault with Mary, for all loved her on account of her munificence.

Next morning Jesus cured several sick persons, and taught in the synagogue. He also taught in a place to which those pagans that had received Baptism and those still in expectation of the same were admitted. In His latter instruction He spoke so feelingly, so naturally, of the lost son, that one would have thought Him the father who had found his son. He stretched out His arms, exclaiming: "See! See! He returns! Let us make ready a feast for him!" It was so natural that the people looked around, as if all that Jesus was saying were a reality. When He mentioned the calf that the father had slaughtered for the newly found son, His words were full of mysterious significance. It was as if He said: "But what would not be that love which would lead the Heavenly Father to give His own Son as a sacrifice, to save His lost children." The instruction was addressed principally to penitents, to the baptized, and to the pagans present, who were depicted as the lost son returning to his home. All were excited to joy and mutual charity. The fruit of Jesus' teaching was soon apparent at the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, in the good will and hospitality shown by the Jews to their pagan brethren. In the afternoon Jesus with His disciples and a crowd of the inhabitants



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took a walk outside the city and along by the Jordan, through the beautiful meadows and flowery fields in which the tents of the heathens stood. The parable they had just heard, that of the Prodigal Son, formed the subject of conversation, and all were cheerful and happy, full of love toward one another.

The exercises of the Sabbath were today brought to a close at an earlier hour than usual. Jesus again taught and cured some sick before its close. Then all went out of the city, or rather to a quarter somewhat remote, for it was built very irregularly, the streets broken up by open squares and gardens. And now was celebrated a great feast. The tabernacles were arranged in three rows and adorned with flowers, green branches, all kinds of devices formed of fruit, streamers, and innumerable lamps. The middle row was occupied by Jesus, the disciples, the priests, and the chief men of the city disposed in numerous groups. In one of the side rows were the women, and in the other the school children, the youths, and the maidens forming three distinct bands. The teachers sat with their pupils, and every class had its own chanters. Soon the children, crowned with flowers, surrounded the tables with flutes and chimes and harps, playing and singing. I saw also that the men held in one hand palm branches on which were little tinkling balls, and branches of willow with fine, narrow leaves, also the branches of a kind of bush such as we cultivate in pots. It was myrtle. In the other they held the beautiful yellow Esrog apple. They waved their branches as they sang. This was done three times: at the commencement, in the middle, and at the end of the feast. That kind of apple is not indigenous to Palestine; it comes from a warmer clime. It may indeed be found here and there in the sunny regions, but it is not so vigorous nor does it ripen to maturity. It was transported hither by caravans from warm countries. The fruit is yellow and like a small melon; it has a little crown



on top, is ribbed and somewhat flat. The pulp in the center of the fruit is streaked with red, and in it closely packed together are five little kernels, but no seed vessel. The stalk is rather curved, and the blossoms form a large, white cluster like our elderberry. The branches below the large leaves strike root again in the earth, whence new ones spring up and thus an arbor is formed. The fruit rises from the axel of the leaves.

The pagans also took part in this feast. They, too, had their tabernacles of green branches, and those that had received Baptism took their places next to the Jews, by whom they were cordially and hospitably entertained. All were still influenced by the impressions received at the instruction upon the Prodigal Son. The meal lasted until late into the night. Jesus went up and down along the tables instructing the guests, and wherever anything was needed supplying the want through one of the disciples. Joyous sounds of conversation and merriment arose from all sides, occasionally interrupted by prayer and canticles. The whole place was ablaze with lights. The roofs of Ennon were covered with tents and tabernacles, and there the occupants of the houses slept at night. In the tabernacles outside the city many poor people and servants, after the feast was over and all had gone to rest, passed the night as guards.

Jesus, accompanied by the disciples and many others, returned from Ennon to Socoth, which was at no great distance. The greater part of the way was covered with tabernacles and tents, for many from the surrounding districts celebrated the feast here, and the caravans, which were constantly coming and going, were now resting for the feast. The whole length of the road was like one triumphal march. Behind the tabernacles were stands covered with awnings at which provisions could be purchased. It took Jesus several hours to traverse this road, for

He was everywhere saluted and from time to time He stood still

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to instruct. He did not reach the synagogue of Socoth till toward evening. Socoth on the north bank of the Jabok was a beautiful city, and had a very magnificent synagogue. Besides the Feast of Tabernacles, there was another celebrated today in Socoth, that of the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau. The whole day was devoted to it, and there were visitors from all the country around. Among the school children at Ennon were some of the orphans from the school of Abelmahula, who were now in Socoth, having come for the feast of today. It was the real anniversary of Jacob and Esau's reconciliation, which, according to the Jewish tradition, had taken place on this day.

The synagogue, one of the most beautiful that I have ever seen, was rendered still more gorgeous today by its festal decorations of countless crowns, flowery garlands, and lovely, sparkling lamps. It was lofty and supported by eight columns. On both sides of the edifice ran corridors communicating with the buildings that comprised the dwellings of the Levites and the schools. One end of the synagogue was more elevated than the rest, and here toward the center rose an ornamented pillar with little cases and projections running up around it, in which were kept the rolls of the Law. Behind the pillar was a table, and near it a curtain that could be drawn to cut off the neighboring space from the rest of the synagogue. A couple of steps farther back was a row of seats for the priests, with one more elevated in the middle for the preacher. Back of these seats stood an altar of incense above which, in the roof of the synagogue, was an opening; and behind this altar, at the far end of the edifice, were tables upon which the offerings were deposited. The men, ranged according to their classes, stood in the center of the synagogue. To the left, on a slight elevation and separated by a grating, was the place for the women; and on the right was that of the school children grouped in classes, the boys and girls separate.





The feast of today celebrated the reconciliation between God and man. There was a general confession of sin made either in public or private, according to individual desire. All gathered round the altar of incense, offered gifts of expiation, received a penance from the priests, and made voluntary vows. This ceremony bore a striking resemblance to our Sacrament of Penance. The priest from the teacher's chair spoke of Jacob and Esau, who had today been reconciled with God and each other, also of Laban and Jacob who had again become friends and offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and he earnestly exhorted his hearers to penance. Many of those present had by John's teaching and that of Jesus during the past days been very much touched, and were waiting only for this great festival to do penance. Some men, whose consciences reproached them with grave faults, went through the door in the grating near the teacher's chair around behind the altar, and laid on the tables their offerings, which a priest received. Then, returning to the priests in front of the pillar containing the Law, they confessed their sins either publicly to the assembled priests, or privately to one of their own choice. In the latter case, both priest and penitent retired behind the curtain, the confession was made in a low voice, a penance imposed, and at the same time incense was cast upon the altar. If the smoke arose in a certain way, the people took it as a sign of the genuineness of the penitent's contrition and of the pardon accorded his sins. The rest of the Jews chanted and prayed during the confessions. The penitents made a kind of profession of faith, promising fidelity to the Law, to Israel, and to the Holy of Holies. Then they prostrated and confessed their sins, often with abundant tears. The female penitents followed after the men, and their offerings were received by the priests. Then retiring behind a grating, they called for a priest and confessed.

The Jews accused themselves of sins against the



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Ten Commandments and of all violations of established usages. There was something singular in their confession, which I hardly know how to repeat. They bemoaned the sins of their forefathers. They spoke of a soul prone to sin received from their progenitors, and of another, a holy one, received from God. They appeared indeed to speak of two distinct souls. The priests in their exhortation likewise said something to the same effect, namely, "May their" (the ancestors') "sinful soul remain not in us, but may our holy soul remain in us!" I cannot now recall what was said of the influence mutually exerted by these two souls upon, and by, and in, each other. Jesus next spoke. He touched upon this same point, but treated it differently from the Doctors. He said that it should indeed be so no longer. The sinful soul received from their forefathers should not remain in them. It was a touching instruction, clearly signifying that Jesus Himself was about to make satisfaction for all souls. They also lamented the sins of their parents, as if knowing that all kinds of evils had descended to them through their progenitors, as if through them they were still in possession of the sad heritage of sin.

The penitential exercises had already begun when Jesus arrived. He was received at the entrance of the synagogue, and for awhile He remained standing at one side on the platform among the Doctors, one of whom was preaching. It was about five o'clock when He arrived. The offerings of the penitents consisted of all sorts of fruits, money, articles of clothing for the priests, pieces of stuff, silken tassels and knots, girdles, etc., and principally of frankincense, some of which was burned at once.

And now I witnessed a touching spectacle. While the confessions were going on and the offerings were being made by the penitents, I noticed a distinguished-looking lady in a private seat near the secluded place of penance. Her seat was cut off from

the rest by a grating. I noticed her troubled and agitated appearance. Her maidservant was nearby, having just deposited on a stool at her mistress' side a basket containing the gifts intended for the offering. The lady was impatient for her turn to come, and when at last she could no longer restrain her agitation and desire for reconciliation, she arose, drew her veil and, preceded by her maid with the offerings, passed through the grating and straight to the priests, into a place to which entrance was forbidden to women. The wardens tried to prevent her, but the maid would not be stopped. She forced her way in, exclaiming: "Make way! Make way for my mistress! She wants to make her offering, she wants to do penance! Make way for her! She wants to purify her soul!" The lady, agitated and bowed down by sorrow, advanced toward the priests, threw herself on her knees, and begged to be reconciled. But they told her to withdraw, they could not hear her there. One of them however, younger than his brethren, took her by the hand, saying: "I will reconcile thee! If thy corporal presence belongs not here, not so thy soul, since thou art penitent!" Then turning with her toward Jesus, he said: "Rabbi, what sayest Thou?" The lady fell on her face before Jesus, and He answered: "Yes, her soul has a right to be here! Permit this daughter of Adam to do penance!" and the priest retired with her into the curtained enclosure. When she reappeared, she prostrated in tears upon the ground, exclaiming: "Wipe your feet on me, for I am an adulteress!" and the priests touched her lightly with the foot. Her husband, who knew nothing of what was transpiring, was sent for. At his entrance, Jesus occupied the teacher's chair, and His words sank deep into the man's heart. He wept, and his wife, veiled and prostrate on the ground before him, confessed her guilt. Her tears flowed abundantly, and she appeared to be more dead than alive. Jesus addressed her: "Thy sins are forgiven thee! Arise, child of God!"

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and the husband, deeply moved, reached out his hand to his penitent wife. Their hands were then bound together with the wife's veil and the long, narrow scarf of the husband, and loosened again after they had received a benediction. It was like a second nuptial ceremony. The lady was now, after her reconciliation, quite inebriated with joy. At the moment her offerings were presented, she had cried out: "Pray! Pray! Burn incense, offer sacrifices, that my sins may be forgiven!" and she falteringly repeated various passages from the Psalms, while being conducted to her place by the priests.

Her offering consisted of many costly fruits such as they were accustomed to use at the Feast of Tabernacles. They had been carefully arranged in the basket, so that they would not injure one another by pressure. There were also borders, silk tassels, and fringes for priestly vestments. She at the same time committed to the flames several magnificent silk robes in which her vanity had arrayed itself for the gaze of her paramour. She was a tall, robust, beautifully formed woman of an ardent and vivacious temperament. Her deep contrition and voluntary avowal of guilt had won for her forgiveness, and her husband was heartily reconciled with her. She had had no children by her illicit connection, had been the first to dissolve her sinful bonds, and had won over her paramour to penance. She did not, however, make him known either to the priests or to her husband. It was forbidden to the latter to make inquiries, and to her to name the guilty one. The husband was a pious man; he forgave and forgot with all his heart. The multitude present did not indeed catch the details of the scene. Still they saw the interruption, they saw that something extraordinary was transpiring, and they heard the lady's cry for prayer and sacrifice. All prayed earnestly for her, and rejoiced over a soul doing penance. The people of this place were very good, as they generally



were on the east side of the Jordan, for they had retained more of the manners and customs of the ancient patriarchs.

Jesus continued teaching in beautiful and touching language. I recall distinctly His allusion to the sins of our forefathers and our own share in the same, and He rectified the ideas of some of His auditors on that subject. Once He used the expression: "Your fathers have eaten grapes, and your teeth have been set on edge."

The schoolteachers were then questioned upon the faults of their pupils, while the latter were reminded that if they accused themselves and were sorry, they would be forgiven,

There were many sick outside the synagogue and, although it was not customary for them to enter on the Feast of Tabernacles, yet Jesus directed the disciples to bring them into the corridor between the sacred building and the dwellings of the Doctors. At the close of the feast, the whole synagogue having long before been lighted up with lamps, He went out into the corridor and cured many of them. At the moment Jesus entered the corridor, a messenger appeared from the lately reconciled lady, begging Jesus to grant her a few words. Jesus went to her and retired apart with her a few instants. She threw herself at His feet and exclaimed: "Master, he with whom I sinned, implores Thee to reconcile him to God!" and Jesus promised to see him there in that same place after the repast.

The curing of the sick was followed by an entertainment in honor of the feast, and given on one of the open squares of the city. Jesus, the disciples, the Levites, and the most distinguished personages of the city took their places under a large and beautiful bower that formed the



center of many others, the men and women separate. The poor were not forgotten. Everyone sent the best from his own table to them. Jesus went around from table to table, not

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excepting that of the women. The reconciled sinner was full of joy, as were also her female friends. They gathered around her, heartily wishing her every happiness. As Jesus was making the rounds of the tables, she seemed to be very uneasy about something, and frequently cast anxious glances toward Him, hoping that He would not forget His promise to reconcile the partner of her guilt, for she knew that he was already waiting at the place designated. When Jesus drew near to where she sat, He quieted her anxiety, telling her that He knew what was troubling her and bidding her rest assured that all would be well in its own good time. When the guests separated for their homes, Jesus started for His lodgings near the synagogue. He was met by the man who had been waiting in the corridor for Him, and who now threw himself at His feet and confessed his sin. Jesus exhorted him to sin no more and imposed on him as penance to give the priests every week for a certain time something for a charitable purpose. He was not obliged to make public offerings, but to mourn his sin in private.

When Jesus returned from Socoth to Ennon, He gave instructions at the place of Baptism, cured the sick, and visited the Gentiles. Several little parties of neophytes were baptized. There were still standing here some of the arrangements John had made when baptizing for the first time at the Jordan near On, a tent and the baptismal stone. The neophytes leaned over a railing, their heads over the baptismal pool. Jesus received the confessions of many and granted them absolution from their sins, a power which He had imparted to some of the older disciples—for instance, to Andrew. John the Evangelist did not yet baptize. He acted as witness and sponsor.

Before Jesus again left Ennon with His disciples, He had an interview with Mary the Suphanite in her own house. He gave her salutary advice.

Mary was entirely changed. She was full of love, zeal, humility,

and gratitude; she busied herself with the poor and the sick. When journeying after her cure through Ramoth and Basan, Jesus had sent a disciple to Bethania to inform the holy women of it and of her reconciliation, in consequence of which announcement Veronica, Johanna Chusa, and Martha had been to visit her.

On His departure from Ennon, Jesus received rich presents from Mary and many other people, all of which were at once distributed to the poor. The gateway by which He left the city was decorated with an arch of flowers and garlands. The assembled crowd saluted Him with songs of praise, and He was met outside the city by women and children who presented Him with wreaths. This was one of the customs at the Feast of Tabernacles. Many of the citizens accompanied Him beyond the city limits. For two hours His road ran to the south, through the valley of the Jordan, and on this side of the river. Then it wound for about half an hour to the west, then turned again to the south and led to the city of Akrabis, which was situated upon a ridge of the mountain.

## **2. Jesus in Akrabis, Silo, and Korea**

Jesus was received in ceremony outside of Akrabis, for the inhabitants were expecting His coming. The tabernacles of green branches were ranged for some distance beyond the city, and into one of the largest and most beautiful they conducted Jesus for the customary washing of feet and offering of refreshments. Akrabis was rather a large place, about two hours from the Jordan. It had five gates, and was traversed by the highway between Samaria and Jericho. Travelers in this direction had to pass through Akrabis, consequently it was well supplied with provisions and other necessaries. Outside the gate at which Jesus arrived were inns for the accommodation of caravans. Tabernacles were

erected before each

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of the five gates, for each quarter of the city had its own gate.

Next day Jesus made the rounds of the city, visited all the tabernacles, and gave instructions here and there. The people observed many customs peculiar to this festival; for instance, they took only a mouthful in the morning, the rest of the repast being reserved for the poor. Their employment during the day was interrupted by canticles and prayers, and instructions were given by the Elders. These instructions were now delivered by Jesus. On His coming and going, He was received and escorted by little boys and girls carrying around Him garlands of flowers. This, too, was one of their customs. The residents of the different quarters sometimes went from their own tabernacles to those of their neighbors, either to listen to the instructions or to assist at an entertainment. On such occasions they went processionaly, carrying garlands such as were borne by Jesus' escort.

The women were busied with all sorts of occupations in the tabernacles. Some were sitting embroidering flowers on long strips of stuff, others were making sandals out of the coarse, brown hair of goats and camels. They attached their work to their girdle as we do our knitting. The soles were furnished with a support like a heel both before and behind, also with sharp points, in order to aid in climbing the mountains. The people gave Jesus a very cordial reception, but the Doctors of the Law were not so simple-hearted as their confreres at Ennon and Socoth. They were indeed courteous in their manner, but somewhat reserved.

From Akrabis Jesus went to Silo, distant only one hour in a direct line toward the southwest; but as the road winds first down into the valley and then over the mountain, it makes the distance a good two hours. The inhabitants of Silo, like those of Akrabis, were assembled in the

tabernacles outside the

gates of the city. They, too, knew of Jesus' coming and were waiting for Him. They saw Him and His companions from afar, climbing up the winding road that led to their city. When they perceived that He was not directing His steps to the gate nearest to Akribis, but was going around the city more to the northwest, to that which led from Samaria, they sent messengers to announce the fact to the people of that quarter. These latter received Him into their tabernacles, washed His feet, and presented the customary refreshments, He went immediately to the central height of the city, where once the Ark of the Covenant had rested, and taught in the open air from a teacher's chair very beautifully wrought in stone. Here, too, were tabernacles and houses of entertainment, in which latter everything needed in the former was cooked in common. Men were performing this duty, but they appeared to me to be slaves and not real Jews.

The day following was one of the most solemn of the feast, though I do not know whether what I saw here was a purely local custom or one practiced generally. One of the Doctors of the Law annually on this day delivered from the teacher's chair a castigatory sermon, to which not one of his hearers dared offer the least contradiction. It was principally for the purpose of delivering this sermon that Jesus had come here today. All the Jews, men, women, youths, maidens, and children had assembled to hear Him. They had come processionally from their different tabernacles, carrying festoons and garlands of leaves between the various divisions and classes. The teacher's chair, under an awning decorated with foliage, crowned a terraced eminence. Jesus taught until midday. He spoke of the mercy of God toward His people, of Israel's revolts and turpitude, of the chastisements awaiting Jerusalem, of the destruction of the Temple, of the present time of grace, the last that would be offered them. He said that if the





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Jews rejected this last grace, never to the end of time should they as a nation receive another, and that a much more frightful chastisement should fall upon Jerusalem than it had ever yet experienced. The whole discourse was calculated to inspire fear. All listened silent and terrified, for Jesus very clearly signified, as He explained the Prophecies, that He Himself was the One who was to bring salvation. The Pharisees of the place, who were not of much account and who, like those of Akrabis, had received Jesus with a show of hypocritical reverence, kept silence, though filled with wonder and irritation. The people, however, applauded Jesus and sang His praises. Jesus spoke likewise of the Scribes, their misrepresentations of the Holy Scriptures, their false interpretations and additions.

That evening a public entertainment was given in the tabernacles on the eminence. But Jesus was not present at it. He went down to the tabernacles of the poor, where He consoled and instructed. Wherever there were no Pharisees to spy their actions, the people pressed around Jesus, cast themselves at His feet, paid Him homage, confessed their sins, and made known their needs. He consoled them and gave them advice. It was a touching sight to see all this going on in the darkness of night among the tabernacles, from which shone forth a faint and trembling glimmer. No lights were to be seen for, on account of the draught, the lamps had been covered with screens, and the yellow glare they cast lit up the green foliage, the fruits, and the people in a manner quite strange to behold. From the height of Silo, many places around could be distinctly seen, and everywhere shone the glimmering light of the tabernacle-feast, while the sound of singing came from far and near. Jesus did not perform any cures here. The Pharisees kept the sick back, and the people appeared to be afraid. Here as in Akrabis, the song of the Pharisees, when they heard of Jesus' coming,



was: "What new doctrine is He now going to bring us? What design has He in coming here?"

From Silo Jesus took a southwestwardly direction and went down for one and a half hours to Korea, a place that could be seen from the height of the former city. It had neither walls nor ramparts. The Pharisees of Korea went out some distance beyond the city to meet Jesus, taking with them one of their fellow citizens who had been blind from his birth. They thought to tempt Jesus. The blind man had over his garments, around his shoulder, and over his head a wide scarf like a linen cloth. He was a tall, handsome man. As Jesus drew near, to the astonishment of the bystanders, the blind man turned toward Him and cast himself at His feet. Jesus raised him and questioned him on his religion, the Ten Commandments, the Law, and the Prophecies. The blind man answered more intelligently than any had dared to hope—yes, he even seemed to utter prophecies. He spoke of the persecution awaiting Jesus, saying that He must not yet go to Jerusalem, because there His enemies would put Him to death. All present were struck with fear. The crowd gathered around was great. Jesus asked him whether he desired to see the tabernacles of Israel, the mountains and the Jordan, his own parents and friends, the Temple, the Holy City, and lastly Himself, Jesus, who was then standing before him. The blind man answered that he already saw Him, that he had seen Him as soon as He drew near, and he described His appearance and dress. "But," he continued, "I do desire to see all other things, and I know that, if Thou wilt, Thou canst give me sight." Then Jesus laid His hand on the man's forehead, prayed, and with His thumb made the Sign of the Cross on his closed eyelids, raising them at the same time. Thereupon the man cast off the scarf from his head and shoulders, looked gladly and wonderingly around, and exclaimed: "Great are the works of the Almighty!"



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He fell at Jesus' feet, who blessed him. The Pharisees looked on in silence, the relatives of the blind man gathered around him, the crowd intoned Psalms, while the blind man himself in a prophetic strain spoke and chanted alternately of Jesus and the fulfillment of the Promise. Jesus went on into the city, where He healed many sick and restored sight to others that were blind, whom He found in the space between the houses and the earthen mounds. The usual courtesies of washing the feet and offering refreshments had already been tendered to Him in one of the tabernacles outside the city. The blind man, who accompanied Jesus the whole way, continued to speak under prophetic inspiration of the Jordan, of the Holy Spirit who had descended upon Him, and of the voice from Heaven.

That evening Jesus preached in the synagogue for the Sabbath. He spoke of the family of Noe, of the building of the ark, of the vocation of Abraham, and expounded the passages of Isaias in which mention is made of God's covenant with Noe, and of the rainbow as a sign in the heavens. (*Is.* 54-55). As He spoke I saw all very distinctly: the whole life and all the generations of the Patriarchs, the branches that separated from the parent stock, and the idolatry that arose from them. When I am actually gazing upon such things, all seems clear and natural, but when out of vision, when returned to the routine of daily life, I am saddened by its weary interruptions and can no longer comprehend what I have seen with the eye of the spirit. Jesus spoke likewise of the erroneous interpretation of the Scripture and of false computation of time. He proved by His own reckoning, which was quite simple and clear, that all things in the Scriptures could be made accurately to accord. I cannot understand how such things could have been thrown into confusion, while others had been totally forgotten.

One section of Korea lay upon a terraced mountain;

the other, connected with the first by a row of small houses, extended eastward into a deep mountain dale. Some Pharisees and many sick from Silo were here awaiting Jesus. Although Korea lay a little more to the west than Akrahis, yet it was still nearer to the Jordan as the river made a bend in this locality. It was not a large place and the people were not rich. They did cheap basketwork, made beehives and long strips of straw matting, some coarse, some fine. The straw or reeds were bleached and of the best. They made also whole screens like entire walls of this matting for separating sleeping chambers one from another. There were in the neighborhood many other little places. The mountains of this region are steep and rugged. Across the Jordan from Akrahis was the region traversed by Jesus the preceding year at the Feast of Tabernacles when He went through the valley to Dibon.

Next morning Jesus preached in the synagogue and, while the Jews took their Sabbath promenade, cured many sick who had been brought to a large hall nearby. At the close of the Sabbath, while assisting at the entertainment given in the tabernacles, Jesus had a dispute with the Pharisees. The subject under discussion was the prophecies uttered lately by the man born blind and to whom Jesus had given sight. The Pharisees maintained that the same man had already predicted many things that had never come to pass, to which Jesus replied that the Spirit of God had not then descended upon him. During the conversation, mention was made of Ezechiel as if his early Prophecies relating to Jerusalem had not been fulfilled, to which Jesus responded that the Spirit of God had not come upon him until he was in Babylon near the river Chobar, when something was given him to swallow. Jesus' response reduced the Pharisees to silence.

The man restored to sight went around the city, praising God, singing



Psalms, and prophesying. The

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day before he had been to the synagogue, where he was invested with a broad girdle and was admitted by vow among the Nazarites. A priest performed over him the ceremony of consecration. I think he afterward joined the disciples.

Jesus visited the parents of the man restored to sight, he himself having prayed Him to do so. He conducted Him to their home, which was in a retired part of the city. They were Essenians, of the grade that lived in marriage, distant relatives of Zachary, and connected in some way with the Essenian community of Maspha. They had several sons and daughters, the one restored to sight being the youngest child. There were several other Essenian families, all related to them, living in their neighborhood. They owned beautiful fields on a declivity just outside their quarter of the city, and cultivated wheat and barley. They retained for their own use only a third part of the produce, one being given to the poor, the other to the community at Maspha. These Essenians came out hospitably to meet Jesus and welcome Him in front of their dwellings. The father of the blind man restored to sight presented him to Jesus with the request that He would receive him as the least of the servants and messengers of His disciples, the one to go before Him and prepare the inns for His reception. Jesus accepted him and sent him at once to Bethania with Silas and one of the disciples from Hebron. I think He intended to give Lazarus a joyful surprise by means of the man restored to sight, for he had known the latter as one born blind. The young man's father was named Cyrus, Sirius, or Syrus, the name of a king who reigned during the Jewish Captivity. The son's name was Manahem. He had always worn a girdle under his garments, but after his cure he put it outside and made a formal vow for a time. He possessed the gift of prophecy. Even when blind he had always been present at John's preaching, and had received baptism. He often gathered



many of the youths of Korea around him, instructed them and, inspired by the Spirit, prophesied to them of Jesus. His parents loved him on account of his piety and zeal, and provided him with clothing of the best. When Jesus gave him sight, He said: "I give thee a double gift, sight of soul and of body." The Pharisees of Korea treated Manahem with contempt on account of his prophecies. They called them troubled fancies, foolish reveries, and said that he was vain of his fine clothes. They had brought him out themselves to meet Jesus, being firmly convinced that He could not cure him since no one had ever seen any pupil in his eyes. And now that he was restored to sight, the most wicked among them dared to affirm that he had never been blind, that being an Essenian, he had very likely made a vow to feign blindness.

The Pharisees who spoke with Jesus of Ezechiel had expressed their contempt for the Prophet. He was, they said, only a servant of Jeremias and he had, in the school of the Prophet, very preposterous, very gloomy reveries. Things had fallen out quite differently from his predictions. Manahem also had uttered very profound prophecies of Melchisedech, Malachias, and Jesus.

### **3. Jesus in Ophra, Salem, and Aruma**

One hour to the southwest of Korea was the city of Ophra, hidden among the mountains. Starting from Korea the traveler had first to ascend and then to descend the mountain road. An hour and a half at most westward from it, and on the north side of the desert to Bethoron toward the west, stood the mountain fortress of Alexandrium. Mount Garizim lay on the northwest, to the south and west the plain just mentioned and the mountains of the tribe of Benjamin. Mary often traversed this plain. Many lonely shepherd huts were scattered over it,

and the

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city of Bethel was built on its confines.

Three highroads ran through Ophra. Caravans from Hebron were constantly passing this way, consequently the whole place was made up of public inns and mercantile houses. The people were somewhat rude and greedy for gain. Once during the preceding year they had received a visit from some of Jesus' disciples, and since that they had improved a little. At the moment of Jesus' arrival, the men of the place were busy gathering grapes in the vineyards that lined the road on either side, for a solemn festival was to begin that evening. The tabernacles were deserted excepting by the children, the youths, and the maidens, who with banners were going through them processionally. The priests also were engaged removing the prayer rolls and other holy things from the tabernacles to the synagogue, where they laid a prayer roll on every seat. I saw the women in their homes. They were dressed in their holiday robes, and were praying from rolls of parchment.

Jesus was espied by some men outside the gate. They went to Him and conducted Him into the city. They washed His feet and He took a little luncheon at an inn near the synagogue. After that He visited several houses, healing the sick and giving instruction. That evening the roll of the Law was carried around in the school, and everyone read a little out of it. This ceremony was followed by a grand entertainment given in the public festive hall. I saw lambs on the table, and the Esrog apples also that had been procured for the Feast of Tabernacles were eaten. These apples were prepared with some ingredients. Each was cut into five parts, and these were again tied into one by a red thread. Five persons ate of one apple. The viands had all been prepared by Sabbath servants, that is, by pagans who appeared to be in a kind of slavery.

Next morning Jesus went from house to house, exhorting the people to turn away from their avarice

and love of gain, and engaging them to attend the instruction to be given in the synagogue. He saluted all with a congratulatory word on the close of the feast. The people of Ophra were so usurious and unpolished that they were held in the same low esteem as the publicans. But they had now improved a little. That afternoon the branches of which the tabernacles had been formed were brought processionally by the boys to the square in front of the synagogue, there piled in a heap, and burned. The Jews watched with interest the rising of the flames, presaging from their various movements good or bad fortune. Jesus preached afterward in the synagogue, taking for His subjects the happiness of Adam, his Fall, the Promise, and some passages from Josue. He spoke also of too great solicitude for the things of life, of the lilies that do not spin, of the ravens that do not sow, etc., and brought forward examples in the person of Daniel and Job. They, He said, were men of piety, engrossed in occupations, but still without worldly solicitude.

Jesus was not entertained gratis in Ophra. The disciples had to pay all expenses at the inn. While He and they were still there a man from Cyprus came to see Him. He had been to see John at Machaerus, ten hours from Ophra, and had been conducted hither by a servant of Zorobabel, the Centurion of Capharnaum. He had been commissioned by an illustrious man of Cyprus to bring him some reliable news of Jesus, also of John, of whom he had heard so much.

The messenger did not tarry long at Ophra. He left as soon as he had executed his commission, for a ship was in waiting to carry him home. He was a pagan, but of a most amiable and humble disposition. The Centurion's servant had, at his request, conducted him from Capharnaum to John, at Machaerus, and from the latter to Jesus, at



Ophra. Jesus conversed with him a long time, and the disciples put in writing

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before his departure all that he desired to know. One of the ancestors of his master had been King of Cyprus. He had received many Jews fleeing from persecution and had even entertained them at his own table. This work of mercy bore its fruit in one of his descendants, obtaining for him the grace to believe in Jesus Christ. In this vision I had a glimpse of Jesus retiring after the coming Pasch to Tyre and Sidon, and thence sailing over to the island of Cyprus to announce His doctrine.

From Ophra Jesus journeyed through the valley between Alexandrium and Lebona to Salem. He descended through the forest of Hareth into the plain of Salem. Gardens and beautiful walks lay around the outskirts of the city, which was most delightfully situated. It was not very large, but cleaner and more regular than many others in this region, laid out in the form of a star, the points radiating from a fountain in the center. All the streets ran toward the fountain, and were broken up by beautiful walks. The city at this period, however, had something in its appearance that bespoke decline. The fountain was regarded as sacred. It was once tainted like that near Jericho, but Eliseus had, like the one alluded to, purified it by casting into it salt and water in which the Holy Mystery had been immersed. The little edifice erected over it was very beautiful. In the center of the city and not far from the fountain arose a lofty castle, then in ruins, the large window casements destitute of windows. Nearby stood a high, round tower. On its flat top, which was surrounded by a gallery, a flag was waving. At about two-thirds of the height of the tower projected four beams toward the four quarters of the world, upon which hung large polished globes that glittered in the sun. They faced four different cities, and were a sort of memorial of David's time. He had once sojourned here with Michol and, when obliged to flee into the land of Galaad, he had by means of these globes received information

from Jonathan concerning Saul and his movements against himself. The globes, by previous agreement, were hung sometimes this way, sometimes that, thus indicating by signs what was transpiring in those parts.

Jesus was very well received. People whom He met near the harvest ricks accompanied Him to the city, from which others were coming to meet Him. They conducted Him and the disciples to a house, in which they washed their feet and provided them with sandals and garments until their own were dusted and cleaned. Travelers were often presented with the dress thus provided, but Jesus never accepted it as a gift. He generally had a change with Him, of which one of the disciples took charge. The Salemites then took Jesus to their beautiful fountain and tendered to Him the customary refreshments. There were gathered around the fountain numbers of sick of all kinds, so numerous that even the streets were lined with them. Jesus at once began to cure, passing quietly from one to another until nearly four o'clock, when He assisted at a dinner given at an inn, and thence proceeded to the synagogue to preach. During the discourse He spoke of Melchisedech, also of Malachias who had once sojourned here and who had prophesied the Sacrifice according to the order of Melchisedech. Jesus told them that the time for that Sacrifice was drawing near, and that those ancient Prophets would have been happy to have seen and heard what they now saw and heard.

The people of Salem were of the middle class, neither poor nor rich, but well inclined and charitable toward one another. The Doctors of the synagogue likewise were well-intentioned, but they were often visited by Pharisees from the neighborhood—to their own great annoyance and that of the citizens. Salem enjoyed certain privileges. It had under its

jurisdiction the district in its immediate vicinity and other neighboring places. Jesus was especially kind to these

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people and confirmed them in their good sentiments.

On the morning of the next day Jesus went about an hour southeast of Salem to a nook between the Jordan and the little river that flows into it from Akrabis. There was a pleasure garden in this hilly region, also three fish ponds, one above another, each fed by the waters of the little river. There were also baths that could be warmed. Jesus was followed thither by many from the city. From this garden Ennon could be distinctly seen across the Jordan, whose opposite bank was full of promenaders. Toward noon all returned to the city and found assembled some of the Pharisees from Aruma. This city was situated on a mountain two hours west of Salem and about one hour northwest of the newly built city of Phasaël, which lay almost hidden in a corner of the mountains. It was there the devout Jairus dwelt, whose daughter Jesus had not long ago raised to life. Among those Pharisees was a brother of Simon the Leper, of Bethania. He was one of the most distinguished Pharisees of Aruma. There were also some Sadducees present. They had all come as guests, for it was customary for the Doctors of the Law to visit one another during the days immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles. Some from other places besides Aruma were present also. A banquet was given in one of the public houses of Salem, at which Jesus and all the Doctors assisted. The latter feared that Jesus was going to preach in Salem on the coming Sabbath. They did not relish the idea, since the inhabitants were already unfavorably disposed toward themselves; therefore Simon's brother invited Jesus to go to Aruma for the Sabbath, and Jesus accepted the invitation.

Phasaël was a new place at which Herod stopped when in that part of the country. The city was surrounded by palm trees, and a little stream took its rise in the neighborhood, thence flowing into the Jordan almost

opposite Socoth. The inhabitants appeared

to be colonists. The city was built by Herod.

On Jesus' arrival at Aruma, He was not received by the Pharisees outside the city gate. Consequently, with His seven disciples, all like Himself with girded garments, He passed through into the city. There He was received according to the custom of the place by some of the well-disposed citizens, and as was always done to travelers that entered the gate with their garments girded. The fact of their entering in that style indicated that they had not yet received hospitality. Jesus and the disciples were taken to a house where their feet were washed, their clothes dusted, and refreshments offered them. After that Jesus went to the priests' house near the synagogue, where was Simon's brother together with several other Pharisees and Sadducees who had come hither from Thebez and other places. Providing themselves with rolls of the Scriptures, they went with Jesus to the public baths outside the city. There they deliberated upon the passages of Holy Writ that occurred in the lesson of the present Sabbath. It was like a preparation for a sermon. They were very courteous, very polished in their manner toward Jesus, whom they pressed to preach that evening, begging Him at the same time not to say anything that could make the people mutinous. They did not say this in plain terms, but they made themselves understood thus. Jesus replied sternly and unhesitatingly that He would teach what was in the Scripture, namely, the truth, and He went on to speak of wolves in sheep's clothing.

In the synagogue Jesus taught of Abraham's vocation and his journey to Egypt, of the Hebrew tongue, of Noe, Heber, Phaleg, and Job. The lessons were from *Genesis* 12 and *Isaias*. Jesus said that already in Heber's time God had separated the Israelites from the rest of mankind, for He had given Heber a new language, the Hebrew, which had

nothing in common with other tongues then existing. This was



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done in order the more effectually to separate his race from all others. Before that, Heber, like Adam, Seth and Noe, had spoken that first mother tongue. But at the building of the Tower of Babel this had been confused and broken up into numerous dialects. In order to separate Heber entirely from the rest of men, God had given him a language of his own, the holy, ancient Hebrew, without which he and his descendants would never have been able to keep themselves pure and a distinct race.

While at Aruma, Jesus received hospitality at the house of Simon the Leper's brother. Simon himself, though now living in Bethania, was originally from Aruma. He was a person of little importance, though with aspirations to the contrary, but his brother of Aruma was well versed in the lore of the day. All things were perfectly regulated in this Pharisee's house. If Jesus was not received with the reverence that faith inspires, still He was treated conformably to the best laws of hospitality. He was given a separate oratory, the toilet linen and vessels were beautiful, and the master of the house himself paid the customary honors to his guest. The wife and children did not make their appearance.

Jairus of Phasaël, whose daughter Jesus had raised from the dead, was also here for the Sabbath and had an interview with Jesus. He then went to see the disciples and took them around through the city. His daughter was not in Phasaël, but at the girls' school up at Abelmahula. On this day many young girls came here in a body, as I had previously seen the men visiting different places in parties. Abelmahula may have been something over six hours from Phasaël.

Outside of Aruma and to the east stood an immense old building occupied by aged men and widows. They were not Essenians, though

they were habited in long, white robes and lived according to a certain rule. Jesus taught among them. When invited to a

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dinner or an entertainment, Jesus usually went from table to table and gave instructions.

The Feast of the Dedication of Solomon's Temple was being celebrated in Aruma. The synagogue was brilliantly illuminated. In the middle of it stood a pyramid of lights. The feast proper was already past. I think it was immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles. The present nocturnal celebration was a continuation of it. Jesus preached on the Dedication. He told of God's appearing to Solomon and saying to him that He would preserve the Israelites and the Temple as long as they remained faithful to Him, and that He would even dwell among them in the sacred edifice; but that He would destroy it if they fell away from Him. Jesus used severe language when alluding to this. He applied it to the present, to His own day, in which evil had reached its height. If, He said, they were not converted, the Temple would be destroyed. Then the Pharisees began to dispute with Him. They declared that God had not made use of such threats, that it was all a fable, an imagination of Solomon. The discussion became very lively, and I saw Jesus speaking with great animation. There was something in His appearance that affected them strongly and they could scarcely rest their eyes upon Him. He spoke to them upon the passages met today in the Sabbath lessons, of distorting and corrupting the eternal truths, of the history and chronology of ancient heathen nations, the Egyptians, for instance. He demanded of the Pharisees how they could venture to reproach these pagans, they themselves being even then in so miserable a condition, since what had been handed over to them as something so peculiarly theirs, something so sacred, the Word of the Almighty upon which His covenant with their holy Temple was founded, they could whimsically and capriciously reject as imaginations and fables. He affirmed and

repeated God's promises to Solomon, and told them that in consequence of their false

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interpretations and sinful explanations, Jehovah's menaces were about to be fulfilled, for when faith in His most holy promises was wavering, the foundation of His Temple also began to totter. He said: "Yes, the Temple will be overturned and destroyed, because ye do not believe in the promises, because ye do not know that which is holy, because ye treat it as a thing profane! You yourselves are laboring at its downfall. No part of it shall escape destruction. It will go to pieces on account of your sins!" In this wise spoke Jesus, and with such significance that He appeared to allude to Himself under the name of the Temple, as before His Passion He said still more plainly: "I will build it up again in three days." His words on this occasion were not so significant, though sufficiently so to fill His hearers with fury not unmixed with dread, and make them feel that there was something extraordinary and mysterious in His speech. They expressed their indignation in loud mutterings. Jesus paid no attention to them. He coolly continued His discourse in language they could not gainsay, for though against their will, they were interiorly convinced of the truth of His words. As He left the synagogue, the Pharisees offered Him their hand, as if desirous of apologizing for their violence. They wished to maintain an appearance of friendliness. Jesus gently addressed to them some earnest words, and left the synagogue, which was then closed.

I had a vision of Solomon. He was standing upon a column in the court of the Temple and near the altar of incense, addressing the people and praying aloud to God. The column was high enough for him to be distinctly seen. There was an interior ascent to the top upon which was a broad platform with a chair. It was movable and could be transported from place to place. I afterward saw Solomon in the fortress of Sion, for he did not yet occupy his new palace. It was there also that at an earlier period I saw God communicating



with David, especially at the time of Nathan's embassy. There was also a terrace sheltered by a tent, upon which David slept. I saw Solomon praying on that terrace. A supernatural light of intense brilliancy shone around him, and from the light a voice proceeded.

Solomon was a handsome man. He was tall and his limbs were rounded, not spare and angular like those of most people of that place. His hair was brown and straight, his beard short and well trimmed, his brown eyes full of penetration, his face round and full with rather prominent cheekbones. He had not at that time devoted himself to his seraglio of pagan women.

To avoid scandalizing His enemies, Jesus did not publicly cure in Aruma. The people were besides intimidated by the Pharisees, and dared not make their appearance by day. It was an exceedingly touching sight to see Jesus, as I did, going on two successive nights through the moonlit streets and seeking admittance at some of the poorest gates where people were humbly awaiting Him. With the two disciples that accompanied Him, He entered the courtyards and cured many sick. They were pious souls who believed in Him and had implored His help through the intervention of the disciples. All this could be easily done without observation, since the streets in that quarter were very quiet. They were lined by the walls of the forecourt in which were little entrance gates; the windows of the houses were in the back, opening into the courtyards and little gardens. The people were patiently waiting for Jesus. I remember seeing a woman afflicted with an issue of blood. She was closely enveloped in a long veil, and was led by two young girls into the court. Jesus did not remain long by the sick when He cured at night. To arouse their faith, He usually put to them the question: "Dost thou believe that God can cure thee, and that He has given that

power to One on earth?" These

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were the words, or something to the same effect, for I cannot clearly recall them. Then He presented His girdle to the sick woman to kiss and spoke some words that sounded like the following: "I heal thee through the Mystery" (or it may have been: I heal thee in the intention) "in which this girdle had been worn from the beginning and will be worn till the end." In curing others Jesus laid the ends of the girdle on their heads. It was a long, wide strip like a towel. It was worn sometimes unfolded, sometimes folded into a narrow band, and again with long, hanging ends ornamented with fringe.

The valley to the east of Aruma, which extended from east to west in the direction of Sichar and northward to the mountain northeast of Sichem, was woody. To the east of this mountain, which rose in the midst of the plain of Sichar, was the little wood known as the Grove of Mambre. It was there that Abraham had first pitched his tent, there also that God appeared to him and made to him the promise of a numerous posterity. A large tree stood nearby. Its bark was not so rough as that of the oak and it bore flowers and fruit at the same time. The latter were used for the knobs of pilgrim staffs. It was near this tree that the Lord appeared.

The highroad ran from Sichar to the left of the wood and around Mount Garizim. In the plain to the north of the forest was a city that recalled Abraham's sojourn in those parts. Some vestiges of it must still exist. It was three hours north of Aruma and two northwest of Phasaël. It was called Thanath-Silo.



#### **4. Jesus Leaves Aruma and Goes to Thanath-Silo and Aser-Machmethat**

After Jesus had once more earnestly addressed the Pharisees, telling them that they had lost the spirit of their religion, that they now held only to empty forms and customs which, however, the devil had managed to fill with himself, as they might see if they looked around on the pagans, He left Aruma and went to the city Thanath-Silo, outside of which stood one of the inns established by Lazarus. He instructed the men and women whom He found at work on the immense corn ricks in the field. He introduced into His discourse parables relating to agriculture and the various kinds of land. These people were slaves and followers of the Samaritan creed. That evening Jesus taught in the synagogue. It was the feast of the new moon, consequently the synagogue and other public buildings were hung with wreaths of fruit.

A great many sick had assembled in front of the synagogue. They were mostly afflicted with paralysis, gout, or issue of blood, and some were possessed. Jesus blessed numbers of children, both sick and well. Many of those that were paralyzed in their hands and on one side owed their sickness in most cases to their labors in the field and to lying on the damp earth at night or in the daytime when in a profuse perspiration. I saw such cases in the fields outside of Gennabris, in Galilee.

Jesus went next day into the harvest field and cured many whom He found there. Some people brought out from the city baskets of provisions, and a great entertainment was spread in one of the tabernacles that still remained standing. Jesus afterward delivered a long discourse, in which He spoke against unnecessary and extravagant care for the preservation of life. He brought forward the example of the lilies.

They do not spin, and yet they are clothed

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more beautifully than Solomon in all his glory. Jesus said many beautiful things to the same effect of the different animals and objects around. He also taught that they should not profane the Sabbath and feasts by working for gain. Works of mercy, such as delivering a man or a beast from danger, were allowable; but as for the harvest, they should commit the care of its fruits to God's providence and not on account of threatening weather gather them in on the Sabbath. Jesus' words on this subject were very beautiful and detailed. It was almost the same kind of a sermon as that on the Mount, for He often repeated the words: "Blessed are these! Blessed are those!"

Such instructions were much needed by the people of this place, for they were extraordinarily covetous and greedy for gain in trade and agriculture. They were wholly engrossed in their calling, and their servants were overburdened. They were charged with the collection of the tithes from the surrounding country. The sums thus coming into their possession they used to hold back for a considerable time, in order to put them out at usury. The products of their fields they sold. The old people worked in wood, for which they often betook themselves to the neighboring forest. I saw them cutting in large numbers the wooden heels worn under the sandals. There were many fig orchards around the city. There were no Pharisees here. The people were rather coarse, but very proud of their descent from Abraham. The sons of Abraham, however, whom the Patriarch had settled here, had soon degenerated. They intermarried with the Sichemites, and when Jacob returned to that region the law of circumcision was already forgotten. Jacob had intended to fix his residence there, but was deterred from doing so by Dina's seduction. He knew the children of Abraham who dwelt in those parts, and sent them presents. Dina had gone to take a walk by the well of Salem. Some of the people in the fields, those to whom her father



had sent presents, invited her to visit them. She was accompanied by her maids, but leaving them, she ventured alone into the fields, desirous of gratifying her curiosity. It was then that the Sichemite saw and ensnared her.

Wherever Jesus went, the sick were collected in crowds. We shall not be surprised at this when we remember that, as soon as His presence became known in any place, they were hurried thither from the huts and villages around the whole country.

Here in Thanath the Jews and Samaritans lived separate, the former being the more numerous. Jesus preached to the Samaritans also, though remaining the while on Jewish territory. His hearers were gathered on the boundary of their own quarter at the head of one of the streets. He also cured their sick. The Jews of Thanath were not so hostile toward them as were those of other places, since here they held not so rigorously to the Law, and especially to the observance of the Sabbath.

Jesus cured here in diverse ways. Some cures were effected at a distance by a glance and a word, some by a mere touch, some by imposition of hands; over some of the sick He breathed, others He blessed, and the eyes of some He moistened with saliva. Many of the sick happening to touch Him were cured, and others at a distance were cured without His even turning to them. Toward the close of His career, He seemed to be more rapid in His movements than in the beginning. I thought that He made use of these different forms of healing to show that He was bound to no single one, but could produce a similar effect by the use of varied means. But He once said Himself in the Gospel that one kind of devil was to be expelled in one way, another in a different

way. He cured each in a manner analogous to his malady, his faith, and his natural temperament, as in our own time we behold Him chastising some sinners and converting others. He did not interrupt the order of

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nature, He merely loosened the bonds that bound the sufferer. He cut no knots, He untied them, and He did everything so easily for He possessed the key to all. Inasmuch as He had become the God-Man, He treated those that He cured in a human manner. I had already been told that Jesus had healed in these different forms in order to instruct the disciples how to act in similar cases. The various forms of blessings, consecrations, and Sacraments made use of by the Church, find their models in those then observed by Jesus.

Toward noon Jesus left the city accompanied by several persons. He proceeded along a tolerably broad highway toward the northeast. It led to Scythopolis with Doch upon the right and Thebez on the left at the eastern extremity of the mountain upon which Samaria was built. He descended toward the Jordan and into a valley through which a stream flowed to the river. Here He encountered a crowd of people, most of them Samaritan laborers who, eager to receive instruction, had hurried thither in advance of Him. He found them waiting for Him, and He stopped to address them. To the left of the valley and upon a height stood a little place consisting of one long row of houses. It was called Aser-Machmethat, and into it Jesus entered toward evening. Abelmahula may have been seven hours distant. Mary and the holy women passed by Aser on their journeys to Judea when they did not take the mountainous road past Samaria. The Blessed Virgin and Joseph took this route on their flight into Egypt. That same evening Jesus went to the well of Abraham and to the pleasure gardens outside of Aser-Machmethat, and there cured many sick. Among them were two Samaritans who had been brought thither. Jesus was very affectionately received by the people of this place. They were very good and each one coveted the honor of showing Him hospitality. But He put up outside the place with a family whose mode





of life was patriarchal in its simplicity. The father was named Obed. Jesus and all the disciples were very lovingly entertained by him. The road through the country from Thanath-Silo to this place was far wider and better than that through Akribis to Jericho. The latter was so very narrow, so uneven and rocky that beasts of burden could with difficulty traverse it with their loads of merchandise.

It was under the tree near Abraham's Well that, in the time of the Judges, the false prophetess carried on her sorcery and gave advice that always turned out disastrously. She used to perform all kinds of ceremonies there at night by the light of torches, calling up by her incantations singular figures of animals, etc. She was nailed to a board by the Madianites at Azo. This took place under the same tree beneath which Jacob buried the idols plundered from the Sichemites.

Joseph with the Blessed Virgin and Jesus had lain concealed a day and a night near that tree on their flight into Egypt, for Herod's persecution had been proclaimed and it was very unsafe to travel in these parts. I think too that, on the journey to Bethlehem when Mary was so chilled by the cold, it was near this tree she suddenly became warm.

Aser-Machmethat lay across a mountain ridge that descends toward the valley of the Jordan. The southern side of the mountain belonged to Ephraim; the northern, to Manasses. On the former stood Machmethat, on the latter Aser, the two forming but one city called Aser-Machmethat. The boundary ran between them. The synagogue was in Aser. The inhabitants of the two quarters were dissimilar in their customs, and had little communication. Machmethat, the quarter belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, extended up the mountain in one long line of houses; below in the valley was the little stream by which Jesus had instructed the

Samaritans who had preceded Him thither. A little beyond this point  
and

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nearer to the entrance of the city was the beautiful well surrounded by baths and pleasure gardens. The well, access to which was by a flight of steps, consisted of a solid basin in whose terraced center rose the tree to which I have more than once alluded. From this reservoir the surrounding bathing cisterns were fed. It was here that Jesus cured the two Samaritan women.

Obed's house was on his large estate outside of Machmethat. He was a kind of chief, or head magistrate of the place. The inhabitants of this quarter were for the most part related to one another, and several of the families were either those of Obed's own children or those of his other relatives. In his character of eldest and chief, Obed managed their business, directed their agricultural and pastoral affairs. His wife, with her housekeeping and the female portion of the family, occupied a separate part of the house. She was still quite a vigorous old Jewess. She had a kind of school, and taught the young girls of the other families all sorts of handiwork, Charity, wise counsels, and industry reigned throughout the whole house. Obed had eighteen children, some of whom were still unmarried. Two of his daughters had wedded husbands from Aser, the quarter belonging to Manasses. This was a cause of regret to Obed, as I learned from his conversation with Jesus, for the people of Aser were not the best in the world and their customs were very different from those of their sister city.

Next morning Jesus preached near the well to an audience of about four hundred people, all ranged around on the grass of the terraced declivity. He spoke in significant terms of the approach of the Kingdom, of His own mission, of penance, and of Baptism. He also prepared some for the last-named ceremony, among whom were Obed's children. After that, accompanied by Obed, He went to some dwellings in the fields

where He consoled and instructed the servants

and aged persons who had had to remain at home while the others repaired to His sermon. Obed conversed long with Jesus of Abraham and Jacob, who had once sojourned in this region, and of Dina's misfortune. The inhabitants of Machmethat looked upon themselves as descendants from Judah. Holofernes, the Median adventurer, had at his invasion quite ruined this place, and after that the ancestors of these people settled here with the firm determination to live together according to their ancient, pious customs. This they had done down to the present. Obed followed the ancient usages of the pious Hebrews, and revered Job in an especial manner. He amply provided for his sons and daughters on their settlement in life, and at every marriage in his family he gave large offerings to the poor and to the Temple.

Jesus blessed numbers of children everywhere presented to Him by their mothers.

That afternoon there was a grand entertainment given in the open space around Obed's house and in the courtyard under the tabernacles which were still standing everywhere. Almost all the inhabitants of Machmethat took part in it, especially the poor of the whole region. Jesus went around to all the tables, blessing and teaching and lovingly helping to the various dishes. He related many parables. The women were seated in a separate tabernacle. Afterward Jesus visited and cured some sick in their homes, and again blessed many little ones presented to Him by their mothers, who stood ranged in a row. There were a great many children present, especially around Obed's wife, for she had many pupils. Obed had a little son of about seven years, and with him Jesus exchanged many words. The boy lived in the field at the house of one of his elder brothers. He was an exceedingly pious child, and often knelt out in the field at night to pray. This did not please the elder brother,

and Obed himself felt a little anxiety about the boy. But

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Jesus' words restored peace to their anxious hearts. After His death, the boy joined the disciples.

In the war of the Machabees, Machmethat remained true and rendered much help to the Jews. Judas Maccabeus himself sojourned here at different times. Obed took Job for his model in all things, and led in the bosom of his large family a life altogether patriarchal.

When Jesus went into the other part of the city, the quarter belonging to the tribe of Manasses, He found near the synagogue some Pharisees (not the best disposed toward Himself) and many arrogant citizens. They were friends and supporters of those that collected the taxes and imposts for the Romans, which they afterward put out at usury. Jesus taught, and then cured the sick. The Pharisees and proud citizens treated Jesus with coldness and indifference. They were displeased at His having visited the simple, rustic people of Machmethat before honoring their own city with His presence. They had no love for Him. And yet, they were ambitious for His first visit as a learned Doctor to be to themselves, rather than to their unsophisticated neighbors, upon whom they looked down.

Jesus, accompanied by a crowd of people, went back to the well outside Machmethat and began preparations for the ceremony of Baptism. Many confessed their sins in general terms, while many others, going in private to Jesus, made them known in detail, and asked for penance and pardon. Saturnin and Judas Barsabas performed the ceremony of Baptism, the other disciples acting as sponsors. It took place in an immense bathing cistern. After the Baptism, Jesus returned to Aser for the Sabbath. He preached from *Genesis* 18:23, *et seq.*, of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, and then taking up the miracles recorded of

Eliseus, He spoke in strong language on the necessity of penance. His words were not pleasing to the Pharisees, for He reproached them with



their contempt for the publicans while they themselves were secretly practicing usury, though hiding the fact under their sanctimonious exterior.

After He had again taught in the synagogue at Aser, His subjects being Abraham and Eliseus, He cured many sick, some of them demoniacs and others possessed by the spirit of melancholy. That afternoon a dinner was given in the public house. The Pharisees had issued invitations; but ignoring that fact, Jesus invited many poor people, as also the inhabitants of Machmethat, and ordered the disciples to defray all expenses. While at table He had a warm discussion with the Pharisees, whereupon He related the parable of the unjust debtor who desired the remission of his own debts, though oppressing others on account of theirs. Jesus applied the parable to themselves. They extorted taxes from the poor and at the same time deceived the Romans by pocketing the proceeds and declaring the people unable to pay; or again, by levying high taxes, only a third part of which was delivered over to the Romans. The Pharisees tried to justify themselves, but Jesus silenced them with the words: "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's." In their fury they exclaimed: "What's that to Him?"

A fast day commemorative of the putting out of Sedecias' eyes by Nabuchodonosor having begun, Jesus preached in the fields among the shepherds, also at Abraham's Well. He spoke of the Kingdom of God, declaring that it would pass from the Jews to the Gentiles, the latter of whom would even attain preeminence over the former. Obed afterward remarked to Jesus that if He preached to the Gentiles in that strain, they might possibly become proud. Jesus replied very graciously, and explained that it was just on account of their humility that they should

reach the first place. He warned Obed and his people against the feeling of conscious rectitude and

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self-complacency to which they were predisposed. They in a measure distinguished themselves from their neighbors, and on account of their well regulated life, their temperance, and the fruits of salvation amassed thereby, they esteemed themselves good and pleasing in the sight of God. Such sentiments might very easily end in pride. To guard against such a consequence, Jesus related the parable of the day laborers. He instructed the women also in their own separate pleasure garden, in which was a beautiful bower. To them He related the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. While so engaged, Jesus stood, and they sat around Him in a terraced circle, one above another. They sat on the ground with one knee slightly raised, and on it resting their hands. All the women on such occasions wore long mantles or veils that covered them completely; the rich had fine, transparent ones, while those of the poor were of coarse, thick stuff. At first these veils were worn closed, but during the sermon they were opened for the sake of comfort.

About thirty men were here baptized. Most of them were servants and people from a distance who had come hither after John's imprisonment.

Jesus took a walk with the people through the vineyards, the fruits of which were ripening for the second time that year.

Jesus left Machmethat with five disciples (the two disciples of John had gone back to Machaerus) and descended the road by which He had come. The little stream in the valley to the south of Aser-Machmethat had its source in the fountain at which Jesus had given Baptism by means of the disciples. He proceeded about three hours westward along the valley at the southern foot of the mountain upon which Thebez and Samaria lay. He gave instructions to the shepherds whom He met along the way, and toward noon reached the field that Jacob had destined for

the special inheritance of Joseph. (*Gen.* 48:22). It lay

in a valley to the south of Samaria and extended from east to west, one hour long and a half broad. A brook flowed westward through that valley. From the vineyards on the heights around could be seen Sichem a couple of hours to the south. It had everything to make it desirable: vineyards, pasture lands, grain, orchards and water, besides the necessary buildings, all in good order. The landlord of this property was leaseholder, for it now belonged to Herod. It was the house at which the Blessed Virgin and the holy women awaited the coming of Jesus from Sichem, and in which He cured the boy. The people here were very good. They assembled in crowds to hear Jesus' instructions, after which they tendered to Him a dinner in the open air which He graciously accepted. This special patrimony of Joseph was not the field near Sichem which Jacob had purchased from Hemor. It was another property upon which the Amorrhites had a footing along with the rightful occupants. They were dwelling on it at the time of purchase, and Jacob was obliged to drive them off. He did not relish their proximity, fearing lest his own people would intermarry among them. A kind of single combat or amicable contention took place between the two parties. It had been agreed upon that the one who broke his opponent's sword, or shield, or struck it out of his hand, should take possession of the land, the other having to retire. They decided the question in another way also, namely, by shooting at a certain boundary with the bow and arrow. Jacob and the Amorrhite leader took their places opposite each other, each attended by a certain number of his own followers standing in the rear. The struggle began. Jacob conquered his adversary, and the latter had to remove. After the contest they made a treaty. All this took place soon after the purchase of the field. Jacob dwelt eleven years near Sichem.

From this place Jesus again ascended the mountain northwestwardly to Meroz, a city on the southern side



of a mountain on whose northern side stood Ataroth. Meroz was built on a higher elevation than Samaria, as well as Thebez off to the north and Aser-Machmethat to the east.

### **5. Jesus Teaches in Meroz and Receives Judas Iscariot to the Number of His Disciples. Ancestry and Character of Judas Iscariot**

Jesus had never before been in Meroz. It was surrounded by a dry moat, which at times received some water from the mountain streams. The place had a bad name in Israel on account of the perfidy of its inhabitants. It had been peopled by the descendants of Aser and Gad, sons of Jacob and the handmaiden Zelpha, some of whom had intermarried with the Gentiles of Sichem. The other tribes refused to acknowledge the offspring of these mixed marriages, and they were despised likewise on account of their faithlessness and perfidy. Meroz, in consequence, became an isolated place, and its inhabitants, being thus cut off from much good, were likewise shielded from much evil. They had fallen into oblivion, perished, as it were, from among men. Their chief occupations consisted in dressing skins, making leather, preparing furs and garments of the same, and manufacturing leather sandals, straps, girdles, shields, and military jerkins. They brought the skins from afar on asses and dressed them partly near Meroz, using for that purpose a cistern supplied with water from their fountain in the city. But because this itself was fed from an aqueduct and had not always a full supply, they tanned the skins near Iscariot, a marshy region, a couple of hours to the west of Meroz and northward from Aser-Machmethat. It was a desolate little place of only a few dwellings. Nearby was a ravine through which a little stream flowed to the valley of the Jordan. It was on its banks that the

people of Meroz prepared their skins. Judas and his parents had for some time dwelt in this locality, hence the surname borne by the former.

Jesus was very joyfully received at some distance from their city by the poor citizens of Meroz. They knew of His approach and went out to meet Him, carrying sandals and garments for His use while they cleaned and brushed His own. Jesus thanked them and went with the disciples into the city, where they washed His feet and offered the customary refreshments. The Pharisees came to salute Him. Toward evening He taught in the synagogue before a large audience, taking for His subject the slothful servant and the buried talent. By this parable Jesus designated the inhabitants themselves. Born of the maid servant, they had received one talent only which they should have put out at interest; but instead of that they had buried it. The Master was coming and they should hasten to gain something. Jesus rebuked them also for their little love for their neighbor and their hatred of the Samaritans.

The Pharisees were not well pleased with Jesus, but the people so much the more, as they were very greatly oppressed by them. They rejoiced likewise at Jesus' visit because their whole region seemed to lie forgotten by all the world, and no one ever came to help or instruct them in any way.

After the sermon, Jesus went with His disciples to an inn that stood outside the western gate of the city. Lazarus had erected it for their use on some ground that he owned in these parts. Bartholomew, Simon Zelotes, Jude Thaddeus, and Philip came here to see Jesus, by whom they were cordially received. They had already spoken with the disciples. They dined with Jesus and remained overnight. Jesus had often before seen Bartholomew, had given him an interior call to His



service and had even spoken of him to the disciples, Simon and Thaddeus were his cousins. Philip also was related to him and, like

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Thaddeus, was already among the disciples. Jesus had called all these to follow Him when, upon His last visit to Capharnaum at Peter's fishery on the lake, He had spoken of their soon being summoned to do so. It was then that Peter had expressed himself so desirous of being allowed to remain at home as unfit for such a calling. Then it was that Peter uttered the words that later on were recorded in the Gospel.

Judas Iscariot likewise had come with the above named disciples to Meroz. He did not, however, spend the evening with Jesus, but at a house in the city where he had often before stayed. Bartholomew and Simon spoke with Jesus of Judas. They said that they knew him to be an active, well-informed man, very willing to be of service, and very desirous of a place among the disciples. Jesus sighed as they spoke and appeared troubled. When they asked Him the cause of His sadness, He answered: "It is not yet time to speak, but only to think of it." He taught during the whole meal, and all slept at the inn.

The newly arrived disciples had come from Capharnaum where they had met Peter and Andrew. They had messages from there and had also brought Jesus some money for the expenses of the journey, the charitable gift of the women. Judas, having met them at Naim, accompanied them to Meroz. Even at this early period, he was already known to all the disciples, and he had recently been in Cyprus. His manifold accounts of Jesus, of His miracles, of the various opinions formed of Him, namely, that some looked upon Him as the Son of David, others called Him the Christ, and the majority esteemed Him the greatest of the Prophets, had made the Jews and pagans of the island very inquisitive with regard to Him. They had heard, too, many wonderful things of His visit to Tyre and Sidon. The Cyprian pagan, the officer who visited Jesus in Ophra, had in consequence of all these marvelous

accounts been sent thither by his master, who was very much impressed by them.

Judas had accompanied the officer back to Cyprus. On his return journey he stopped at Ornithopolis where the parents of Saturnin, originally from Greece, then dwelt.

When Judas learned on the way that Jesus was going into the region of Meroz, where he himself was well-known, he went to seek Bartholomew in Debbaseth. He was already acquainted with him and he invited him to go with him to Meroz and present him to Jesus. Bartholomew expressed his willingness to do so. But he went first to Capharnaum with Jude Thaddeus to see the disciples there, thence with Thaddeus and Philip to Tiberias, where Simon Zelotes joined them, and then stopped at Naim for Judas who had journeyed thither to meet them. He begged them again to present him to Jesus as one desirous of becoming a disciple. They were well pleased to do so, for they took delight in his cleverness, his readiness to render service, and his courteous manner.

Judas Iscariot may have been at that time twenty-five years old. He was of middle height and by no means ugly. His hair was of a deep black, his beard somewhat reddish. In his attire he was perfectly neat and more elegant than the majority of Jews. He was affable in address, obliging, and fond of making himself important. He talked with an air of confidence of the great or of persons renowned for holiness, affecting familiarity with such when he found himself among those that did not know him. But if anyone who knew better convicted him of untruth, he retired confused. He was avaricious of honors, distinctions, and money. He was always in pursuit of good luck, always longing for fame, rank, a high position, wealth, though not seeing clearly how all this was to come to him. The appearance of Jesus in public greatly encouraged him to hope for a realization of his dreams. The disciples were provided for;

the wealthy Lazarus took part with Jesus, of whom everyone thought that He was about to establish a kingdom;

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He was spoken of on all sides as a King, as the Messiah, as the Prophet of Nazareth. His miracles and wisdom were on every tongue. Judas consequently conceived a great desire to be numbered as His disciple and to share His greatness which, he thought, was to be that of this world. For a long time previously he had picked up, wherever he could, information of Jesus and had in turn carried around tidings of Him. He had sought the acquaintance of several of the disciples, and was now nearing the object of his desires. The chief motive that influenced him to follow Jesus was the fact that he had no settled occupation and only a half-education. He had embarked in trade and commerce, but without success, and had squandered the fortune left him by his natural father. Lately he had been executing all kinds of commissions, carrying on all kinds of business and brokerage for other people. In the discharge of such affairs, he showed himself both zealous and intelligent. A brother of his deceased father, named Simeon, was engaged in agriculture in Iscariot, the little place of about twenty houses that belonged to Meroz and from which it lay only a short distance toward the east. His parents had lived there a long time, and even after their death he had generally made it his home, hence his appellation of Iscariot. His parents at one time led a wandering life, for his mother was a public dancer and singer. She was of the race of Jephthe, or rather that of his wife, and from the land of Tob. She was a poetess. She composed songs and anthems, which she sang with harp accompaniment. She taught young girls to dance, and carried with her from place to place all sorts of feminine finery and new fashions. Her husband, a Jew, was not with her; he lived at Pella. Judas was an illegitimate child whose father was an officer in the army near Damascus. He was born at Ascalon on one of his mother's professional journeys, but she soon freed herself from the encumbrance by exposing the child. Shortly after

his birth, he was abandoned on the water's edge. But being found by some rich people with no children of their own, they cared for the child and bestowed upon him a liberal education. Later on, however, he turned out to be a bad boy and, through some kind of knavery, fell again to the care of his mother, who assumed the charge for pay. It is in my mind that the husband of his mother, becoming acquainted with the boy's origin, had cursed him. Judas received some wealth from his illegitimate father. He was possessed of much wit. After the death of his parents, he lived mostly in Iscariot with his Uncle Simeon, the tanner, and helped him in his business. He was not as yet a villain, but loquacious, greedy for wealth and honor, and without stability. He was neither a profligate nor a man without religion, for he adhered strictly to all the prescriptions of the Jewish Law. He comes before me as a man that could be influenced as easily to the best things as to the worst. With all his cleverness, courteousness, and obligingness, there was a shade of darkness, of sadness, in the expression of his countenance, proceeding from his avarice, his ambition, his secret envy of even the virtues of others.

He was not, however, exactly ugly. There was something bland and affable in his countenance, though at the same time, something abject and repulsive. His father had something good in him, and thence came that possessed by Judas. When as a boy he was returned to his mother, and she on his account was embroiled in a quarrel with her husband, she cursed him. Both she and her husband were jugglers. They practiced all kinds of tricks; they were sometimes in plenty and as often in want.

The disciples in the beginning were favorably inclined toward Judas on account of his obliging ways, for he was ready even to clean their shoes. As he was an excellent walker, he made at first long journeys in the service of the little Community. I never saw

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him work a miracle. He was always full of envy and jealousy and, toward the close of Jesus' career, he had become weary of obedience, of the wandering life of the disciples, and of the—to him—inexplicable mystery that surrounded the Divine Master.

In the center of Meroz was a beautifully constructed fountain, the water of which was conducted through pipes from the neighboring mountain, at a little distance to the north of the city. There were five galleries around the well, each of which contained a reservoir. Into these reservoirs the water of the well could be pumped. In the outer gallery of all were little bathing houses, and the whole place could be closed. Here to these galleries around the well had numbers of very sick persons belonging to the city, some of them considered incurable, been brought on beds. The worst were placed in the little bathing houses in the outside circle. Meroz, abandoned, despised, and helpless, possessed an astonishing number of sick, dropsical old people, paralytics, and sufferers of all kinds. Jesus, accompanied by the disciples, Judas excepted (he had not yet been presented to Jesus), went into the city. The Pharisees of the place and some strangers who had come from a distance were present. They took their stand at the center of the fountain where they could see all that went on. They appeared astonished and even somewhat scandalized at the miracles of Jesus. They were old people grounded in their own opinion, who had listened to previous accounts of such wonders with wise shakes of the head, smiles, and shrugs, giving credence to none of it. But now they beheld with surprise and vexation those seriously affected, those incurables of their own city, by whose deep-seated maladies they hoped to see Jesus' healing power set at naught, taking up their beds and going off to their homes with songs of praise for their perfect cure. Jesus preached, instructed and consoled the sick, and gave Himself no trouble about the Pharisees. The





whole city resounded with joy and thanksgiving. This lasted from early morn till nearly noon.

Jesus and the disciples now returned to their inn by the western gate of the city. On their way through the streets, some furious possessed, that had been allowed to leave their place of confinement, cried after Jesus. He commanded them to be silent. They instantly ceased their cries and threw themselves humbly at His feet. Jesus cured them and admonished them to purify themselves. From the inn He went to the hospital of the lepers a short distance from the city, entered, called the lepers before Him, touched them, healed them, and commanded them to present themselves before the priests for the customary purifications. Jesus did not allow the disciples to follow Him into the leprous hospital. He sent them up to the mountain where, after healing the lepers, He was to deliver an instruction.

On the way the disciples were met by Judas Iscariot, and when Jesus again joined them, Bartholomew and Simon Zelotes presented him to Jesus with the words: "Master, here is Judas of whom we have spoken to Thee," Jesus looked at him graciously, but with indescribable sorrow. Judas, bowing, said: "Master, I pray Thee allow me to share Thy instructions." Jesus replied sweetly and in words full of prophetic meaning: "Thou mayst have a place among My disciples, unless thou dost prefer to leave it to another." These were His words or at least their purport. I felt that Jesus was prophesying of Matthias, who was to fill Judas' place among The Twelve, and alluding also to His own betrayal. The expression was more comprehensive, but I felt that such was the allusion.

They now continued the ascent of the mountain, Jesus teaching all the

while. On the summit was gathered a great crowd from Meroz, from Ataroth off to the north, and from the whole region around. There were also many Pharisees from these places, Jesus had some days previously announced the sermon by

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means of the disciples. He preached in vigorous terms of the Kingdom, of penance, of the abandonment in which the people of Meroz lived, and He earnestly exhorted them to arise from their sluggishness. There was no teacher's chair up here. The preacher took his stand on an eminence, surrounded by a trench and a low wall, upon which the listeners leaned or stood.

The view from this point was very beautiful and extended. One could see over Samaria, Meroz, Thebez, Machmethat, and away over the whole country around. Mount Garizim, however, was not in view, though the towers of its ancient temple were visible. Toward the southeast, the horizon stretched off to the Dead Sea and eastward over the Jordan to Gilead. To the north in an oblique direction rose the heights of Tabor, the view further extending in the direction of Capharnaum.

When evening closed, Jesus informed His hearers that He would teach there again in the morning. A great many of the people slept on the mountain under tents as they were at so great a distance from home. Jesus and the disciples went back to the inn near Meroz. All along the way Jesus taught of the good employment of time, of salvation so long looked for and now so near, of abandoning their relatives in order to follow Him, and of helping the needy. Arrived at the inn, He dined with the disciples. While on the mountain, He had caused to be distributed to the poor the money that the disciples had brought with them from Capharnaum. Judas regarded that distribution with a covetous eye. During the meal at the inn, Jesus continued His instructions, and indeed after it far into the night. Today, for the first time, Judas sat at table with the Saviour and spent the night under the same roof with Him.

## **6. Sermon on the Mountain Near Meroz. The Daughters of Lais**

Next morning Jesus went again to the mountain and there during the whole forenoon delivered a grand discourse similar to that known as the Sermon on the Mount. The multitude present was great, and food was distributed: bread and honey, along with fish taken from the ponds fed by the little brooks that watered the region. Jesus had by means of the disciples procured provisions for the poor. Toward the end of the discourse, He alluded again to the one talent that, as children of the handmaid, they had received and buried, and He inveighed severely against the Pharisees for their hatred toward them, asking why they had not long ago led these people back to the truth. His words vexed the Pharisees, and they began to retort. They reproached Jesus for allowing His disciples so much liberty, especially on the score of fasting, washing, purifications, the Sabbath, the shunning of publicans and the different sects. It was not in this way, they said, the children of the Prophets and the Scribes used to live.

Jesus replied in the words of the Commandment of fraternal love: "Love God above all things and thy neighbor as thyself. That is the first Commandment!" and He told the disciples that they should learn to practice it, instead of covering up its abuse by means of exterior practices. Jesus spoke somewhat figuratively; consequently, Philip and Thaddeus said to Him: "Master, they have not understood Thee." Then Jesus explained Himself quite significantly. He commiserated the poor, ignorant, sinful people whom they, the Pharisees, with all their outward observance of the Law, had allowed to go to destruction, and He ended by boldly declaring that they who acted so should have no part in His Kingdom. He then went down the mountain to His inn, which was one-half hour from the scene of the sermon and another from the city. He

met

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all along the way, on litters under tents, a great number of sick of all kinds patiently awaiting His coming. Many of them had come too late for the first cures. They belonged to the country far around. Jesus cured them, addressing to them at the same time words of consolation and exhortation to a change of life.

A pagan widow of Naim, called Lais, was also here waiting for Jesus. She had come to implore His aid in behalf of her two daughters, Sabia and Athalia. They were in a fearful manner possessed by the devil, and were at home in Naim confined to their respective apartments. They were perfectly furious. They dashed themselves here and there, they bit their own flesh, and struck wildly around them; no one ventured to approach them. At other times their members were contracted by cramps, and they fell to the ground pale and unconscious. Their mother, accompanied by handmaids and menservants, had come to Jesus for help. She was waiting at a distance eagerly desirous of His approach, but to her disappointment, she saw Him always turning to others. The poor mother could not restrain her eagerness, but cried out from time to time as He drew near: "Ah, Lord, have mercy on me!" but Jesus appeared not to hear her. The women near her suggested that she should say: "Have mercy on my daughters!" since she herself was not a sufferer. She replied: "They are my own flesh. In having mercy on me, He will have mercy on them also!" and again she uttered the same cry. At last Jesus turned and addressed her: "It is proper that I should break bread to the children of My own household before attending to strangers." The mother replied: "Lord, Thou art right. I will wait or even come again, if Thou canst not help me today, for I am not worthy of Thy assistance!" Jesus had, however, finished His work of healing, and the cured, singing canticles of praise, were going off with their beds. Jesus had turned away from the disconsolate mother and appeared about to retire. Seeing this,





the poor woman grew desperate. "Ah!" she thought, "He is not going to help me!" But as the words flashed through her mind, Jesus turned toward her and said: "Woman, what askest thou of Me?" She cast herself veiled at His feet and answered: "Lord, help me! My two daughters at Naim are tormented by the devil. I know that Thou canst help them if Thou wilt, for all things are possible to Thee." Jesus responded: "Return to thy home! Thy daughters are coming to meet thee. But purify thyself! The sins of the parents are upon these children." These last words Jesus spoke to her privately. She replied: "Lord, I have already long wept my sin. What shall I do?" Then Jesus told her that she should get rid of her unjustly acquired goods, mortify her body, pray, fast, give alms, and comfort the sick. She promised with many tears to do all that He suggested, and then went away full of joy. Her two daughters were the fruit of an illicit connection. She had three sons born in lawful wedlock, but they lived apart from their mother, who still retained property belonging to them. She was very rich and, notwithstanding her repentance, lived, like most people of her class, a life of luxury. The daughters were confined in separate chambers. While Jesus was speaking with their mother, they fell unconscious, and Satan went out of them in the form of a black vapor. Weeping vehemently and quite changed, they called their female attendants, and informed them that they were cured. When they learned that their mother had gone to the Prophet of Nazareth, they set out to meet her, accompanied by many of their acquaintances. They met her at about an hour's distance from Naim and related all that had happened to them. The mother then went on to the city, but the daughters with their maids and servants proceeded straight forward to Meroz. They wished to present themselves to Jesus who, they had heard, was going to teach there again the next morning. During the healing of the sick, Manahem, the blind

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disciple of Korea, who had been restored to sight and whom Jesus had sent on a message to Lazarus, returned from Bethania with the two nephews of Joseph of Arimathea. Jesus gave them an interview. The holy women had sent by them money and gifts of various kinds to Jesus. Dina the Samaritan had visited the holy women at Capharnaum, bringing with her a rich contribution. Veronica and Johanna Chusa had also visited Mary. On their return journey they called to see Magdalen, whom they found very much changed. She was depressed in spirits, her folly apparently undergoing a struggle with her good inclinations. The holy women took Dina with them to Bethania. There was at this epoch a rich, aged widow who joined Martha's little band and gave all she possessed for the benefit of the young community.

When the Pharisees invited Jesus to a dinner, they asked Him whether His disciples, young, inexperienced men, some of them quite rustic and unaccustomed to the society of the learned, should also be invited. Jesus answered: "Yes! For whoever invites Me, invites the members of My household also; and he that rejects them likewise rejects Me." At these words, they bade Him bring the disciples with Him. All repaired to the public house in the city, where Jesus still taught and explained parables.

The property upon which Lazarus had established the inn near Meroz, consisted of a beautiful field and numerous orchards interspersed with charming groves. Some of his servants lived there to attend to the fruit and provide for its sale. At this time they had charge also of the inn. At the last meeting of Jesus with Lazarus at Ennon, it had been agreed that Jesus should tarry for some time in these parts. The holy women had, in consequence, come thither to get the inn in order, and the people around the country had been notified to expect Jesus.

On the following morning, before going again to the mountain, Jesus taught at the fountain in Meroz,

and again reproached the Pharisees for the little care they took of the people. After that He ascended the mountain and delivered an instruction similar to that known as the Sermon on the Mount. Before taking leave of the people, He once more gave an explanation of the buried talent. Some of His hearers had already been three days encamped on the mountain. Those in need had been placed apart from the rest and were provided with food and other necessaries by the disciples. Judas' uncle, Simeon of Iscariot, a devout, old man, dark complexioned and vigorous, entreated Jesus to go to Iscariot, and Jesus promised to do so. When He went down the mountain, He found some sick awaiting Him. They were still able to walk. Jesus cured them. This took place on the road between the inn and Lazarus' property, at a little distance below the place where the disciples had distributed food to the people.

On the same spot upon which the pagan woman Lais of Naim had knelt yesterday at Jesus' feet praying for her sick daughters, were today those daughters, now both cured, awaiting the coming of Jesus. They were named Athalia and Sabia, and were accompanied by their maids and men servants. With all their attendants, they cast themselves down before Jesus, saying: "Lord, we esteemed ourselves unworthy to listen to Thy instructions, therefore we waited here to thank Thee for freeing us from the power of the evil one." Jesus commanded them to rise. He commended their mother's patience, humility, and faith, for as a stranger she had waited until He had broken bread to His own household. But now, He continued, she too belonged to His household, for she had recognized the God of Israel in His mercy. The Heavenly Father had sent Him to break bread to all that believed in His mission and brought forth fruits of penance. Then He ordered the disciples to bring food, which He gave to the maidens and all their attendants—to each a piece of bread and a piece of



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fish—delivering to them at the same time an instruction thereon full of deep significance. After that He went on with the disciples to the inn. One of the maidens was twenty, the other five and twenty years old. Their sickness and the confinement in which they lived had made them pale and wan.

**7. Jesus in Iscariot and Dothan. Cure of Issachar**

Next morning Jesus left the inn with the disciples and journeyed eastward to Iscariot, distant not quite an hour. On the swampy ground of a deep ravine stood a row of houses, about twenty-five, near a stream of water black and full of reeds. Here and there it was dammed so as to form pools for tanning. Very frequently this water failed, and then they had to let in other sources. The cattle for slaughter belonging to Meroz were pastured around these parts. When needed in Meroz, they were slaughtered here, then flayed, and the hide handed over to the tanners of Iscariot. The ravine in which the little place lay was directly to the north of Machmethat. The tanner's trade, on account of the odors attending it, was held in detestation by the Jews. Although for tanning the hides of the slaughtered cattle pagan slaves and others of the most despised races were needed, yet in Meroz they dwelt apart from the other inhabitants. In Iscariot no calling was carried on but tanning, and it seemed to me that most of the houses of this place belonged to old Simeon, the uncle of Judas.

Judas was very dear and quite useful to his old uncle in his leather trade. Sometimes he dispatched him with asses to purchase raw hides, sometimes with prepared leather to the seaport towns, for he was a clever and cunning broker and commission merchant. Still he was not at this time a villain, and had he overcome himself in little things, he

would not have fallen so low. The Blessed Virgin very often

warned him, but he was extremely vacillating. He was susceptible of very vehement, though not lasting repentance. His head was always running on the establishment of an earthly kingdom, and when he found that not likely to be fulfilled, he began to appropriate the money entrusted to his care. He was therefore greatly vexed that the worth of Magdalen's ointment had not passed as alms through his hands. It was at the last Feast of Tabernacles in Jesus' lifetime that Judas began to go to the bad. When he betrayed Jesus for money, he never dreamed of His being put to death. He thought his Master would soon be released; his only desire was to make a little money.

Judas was, here in Iscariot, very obliging and ready to serve; he was perfectly at home. His uncle, the tanner Simeon, a very busy and active man, received Jesus and the disciples at some distance from the place, washed their feet, and offered the customary refreshments. Jesus and the disciples visited his house where were his family, consisting of his wife, his children, and his servants.

Jesus paid a visit to the opposite side of the place where, in the midst of a field, was a kind of pleasure garden in which the tabernacles were still standing. All the inhabitants of the place were here assembled. Jesus taught upon the parable of the sower and the different kinds of soil. He exhorted the people to let the instructions they had heard from Him on the mountain near Meroz find good soil in their hearts.

Jesus afterward, with the disciples and Simeon's family, took a little repast standing. During it old Simeon begged Him to admit Judas his nephew, whom he praised in many ways, to a participation in His teachings and His Kingdom. Jesus responded in pretty much the same terms as He had used toward Judas himself: "Everyone may have a



share therein, provided he is resolved not to relinquish his portion

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to another." Jesus performed no cures here, for the sick had already been healed on the mountain.

Jesus and the disciples went from Iscariot back toward the west almost as far as the inn. Then turning to the north, they traversed the valley having the mountain upon which Jesus had taught to the left, turned somewhat northwestwardly, then again to the north, and journeyed along a low mountain terrace toward Dothan, which could be seen lying low in the eastern vale of the plain of Esdrelon. To the east rose the mountains above, and to the west lay the valley below it.

Jesus was accompanied by three troops of men who, having been present at His instructions on the mountain, were now returning in bands to their homes for the Sabbath. When one party left Him, another came up to bear Him company. It was almost three hours from the inn to Dothan, a place as large as Munster. I had a vision in which I saw that it was here that the soldiers sent by Jeroboam to seize Eliseus were struck blind. Dothan had five gates and as many principal streets; it was traversed likewise by two highways. One of the latter led from Galilee down to Samaria and Judea; the other came from the opposite side of the Jordan and ran through the valley of Apheca and Ptolomais on the sea. Trade in wood was carried on in Dothan. On the mountain chain around here and near Samaria there was still much wood; but across the Jordan near Hebron, and at the Dead Sea, the mountains are quite bare. I saw in the neighborhood of Dothan much work going on under tents in the preparation of wood. All sorts of beams for the different parts of ships were put into shape, and long, thin slats were prepared for wicker partitions. Outside the gates on the highways that crossed each other in Dothan were several inns.

Jesus went with the disciples to the synagogue, where a crowd was already assembled, among them many Pharisees and Doctors. They must have had

some intimation of Jesus' coming, for they were so polite as to receive Him in the court outside the synagogue, wash His feet, and present to Him the customary refectation. Then they conducted Him in and handed Him the roll of the Law. The sermon was on the death of Sara, Abraham's second marriage with Ketura, and the Dedication of Solomon's Temple.

The Sabbath instructions over, Jesus went to an inn outside the city. There He found Nathanael the bridegroom, two sons of Cleophas and His Mother's eldest sister, and a couple of the other disciples who had come hither for the Sabbath. There were now about seventeen disciples with Him. The people from the house on Lazarus' estate near Ginaea, where Jesus stopped recently when He went to Ataroth, were also here to celebrate the Sabbath.

Dothan was a beautiful, well-built old city, very agreeably situated. In the rear, though at a considerable distance, arose a mountain chain, and in front it looked out upon the delightful plain of Esdrelon. The mountains of this region are not so steep and rugged. Peak rises above peak, and the roads are better. The houses were of the old style, like those in David's time. Many had little turrets on the corners of the flat roofs capped by large domes, or cupolas, in which an observer could sit and view the surrounding locality. It was from such a cupola that David saw Bethsabee. There were also on the roofs galleries of roses and even of trees.

Jesus entered many of the fore courts of the dwellings, where He found sick whom He cured. The occupants standing at their doors implored Him to come in, which He did accompanied by two of the disciples. They also in different places begged the disciples to intercede for them,

which they accordingly did. Jesus went likewise to the place in which the lepers abode, separated from all others, and there He healed the sufferers. There were many lepers in this city. It may have been on account of their

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frequent communication with strangers for trading purposes, for besides the trade in wood, the inhabitants of Dothan carried on other branches of industry. They imported carpets, raw silk, and similar goods which they unpacked and again exported.

I saw goods like the above at the house of the sick man whom Jesus was entreated by Nathanael to visit. Nathanael lived at his house. It was a very elegant looking dwelling surrounded by courtyards and open colonnades, and situated not far from the synagogue. The occupant was a wealthy man of about fifty years named Issachar, who was suffering from dropsy. Notwithstanding his miserable condition, Issachar had a few days previously to the coming of Jesus espoused a young woman named Salome, aged twenty-five years. This union was according to legal prescription analogous to that of Ruth and Booz—it gave Salome the right to inherit Issachar's property. The evil tongues of the city, especially the Pharisees, found great fault with this marriage, which at once became the general talk. But Issachar and Salome put their trust in Jesus, for at His last visit to this part of the country, they had recommended their affairs to Him.

The family had been long acquainted with Jesus, even during the lifetime of Salome's parents, for Mary and Joseph when journeying from Nazareth to visit Elizabeth had found hospitality with them. This happened shortly before the Paschal solemnity. Joseph went with Zachary from Hebron to Jerusalem for the feast, after which he returned to Hebron and then went home leaving Mary there. Thus had Jesus, while still in His Mother's womb, received hospitality in this house, to which He now came thirty-one years later as the Saviour of mankind, to discharge in the person of their sick son the debt of gratitude He owed to the goodness of the parents.

Salome was the child of this house and the widow of Issachar's brother,  
Issachar himself being the widower

of Salome's sister. The house and all the property were to revert to Salome, for neither she nor Issachar had had children by the previous union. They were childless and the only descendants of an illustrious race. They had espoused each other trusting to the merciful healing power of Jesus. Salome was allied to Joseph's family. She was originally from Bethlehem, and Joseph's father was accustomed to call her grandfather by the title of brother, although he was not really his brother. They had a descendant of the family of David among their forefathers who, I think, was also a king. His name sounds like Ela. It was through respect to this ancient friendship that Mary and Joseph were there entertained. Issachar was of the tribe of Levi.

Upon His entrance into the house Jesus was met by Salome, her maids, and the other servants of the household. Salome cast herself at Jesus' feet and begged her husband's cure. Jesus went with her into the chamber of the sick man, who lay covered up on his couch, for he was dropsical as well as paralyzed on one side. Jesus saluted him and spoke to him words full of kindness. The sick man was very much touched and gratefully acknowledged the salutation, though he could not rise. Then Jesus prayed, touched the sufferer, and gave him His hand. Instantly the sick man arose, threw another garment around him, and left his bed, when he and his wife cast themselves at Jesus' feet. The Lord addressed them a few words of exhortation, blessed them, promised them posterity, and then led them out of the chamber to their assembled household, who were all filled with joy. The miraculous cure was kept a secret all that day.

Issachar invited Jesus and all His followers to stay that night at his house and, after the exercises of the synagogue, to dine with him. Jesus accepted the invitation, and then went to preach in the synagogue.



Toward the end of His discourse the Pharisees and

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Sadducees began to strive against Him. From the explanation of Abraham's marriage with Ketura, He had come to speak of marriage itself. The Pharisees broached that of Issachar and Salome. They declared it insane in a man so sick and old to marry a young woman. Jesus replied that the couple had married in obedience to the Law, and He asked how could they, who held so strictly to the same, blame them. They answered by asking how He could look upon such a union as prescribed by the Law, since so old and sick a man could hope for no blessing on his marriage, consequently such an affair was no other than a scandal. Jesus responded: "His faith has preserved to him the fruit of wedlock. Do ye set limits to the almighty power of God? Has not the sick man married in obedience to the Law? In trusting in God and believing that He will help him, he has done excellently well. But this is not the cause of your indignation. Ye hoped that this family would die out for want of heirs, and then ye would get their property into your own hands." Then He cited the example of many devout old people whose faith had been rewarded with posterity, and said many other things upon the subject of matrimony. The Pharisees were furious, but had not a word in reply.

The Sabbath over, Jesus left the synagogue and, accompanied by the disciples, went to Issachar's, where a grand banquet had been prepared for Him. Jesus, the disciples related to Him, and Issachar himself sat at one table, while Salome, the wife, came and went doing the honors of the same. The other disciples ate in a side hall. Previously to sitting down Jesus had healed several sick. It was dusk, and the miracles were performed by torchlight outside the synagogue and near Issachar's dwelling, where the sick had gathered. I saw among the disciples Judas Iscariot, Bartholomew, and Thomas, also an own brother and a stepbrother of the last named. Thomas had two stepbrothers. They had come thither for the



Sabbath from Apheca, seven hours distant, and they put up at Issachar's, Thomas being well-known to him on account of his commercial pursuits. Though he had acquaintances among the disciples, he had never yet spoken to Jesus, for he was anything but obtrusive. James the Less also had come from Capharnaum for the Sabbath, likewise Nathanael, the son of the widow Anna, eldest daughter of Cleophas, who was now living with Martha. Nathanael was the youngest of her sons engaged at Zebedee's fishery. He was about twenty years old, gentle and amiable, with something of the appearance of John. He had been reared in the house of his grandfather, and was nicknamed "Little Cleophas," in order to distinguish him from the other Nathanaels. I learned that on this Sabbath when I heard Jesus say: "Call little Cleophas to Me!"

The entertainment consisted of birds, fish, honey, and bread. There were in this city numbers of pigeons, turtledoves, and colored birds which ran like hens around the houses, and often took flight to the beautiful plain of Jezrael. During the meal, Issachar spoke of Mary. He recalled the fact of her having been in that house in her youth, and said that his wife's parents had often related the circumstance, telling how young and beautiful and pious she was. He expressed the hope that God, who had cured him through Joseph's Son (he guessed not his Saviour's origin), would likewise give him posterity. All the disciples found hospitality at this house. There were large, open porticos around it on which beds were prepared for them, separated from one another by movable partitions. Of the Dothanites, some were very good, and some very bad. On account of the antique style of its houses, Dothain compared with the other cities in its neighborhood as Cologne with our other German towns.

Next morning when Jesus and the disciples went to walk outside the city, Thomas approached and

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begged Jesus to admit him to the number of His disciples. He promised to follow Him and fulfill all His commands for, as he said, by His preaching and by the miracles he had witnessed, he was convinced of the truth of what John and all the disciples of his acquaintance had said about Him. He begged, also, to be allowed a part in His Kingdom. Jesus replied that he was no stranger to Him and that He knew that he, Thomas, would come to Him. But Thomas would not subscribe to that, He asserted that he had never before thought of taking such a step, for he was no friend of novelty, and had only now determined upon it since he was convinced of His truth by His miracles. Jesus responded: "Thou speakest like Nathanael. Thou dost esteem thyself wise, and yet thou talkest foolishly. Shall not the gardener know the trees of his garden? The vinedresser, his vines? Shall he set out a vineyard, and not know the servants whom he sends into it?" Then He related a similitude of the cultivation of figs upon thorns.

Two of John's disciples who had been sent to Jesus by the Baptist had an interview here with Jesus and then returned to Machaerus. They had been present at the sermon on the mountain near Meroz and had witnessed the miracles there performed. They belonged to the disciples that had followed their master to the place of his imprisonment and had received his instructions outside his prison. They were warmly attached to him. As they had never witnessed any of Jesus' actions, John had sent them to Him that they might be convinced of the truth of what he himself had told them of Him. He commissioned them to beg Jesus in his name to declare openly and precisely who He was and to establish His Kingdom on earth. These disciples told Jesus that they were now convinced of all that John had announced of Him, and they inquired whether He would not soon go to free John from prison. John, they said, hoped to be released through Him, and they themselves were



longing for Him to establish His Kingdom and set their master at liberty. They thought that would be a more profitable miracle than even His curing the sick. Jesus replied that He knew that John was longing and hoping soon to be freed from imprisonment, and that he should indeed be released, but that He should go to Machaerus and deliver John who had prepared His ways, John himself never even dreamed. Jesus ended by commanding them to announce to John all that they had seen and say to him that He would fulfill His mission.

I do not know whether John was aware that Jesus was to be crucified and that His Kingdom was not to be an earthly one. I think that he thought Jesus, after converting and freeing the people, would establish a holy Kingdom upon earth.

Toward noon Jesus and the disciples returned to the city and to Issachar's, where many people were already assembled. The mistress and domestics were busy preparing the noonday meal. Back of the house was a charming spot in the center of which was a beautiful fountain surrounded by summerhouses. The fountain was regarded as sacred, for it had been blessed by Eliseus. There was a handsome chair nearby for the preacher's use and around it an enclosed space with shade trees, in which quite a number might assemble for instructions. Several times in the year, especially at Pentecost, public instructions were given here. There were besides, in the region of the fountain, places with long, stone stalls or narrow terraces, where caravans and the crowds going to Jerusalem at the Paschal time could rest and take refreshments. Issachar's house stood near enough to command a view of the fountain and its surroundings. The arrangements of the resting place and the customs observed there were also superintended from Issachar's, where a kind of freight business was carried on. The caravans unloaded



and unpacked their goods here for Issachar to forward

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to other places, and very frequently the merchants and their servants received hospitality at his house, although it was not a public inn. Issachar's business was like that of the father of the bride of Cana in Galilee. The beautiful fountain had one inconvenience. It was so deep that the water could be pumped only with great fatigue. When pumped up, it ran into basins standing around.

There were crowds assembled around the fountain on the invitation of Jesus and Issachar. Jesus, from the teacher's chair, delivered a discourse to the people on the fulfillment of the Promise, the nearness of the Kingdom, on penance and conversion, and of the way to implore the mercy of God and to receive His graces and miracles. He alluded to Eliseus, who had formerly taught in this same place. The Syrians sent to take him prisoner were struck with blindness. Then Eliseus conducted them to Samaria into the hands of their enemies, but far from allowing them to be put to death, he entertained them hospitably, restored their sight, and sent them back to their king. Jesus applied this to the Son of Man and the persecution He endured from the Pharisees. He spoke also for a long time of prayer and good works, related the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, and told His hearers that they ought to adorn and perfume themselves on their fast days instead of parading their piety before the people. The inhabitants of this place, who were very much oppressed by the Pharisees and Sadducees, were greatly encouraged by Jesus' teaching. But the Pharisees and Sadducees, on the contrary, were enraged upon seeing the joyous multitude and hearing the words of Jesus. Their rage increased when they beheld Issachar in perfect health going around among the people, joyfully helping the disciples and his own servants to distribute food to them as they seated themselves along the stone benches. This sight so exasperated them that they stormed violently against Jesus. It

## **10. Jesus Goes to Giskala, The Birthplace of St. Paul**

From Dabereth Jesus went in the forenoon with the disciples three hours northward to the plain and city of Giskala, almost an hour from Bethulia. Just at the outset of His journey lay a place to the east, I think Japhia, and another directly opposite toward the west and northward from Thabor. Giskala was situated upon a height, but one not so elevated as that of Bethulia. It was a stronghold garrisoned by pagan soldiers in Herod's pay. The Jews dwelt in a little quarter apart, about fifteen minutes distant from the fortress. Giskala was very different from other cities. There were open squares and large buildings surrounded with palisades, as if to afford space for hitching horses, and all around the city ran a wall with towers, from whose stories troops of soldiers could defend it. All this gave Giskala a very remarkable appearance. Near one of the towers stood the idolatrous temple. The Jews of the little city lived on good terms with the pagan soldiers, for whom they manufactured articles of leather, harness for the horses and military equipment for the men. They were likewise partly the owners and partly the overseers and stewards of the fertile region lying around the city. Far from it, off to Capharnaum, stretched the magnificent country of Genesareth. The citadel stood upon a height up to which led a paved road from terrace to terrace. The little Jewish quarter lay outstretched on the declivity of that same height. Before it was a well, or rather a cistern, for drinking water, which was conducted from distant sources by means of pipes. It was by this cistern that Jesus and the disciples sat down on their arrival.

The residents of the Jewish quarter were just then celebrating a feast and all the inhabitants, young and old, were out in the gardens and fields. The pagan children from the city were present also, but

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they kept to themselves somewhat apart from the others. When the people spied Jesus going to the cistern, the chief men of the city, with their learned schoolmaster, approached Him. They welcomed Him and the disciples, washed their feet, and presented them fruit, Jesus, still at the cistern, gave an instruction in which He alluded to the harvest in a parable, for in this region at that moment they were busy gathering in their second harvest of grapes and all kinds of fruit. He next went over to where the pagan children were, spoke to the mothers, blessed them, and cured several who were sick.

The Jews of Giskala were on that day celebrating a feast commemorative of their deliverance from the yoke of a tyrant, the first founder of the Sadducees. He lived over two hundred years before Christ, but I have forgotten his name. He was one of the officers of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, and was charged to watch over the points of faith not found set down in the written Law. He had tormented the people horribly with his rigorous ideas, one of which was that no reward could be hoped from God, but that He was to be served by them as slaves serve their master. Giskala was his birthplace, but his townsmen held his memory in horror. Today's festival was a memorial rejoicing at his death. One of his disciples was from Samaria. Sadoch, who denied the dogma of the resurrection of the body, continued to promulgate the founder's doctrine. He was a pupil of Antigonus. Sadoch also had a Samaritan accomplice helping to propagate his errors.

Jesus and His disciples lodged with the Elder of the synagogue, and taught in the forecourt of the same. They brought some sick to Him, whom He healed, among them a dropsical old woman. This Elder of the synagogue was a very good and learned man. The people abhorred the Pharisees and Sadducees, and had taken great care to provide

themselves with such a teacher. That he might acquire more knowledge,

they had sent him travelling far away, even down to Egypt. Jesus conversed a long time with him. As usual, the Elder turned the conversation upon John, whom he praised very highly. He asked Jesus why, powerful and enlightened as He was said to be and as He was in reality, He did not make some effort to free that man so truly grand and admirable.

During His instruction in the forecourt of the synagogue Jesus uttered prophetic words to the disciples concerning Giskala. They were as follows: Three zealots had arisen in Giskala. The first was that one in whose memory the Jews were then celebrating a feast; the second was a great villain, John of Giskala, who had raised a terrible insurrection in Galilee and at the siege of Jerusalem had committed frightful excesses; the third was living at the very time He was speaking. He would pass from hatred to love, would be zealous for the truth, and would convert many to God. This third was Paul, who was born at Giskala, but whose parents afterward removed to Tarsus.

After his conversion and when journeying to Jerusalem, Paul very zealously preached the Gospel at Giskala. His parents' house was still standing, and rented to strangers. It was situated at the extremity of the suburb of Giskala, and at some distance were squares surrounded with palisades and little buildings, like bleaching huts, that reached almost to the city itself. Paul's parents must have carried on the manufacture of linen, or perhaps they had a weaver's establishment. A pagan officer named Achias now rented and lived in the dwelling house.

### **Cure of the Son of a Pagan Officer**

It would be difficult to describe the fruitfulness of the region around

Giskala. The people were now gathering the second crop of grapes, different kinds of fruits, aromatic shrubs, and cotton. A kind of reed grew in these parts, the lower leaves of which were

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large, the upper ones small. From it distilled a sweet juice like resin. Here, too, were seen those trees whose fruit was used for the decoration of the tabernacles. The fruit was called the apples of the Patriarchs, from the fact of their having been brought hither from the warm eastern countries by the Patriarchs. These trees were trained against walls forming an espalier, although their trunk was often more than a foot in diameter. Here also were found many plants producing cotton, whole fields of sweet-scented shrubs, and the aromatic herb from which nard is made. Figs, olives, and grapes were in abundance, while magnificent melons lay in countless numbers in the fields, the roads to which were lined with palms and date trees. In the midst of this luxuriance of nature were great herds of cattle grazing in the most beautiful meadows covered with grass and herbs. I saw likewise large trees with great, thick nuts, the wood of which was exceedingly tough and solid.

As Jesus was walking through the fields and gardens into which the people were fast gathering, groups collected around Him here and there. He instructed them in parables taken from their ordinary circumstances and occupations. The pagan children mingled familiarly with those of their Jewish neighbors in harvest time, but they were somewhat differently clothed.

In the house in which Paul was born there lived at this period an officer in command of the pagan soldiers of the citadel. He was called Achias. He had a sick son seven years old, to whom he had given the name of Jephthe after the Jewish hero. Achias was a good man. He sighed for help from Jesus, but none of the inhabitants of Giskala would intercede for him with the Lord. The disciples were all engaged: some busy around their Master, others scattered among the harvesters to whom they were telling of Jesus and repeating His instructions, while some



others had already been dispatched as messengers to

Capharnaum and into the neighboring districts. The townspeople had no liking for the officer, whom they did not care to have so near them. They would have been glad had he fixed his abode elsewhere. They were, besides, not very friendly in disposition, and even showed very little enthusiasm over Jesus Himself. They went carelessly on with their work, listening to His words, but taking no lively, active interest. The anxious father therefore made bold to follow Jesus, but at a distance. At last he approached Him, stepped before Him, bowing, and said: "Master, reject not Thy servant! Have pity on my little son lying sick at home!" Jesus replied: "It behooveth to break bread to the children of the household before giving it to the stranger who stands without." Achias responded: "Lord, I believe the Promise. I believe that Thou hast said that such as believe in Thee are not strangers but Thy children. Lord, have pity on my son!" Then said Jesus: "Thy faith hath saved thee!" and followed by some of the disciples, He went into the house in which Paul was born and in which Achias now resided.

It was rather more elegant than the generality of Jewish dwellings, though its arrangements were pretty much of the same style. There was a courtyard in front, from which one entered a broad hall, on either side of which were sleeping apartments, or spaces, cut off from the main portion by movable screens. In the center of the house arose the fireplace. Around it lay large rooms and halls, provided with broad stone benches near the walls, upon which lay rugs and cushions. The windows were high up in the building. Achias conducted Jesus into the interior of the house, and some of the servants carried to Him the boy in his bed. The wife of Achias followed veiled. She bowed timidly, and stood somewhat behind the rest in anxious expectation. Achias was radiant with joy. He called in all his domestics who, full of curiosity, were standing at a distance. The boy



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was a beautiful child of about six years. He had on a long woolen gown and a striped fur around his neck and crossed on the breast. He was dumb and paralyzed, wholly unable to move. But he looked intelligent and affectionate, and cast upon Jesus a most touching glance.

Jesus addressed to the parents and all present some words on the vocation of the Gentiles, the nearness of the Kingdom, of penance, and of the entrance into the Father's house by Baptism. Then He prayed, took the boy from his little bed up in His arms, laid him on His breast, bowed low over him, put His fingers under his tongue, set him down on the floor, and led him to the officer who, with the mother trembling for joy, rushed forward with heartfelt tears to meet and embrace their child. The little fellow, likewise stretching out his arms toward his parents, cried: "O father! O mother! I can walk, I can again speak!" Then Jesus said: "Take the boy! Ye know not what a treasure has been given to you in him. He is now restored to you, but he will one day be redemanded of you!" The parents led the child again to Jesus and in tears threw themselves with him at His feet, uttering thanks. Jesus blessed the boy and spoke to him most kindly. The officer begged Jesus to step with him into an adjoining apartment and take some refreshment. This He did along with the disciples. They partook, standing, of bread, honey, small fruits, and some kind of beverage. Jesus again spoke with Achias, telling him that he should go to Capharnaum and there receive Baptism, and that he might join Zorobabel. Achias and his domestics did this later on. The boy Jephthe afterward became a very zealous disciple of St. Thomas.

The soldiers of Giskala, in quality of guards, assisted at the Crucifixion of Christ. They were on similar occasions employed as police.

Jesus bade farewell to the home of the happy Achias. He spoke with His disciples of the child and of the

fruits of salvation he was destined to reap. He told them also that from that same house one had already gone out who would accomplish great things in His Kingdom.

### **11. Jesus Teaches in Gabara. Magdalen's First Conversion**

On leaving Giskala, Jesus did not go to Bethulia, which was near, but leaving it on the left, He traversed the valley and the plain to the somewhat important city of Gabara. It lay at the western foot of the mountain on whose south-eastern slope was perched the Herodian eyrie Jetebatha. The distance between the city and the fortress, that is, if one went around the mountain, was one hour. This mountain, in which steps were hewn, arose like a steep wall behind Gabara, whose inhabitants were engaged in the manufacture of cotton fine as silk, which they wove into cloth and covers. They made of it also a kind of mattress, which they stretched and fastened on hooks. This formed the whole bed. Some others were engaged in salting and exporting fish.

While still in Giskala, Jesus had sent some of the disciples around to the neighboring places to say that He would deliver a great instruction on the mountain beyond Gabara. There came in consequence, from a circuit of several hours, large crowds of people, who encamped around the mountain. On the summit was an enclosed space in which was a teacher's chair long out of use.

Peter, Andrew, James, John, Nathanael Chased, and all the rest of the disciples had come, besides most of John's disciples and the sons of the Blessed Virgin's eldest sister. There were altogether about sixty disciples, friends, and relatives of Jesus here assembled. The more intimate of the disciples were greeted by Jesus with clasping of both

hands and pressing cheek to cheek.

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Crowds of heathens came from Cydessa, one hour westward of the neighboring city of Damna, from Adama and the country around Lake Merom. The people crowding hither brought with them provisions and sick of all kinds. Cydessa was a heathen city in the heart of Zabulon. It was in ruins in the time of Alexander the Great, who bestowed it upon a man from Tyre called Livias. The latter restored it, and led thither many of his pagan countrymen from Tyre. The first pagans that came to John's baptism were from Cydessa, which was very beautifully situated and commanded a view of the luxuriantly fruitful country around.

**Magdalen**

Magdalen also wended her way to the mount of instruction near Gabara. Martha and Anna Cleophas had left Damna, where the holy women had an inn, and gone to Magdalum with the view of persuading Magdalen to attend the sermon that Jesus was about to deliver on the mountain beyond Gabara. Veronica, Johanna Chusa, Dina, and the Suphanite had meanwhile remained at Damna, distant three hours from Capharnaum and over one hour from Magdalum. Magdalen received her sister in a manner rather kind and showed her into an apartment not far from her room of state, but into this latter she did not take her. There was in Magdalen a mixture of true and false shame. She was partly ashamed of her simple, pious, and plainly dressed sister who went around with Jesus' followers so despised by her visitors and associates, and she was partly ashamed of herself before Martha. It was this feeling that prevented her taking the latter into the apartments that were the scenes of her follies and vices. Magdalen was somewhat broken in spirits, but she lacked the courage to disengage herself from her surroundings. She looked pale and languid. The man with whom she



lived, on account of his low and vulgar sentiments, was utterly distasteful to her.

Martha treated her very prudently and affectionately. She said to her: "Dina and Mary, the Suphanite, whom you know, two amiable and clever women, invite you to be present with them at the instruction that Jesus is going to give on the mountain. It is so near, and they are so anxious for your company. You need not be ashamed of them before the people, for they are respectable, they dress with taste, and they have distinguished manners. You will behold a very wonderful spectacle: the crowds of people, the marvelous eloquence of the Prophet, the sick, the cures that He effects, the hardihood with which He addresses the Pharisees! Veronica, Mary Chusa, and Jesus' Mother, who wishes you so well—we all are convinced that you will thank us for the invitation. I think it will cheer you up a little. You appear to be quite forlorn here, you have no one around you who can appreciate your heart and your talents. Oh, if you would only pass some time with us in Bethania! We hear so many wonderful things, and we have so much good to do, and you have always been so full of compassion and kindness. You must at least come to Damna with me tomorrow morning. There you will find all the women of our party at the inn. You can have a private apartment and meet only those that you know," etc. In this strain Martha spoke to her sister, carefully avoiding anything that might wound her.

Magdalen's sadness predisposed her to listen favorably to Martha's proposals. She did indeed raise a few difficulties, but at last yielded and promised Martha to accompany her to Damna. She took a repast with her and went several times during the evening from her own apartments to see her. Martha and Anna Cleophas prayed together that night that God would render the coming journey fruitful in good for Magdalen.

A few days previously James the Greater, impelled

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by a feeling of intense compassion for Magdalen, had come to invite her to the preaching soon to take place at Gabara. She had received him at a neighboring house. James was in appearance very imposing. His speech was grave and full of wisdom, though at the same time most pleasing. He made a most favorable impression upon Magdalen, and she received him graciously whenever he was in that part of the country. James did not address to her words of reproof; on the contrary, his manner toward her was marked by esteem and kindliness, and he invited her to be present at least once at Jesus' preaching. It would be impossible, he said, to see or hear one superior to Him. She had no need to trouble herself about the other auditors, and she might appear among them in her ordinary dress. Magdalen had received his invitation favorably, but she was still undecided as to whether she should or should not accept it, when Martha and Anna Cleophas arrived.

On the eve of the day appointed for the instruction, Magdalen with Martha and Anna Cleophas started from Magdalum to join the holy women at Damna. Magdalen rode on an ass, for she was not accustomed to walking. She was dressed elegantly, though not to such excess nor so extravagantly as at a later period when she was converted for the second time. She took a private apartment in the inn and spoke only with Dina and the Suphanite, who visited her by turns. I saw them together, an affable and well-bred confidence marking their intercourse. There was, however, on the part of the converted sinners, a shade of embarrassment similar to what might be experienced on a military officer's meeting a former comrade who had become a priest. This feeling soon gave way to tears and womanly expressions of mutual sympathy, and they went together to the inn at the foot of the mountain. The other holy women did not go to the instruction, in order not to annoy Magdalen by their presence. They



had come to Damna with the intention of prevailing upon Jesus to remain there and not go to Capharnaum where Pharisees from various localities were again assembled. They, the Pharisees, had taken up their abode together, determined to make Capharnaum their headquarters for awhile, since it was the central point of all Jesus' journeyings. The young Pharisee from Samaria who was present the last time was not among this set; another had taken his place. At Nazareth also and in other places the Pharisees had formed similar unions against Jesus.

The holy women, and especially Mary, were very much troubled, for the Pharisees had uttered loud threats. They sent a messenger to Jesus imploring Him not to go to Capharnaum after this instruction, but to join them in Damna; or He might turn to the right or to the left as seemed good to Him; or better perhaps would it be for Him to cross the lake and preach among the pagan cities where He would run no risk. Jesus replied by sending them word not to worry about Him, that He knew what was best for Him to do, and that He would see them again in Capharnaum.

### **The Mount of Instruction near Gabara. Magdalen**

Magdalen and her companions reached the mountain in good time, and found crowds of people already encamped around it. The sick of all kinds were, according to the nature of their maladies, ranged together in different places under light canopies and arbors. High upon the mountain were the disciples, kindly ranging the people in order and rendering them every assistance. Around the teacher's chair was a low, semicircular wall, and over it an awning. The audience had here and there similar awnings erected. At a short distance from the teacher's chair, Magdalen and the other women had found a



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comfortable seat upon a little eminence.

About ten o'clock, Jesus ascended the mountain with His disciples, followed by the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducees, and took the teacher's chair. The disciples were on one side, the Pharisees on the other, forming a circle around Him. Several times during His discourse, Jesus made a pause to allow His hearers to exchange places, the more distant coming forward, the nearest falling back, and He likewise repeated the same instructions several times. His auditors partook of refreshments in the intervals, and Jesus Himself once took a mouthful to eat and a little drink. This discourse of Jesus was one of the most powerful that He had yet delivered. He prayed before He began, and then told His hearers that they should not be scandalized at Him if He called God His Father, for whosoever does the will of the Father in Heaven, he is His son, and that He really accomplished the Father's will, He clearly proved. Hereupon He prayed aloud to His Father and then commenced His austere preaching of penance after the manner of the ancient Prophets. All that had happened from the time of the first Promise, all the figures and all the menaces, He introduced into His discourse and showed how, in the present and in the near future, they would be accomplished. He proved the coming of the Messiah from the fulfillment of the Prophecies. He spoke of John, the precursor and preparer of the ways, who had honestly fulfilled his mission, but whose hearers had remained obdurate. Then He enumerated their vices, their hypocrisy, their idolatry of sinful flesh; painted in strong colors the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians; and spoke with great warmth of the anger of God and the approaching judgment, of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and of the diverse woes that hung over their country. He quoted many passages from the prophet Malachias, explaining and applying them to the Precursor, to the Messiah, to





the pure oblation of bread and wine of the New Law (which I plainly understood to signify the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass), to the judgment awaiting the godless, to the second coming of the Messiah on the last day, and spoke of the confidence and consolation those that feared God would then experience. He added, moreover, that the grace taken from them would be given to the heathens.

Then turning to the disciples, Jesus exhorted them to confidence and perseverance, and told them that He would send them to preach salvation to all nations. He warned them to hold neither to the Pharisees, the Sadducees, nor the Herodians, whom He painted in lively colors by comparisons as just as they were striking. This was peculiarly vexatious to the last named, since no one wanted to be publicly known as an Herodian. They who adhered to this sect did so mostly in secret.

When in the course of His instruction Jesus observed that if His hearers would not accept the salvation offered them, it would be worse for them than for Sodom and Gomorrha, some of the Pharisees, taking advantage of a pause, stepped up to Him with the question: "Then, will this mountain, this city, yes, even the whole country, be swallowed up along with us all? And could there happen something still worse?" Jesus answered: "The stones of Sodom were swallowed up, but not all the souls, for these latter knew not of the Promise, nor had they the Law and the prophets." He added some words that I understood of His own future descent into Limbo, and from which I gathered that many of those souls were saved. Then coming back to the Jews of His own time, He reminded them that they were a chosen race whom God had formed into one nation, that they had received instruction and warnings, the Promises and their realization, that if they rejected them and persevered in their incredulity, not the rocks, the mountains (for they obeyed the

Lord), but

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their own stony hearts, their own souls, would be hurled into the abyss. And thus would their lot be more grievous than that of Sodom.

When Jesus had, thus vehemently urged the guilty to penance, when He had so severely pronounced judgment upon the obdurate, He became once more all love, invited all sinners to come to Him, and even shed over them tears of compassion. Then He implored His Father to touch their hearts that some, a few, yes, even one, though burdened with all kinds of guilt, might return to Him. Could He gain but one soul, He would share all with it, He would give all that He possessed, yes, He would even sacrifice His life to purchase it. He stretched out His arms toward them, exclaiming: "Come! Come to Me, ye who are weary and laden with guilt! Come to Me, ye sinners! Do penance, believe, and share the Kingdom with Me!" Then turning to the Pharisees, to His enemies, He opened His arms to them also, beseeching all, at least one of them, to come to Him.

Magdalen had taken her seat among the other women with the self-confident air of a lady of the world, but her manner was assumed. She was inwardly confused and a prey to interior struggle. At first she gazed around upon the crowd, but when Jesus appeared and began to speak, her eyes and soul were riveted upon Him alone. His exhortations to penance, His lively pictures of vice, His threats of chastisement, affected her powerfully, and unable to suppress her emotions, she trembled and wept beneath her veil. When Jesus, Himself shedding tears full of loving compassion, cried out for sinners to come to Him, many of His hearers were transported with emotion. There was a movement in the circle and the crowd pressed around Him. Magdalen also, and following her example the other women likewise, took a step nearer. But when Jesus exclaimed: "Ah! If even *one* soul would come to

Me!" Magdalen was so moved that she wanted to fly to Him at once.  
She

stepped forward; but her companions, fearing some disturbance, held her back, whispering: "Wait! Wait!" This movement of Magdalen attracted scarcely any notice among the bystanders, since the attention of all was riveted upon Jesus' words. Jesus, aware of Magdalen's agitation, uttered words of consolation meant only for her. He said: "If even one germ of penance, of contrition, of love, of faith, of hope has, in consequence of My words, fallen upon some poor, erring heart, it will bear fruit, it will be set down in favor of that poor sinner, it will live and increase. I Myself shall nourish it, shall cultivate it, shall present it to My Father." These words consoled Magdalen while they pierced her inmost soul, and she stepped back again among her companions.

It was now about six o'clock, and the sun had already sunk low behind the mountain. During His discourse Jesus was turned to the west, the point toward which the teacher's chair faced, and there was no one behind Him. And now He prayed, dismissed the multitude with His blessing, and commanded the disciples to buy food and distribute it to the poor and needy. Whoever had more than enough for himself was to give it or sell it for the benefit of the poor, who were to take home with them whatever they received over and above. Some of the disciples went immediately to execute their Master's commission. Most of those present gave willingly what they could spare, while others just as willingly took some indemnification for it. The disciples were well known in this part of the country, so the poor were well cared for, and they thanked the great charity of the Lord.

Meanwhile the other disciples accompanied Jesus to the sick, numbers of whom had been brought thither. The Pharisees, scandalized, impressed, astonished, enraged, went back to Gabara. Simon Zabulon,

the chief of the synagogue, reminded Jesus of the invitation to sup in his house. Jesus replied that

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He would be there. The Pharisees murmured against Jesus and criticized Him the whole way down the mountain, finding fault with His doctrine and His manners. Each was ashamed to allow his neighbor to remark the favorable impression that had been made upon him, and so by the time they reached the city, they had again entrenched themselves in their own self-righteousness.

Magdalen and her companions followed Jesus. The former went among the people and took her place near the sick women as if to render them assistance. She was very much impressed, and the misery that she witnessed moved her still more. Jesus turned first to the men, among whom for a long time He healed diseases of all kinds. The hymns of thanksgiving from the cured and their attendants as they moved away, rang on the breeze. When He approached the sick females, the crowd that pressed around Him and the need that He and His disciples had of space forced Magdalen and the holy women to fall back a little. Nevertheless, Magdalen sought by every opportunity, by every break in the crowd, to draw near to Him, but Jesus constantly turned away from her.

He healed some women afflicted with a flow of blood. But how express the feelings of Magdalen, so delicate, so effeminate, whose eyes were quite unused to the sight of human suffering! What memories, what gratitude swelled the heart of Mary Suphan when six women, bound three and three, were forcibly led to Jesus by strong servant maids who dragged them along with cords, or long linen bands! They were possessed in the most frightful manner by unclean spirits, and they were the first possessed women that I saw brought publicly to Jesus. Some were from beyond the Lake of Genesareth, some from Samaria, and among them were several pagans. They had been bound together only

upon reaching this place. Ordinarily they were perfectly quiet and gentle, they offered no violence to one another. But anon,



they became quite furious, screaming and hurling themselves here and there. Their custodians bound them and kept them at a distance during Jesus' discourse, and now when all was nearly over, they brought them forward. As the afflicted creatures drew near to Jesus and the disciples, they began to offer vehement resistance. Satan was tormenting them horribly. They uttered the most awful cries and fell into violent contortions. Jesus turned toward them and commanded them to be silent, to be at peace. They instantly stood still and motionless; then He went up to them, ordered them to be unbound, commanded them to kneel down, prayed, and laid His hands upon them. Under the touch of His hand they sank into a few moments' unconsciousness, during which the wicked spirits went out of them in the form of a dark vapor. Then their attendants lifted them up, and veiled and in tears, they stood before Jesus, inclining low and giving thanks. He warned them to amend their lives, to purify themselves and do penance, lest their misfortune might come upon them more frightfully than before.

It was dusk before Jesus and the disciples, preceded and followed by crowds of people, started at last down the mountain for Gabara. Magdalen, obeying only her impulse without regard to appearances, followed close after Jesus in the crowd of disciples, and her four companions, unwilling to separate from her, did the same. She tried to keep as close to Jesus as she possibly could, though such conduct was quite unusual in females. Some of the disciples called Jesus' attention to the fact, remarking at the same time what I have just observed. But Jesus, turning around to them, replied: "Let them alone! It is not your affair!" And so He entered the city. When He reached the hall in which Simon Zabulon had prepared the feast, He found the forecourt filled with the sick and the poor who had crowded thither on His approach, and who were loudly calling upon Him for help. Jesus at



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once turned to them, exhorting, consoling, and healing them. Meanwhile Simon Zabulon, with some other Pharisees, made his appearance. He begged Jesus to come in to the feast, for they were awaiting Him. "Thou hast," he continued, "already done enough for today. Let these people wait till another time, and let the poor go off at once." But Jesus replied: "These are My guests. I have invited them, and I must first see to their entertainment. When thou didst invite Me to thy feast, thou didst invite them also. I shall not go into thy feast until they are helped, and then even I will go in only with them." Then the Pharisees had to go and prepare tables around the court for the cured and the poor. Jesus cured all, and the disciples led those that wished to remain to the tables prepared for them, and lamps were lighted in the court.

Magdalen and the women had followed Jesus hither. They stood in one of the halls of the court adjoining the entertainment hall. Jesus, followed by some of the disciples, went to the table in the latter and from its sumptuous dishes sent various meats to the tables of the poor. The disciples were the bearers of these gifts; they likewise served and ate with the poor. Jesus continued His instructions during the entertainment. The Pharisees were in animated discussion with Him when Magdalen, who with her companions had approached the entrance, all on a sudden darted into the hall. Inclining humbly, her head veiled, in her hand a little white flask closed with a tiny bunch of aromatic herbs instead of a stopper, she glided quickly into the center of the apartment, went behind Jesus, and poured the contents of her little flask over His head. Then catching up the long end of her veil, she folded it, and with both hands passed it lightly once over Jesus' head, as if wishing to smooth His hair and to arrest the overflow of the ointment. The whole affair occupied but a few instants, and after it Magdalen retired some steps. The discussion carried on so hotly at the moment

suddenly ceased. A hush fell

upon the company, and they gazed upon Jesus and the woman. The air was redolent with the fragrance of the ointment. Jesus was silent. Some of the guests put their heads together, glanced indignantly at Magdalen, and exchanged whispers. Simon Zabulon especially appeared scandalized. At last Jesus said to him: "Simon, I know well of what thou art thinking! Thou thinkest it improper that I should allow this woman to anoint My head. Thou art thinking that she is a sinner, but thou art wrong. She, out of love, has fulfilled what thou didst leave undone. Thou hast not shown Me the honor due to guests." Then He turned to Magdalen, who was still standing there, and said: "Go in peace! Much has been forgiven thee." At these words Magdalen rejoined her companions, and they left the house together. Then Jesus spoke of her to the guests. He called her a good woman full of compassion. He censured the criticizing of others, public accusations, and remarks upon the exterior fault of others while the speakers often hid in their own hearts much greater, though secret evils. Jesus continued speaking and teaching for a considerable time, and then returned with His followers to the inn.

Magdalen was deeply touched and impressed by all she had seen and heard. She was interiorly vanquished. And because she was possessed of a certain impetuous spirit of self-sacrifice, a certain greatness of soul, she longed to do something to honor Jesus and to testify to Him her emotion. She had noticed with chagrin that neither before nor during the meal had He, the most wonderful, the holiest of teachers, He, the most compassionate, the most miraculous Helper of mankind, received from these Pharisees any mark of honor, any of those polite attentions usually extended to guests, and therefore she felt herself impelled to do what she had done. The words of Jesus, "If even one would be moved to come to Me!" still lingered in her memory. The little flask, which was about a hand in height, she generally



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carried with her as do the grand ladies of our own day. Magdalen's dress was white, embroidered with large red flowers and tiny green leaves. The sleeves were wide, gathered in and fastened by bracelets. The robe was cut wide and hung loose in the back. It was open in front to just above the knee, where it was caught by straps, or cords. The bodice, both back and front, was ornamented with cords and jewels. It passed over the shoulders like a scapular and was fastened at the sides; under it was another colored tunic. The veil that she usually wound about her neck she had, on entering the banquet hall, opened wide and thrown over her whole person. Magdalen was taller than all the other women, robust, but yet graceful. She had very beautiful, tapering fingers, a small, delicate foot, a wealth of beautiful long hair, and there was something imposing in all her movements.

When Magdalen returned to the inn with her companions, Martha took her to another about an hour distant and near the baths of Bethulia. There she found Mary and the holy women awaiting her coming, Mary conversed with her. Magdalen gave an account of Jesus' discourse, while the two other women related the circumstances of Magdalen's anointing and Jesus' words to her. All insisted on Magdalen's remaining and going back with them, at least for awhile, to Bethania. But she replied that she must return to Magdalum to make some arrangements in her household, a resolution very distasteful to her pious friends. She could not, however, cease talking of the impressions she had received and of the majesty, force, sweetness, and miracles of Jesus. She felt that she must follow Him, that her own life was an unworthy one, and that she ought to join her sister and friends. She became very thoughtful, she wept from time to time, and her heart grew lighter. Nevertheless, she could not be induced to remain, so she returned to Magdalum with her maid. Martha accompanied her a part of the way, and then joined the

holy women who were going back to Capharnaum.

Magdalen was taller and more beautiful than the other women. Dina, however, was much more active and dexterous, very cheerful, ever ready to oblige, like a lively, affectionate girl, and she was moreover very humble. But the Blessed Virgin surpassed them all in her marvelous beauty. Although in external loveliness she may have had her equal, and may have even been excelled by Magdalen in certain striking features, yet she far outshone them all in her indescribable air of simplicity, modesty, earnestness, sweetness, and gentleness. She was so very pure, so free from all earthly impressions that in her one saw only the reflex image of God in His creature. No one's bearing resembled hers, except that of her Son. Her countenance surpassed that of all women in its unspeakable purity, innocence, gravity, wisdom, peace, and sweet, devout loveliness. Her whole appearance was noble, and yet she was like a simple, innocent child. She was very grave, very quiet, and often pensive, but never did her sadness destroy the beauty of her countenance, for her tears flowed softly down her placid face.

Magdalen was soon again in her old track. She received the visits of men who spoke in the usual disparaging way of Jesus, His journeys, His doctrine, and of all who followed Him. They ridiculed what they heard of Magdalen's visit to Gabara, and looked upon it as a very unlikely story. As for the rest, they declared that they found Magdalen more beautiful and charming than ever. It was by such speeches that Magdalen allowed herself to be infatuated and her good impressions dissipated. She soon sank deeper than before, and her relapse into sin gave the devil greater power over her. He attacked her more vigorously when he saw that he might possibly lose her. She became possessed, and often fell into cramps and convulsions.



