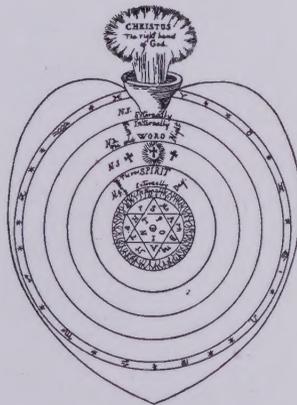
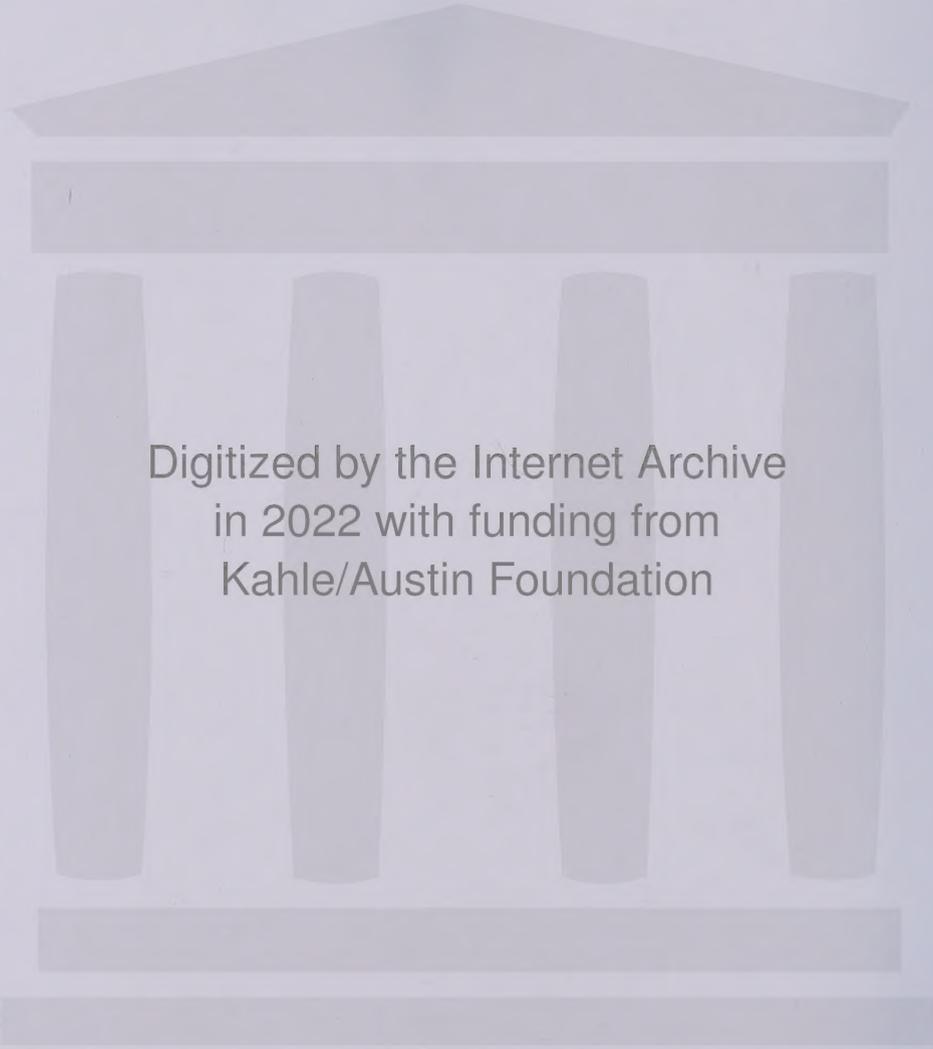


THE DIARY OF
JUDAS ISCARIOT
OF THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING
TO
JUDAS

(1912)



Gregory A. Page



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THE DIARY OF
JUDAS ISCARIOT

OR

THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO JUDAS

BY

GREGORY A. PAGE

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THE MARY OF
JUDAS ISCARIOT
THE STORY OF
ACCORDING TO THE
GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW
BY
GREGORY A. PAGE
First Edition, 1912

GREGORY A. PAGE



THE MARY OF JUDAS ISCARIOT, LLC
1111 11th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

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The MS. of the following work was submitted in the summer of 1911 to

THE LATE
WILLIAM T. STEAD,

who, in returning the same, expressed great pleasure at having been permitted to read it, and his agreement with the author's estimate of Judas's character and career. Not being a book-publisher, Mr. Stead was unable to entertain the issue of the work, but trusted the writer would have no difficulty in finding a publisher.

[Unfortunately Mr. Stead's letter has been lost; but his son, Mr. Henry Stead, has kindly granted permission to print the above summary of its contents.]

LONDON, May 1912.

WARNING

LET no man venture to read this little book who is unable to shake himself free for a time from those inherited and acquired conceptions of Christ as a divine Being of more than human perfection which have become woven into the very texture of every devout Christian's thought and faith. The reader must learn, at least to some extent, to regard the young Prophet of Galilee through the eyes of a contemporary Jew, to whom He came, making great and wonderful claims, it is true, but lacking all those credentials of splendour, authority, rank, and worldly power which he had been led to expect in the promised Messiah.

He looked for a King, and behold a carpenter! He had dreamt of a Conqueror,

and lo ! a Man meek and lowly, who carefully avoided conflict, and even contact, with the Roman authorities. He expected one who would fulfil and amplify the Law, enforcing its obligations not only upon the Jews, but also upon all the Gentile world ; and behold a Man who openly disregarded its most stringent enactments, and lived in a state of constant rebellion against the men whom he regarded as its chosen exponents and official guardians.

What wonder that many were outraged, others disappointed, and all men puzzled ?

Even if my readers do not accept my estimate of Judas and of the stages which led to his calamitous fall, they must at least admit that Christ's acts and words must have seemed strange and inexplicable to most of the men among whom He moved and taught, and that I have in no case overstepped the bounds of probability in my statement of their effect on the mind of Judas.

With this brief warning, I invite a careful and thoughtful perusal of the following study of our Saviour's career, as viewed by an average Jew, to whom the spiritual side of His mission remained a sealed book, and who only sought in Him a temporal and national Deliverer.

G. A. P.

PREFACE

THIS little book is not an apology for Judas Iscariot, but rather a restatement of the facts of his case from the point of view—so far as that can now be obtained—of the man Judas himself.

It has long seemed to the writer that, during these centuries, Judas has been suffering under an exaggerated weight of censure. The fact that the Person betrayed was the greatest, the purest, the loveliest and the most glorious character in all history has led men to magnify the sin of His betrayer until it now passes the wit of man to invent any terms of scorn or obloquy which have not already been heaped upon the traitor's thrice-accursed head.

But the more closely one studies the life and words of Christ, the more apparent does it become that that life and those words must have put a terrible strain upon the faith of

the men and women who followed His leadership. He fulfilled hardly any of their expectations ; He acted contrary to their most cherished traditions ; He scouted and scorned their most trusted leaders, and disappointed their fondest hopes. What wonder, then, that many went back from following Him ! Indeed, the wonder is that, of the twelve chosen Apostles, only one broke down under the strain ; and it is the fall of this one which I endeavour to trace in the following pages.

I have imagined Judas to be an average Jew, with the hopes and fears, the training and prejudices of a Jew ; striving to live a godly life according to the traditions of his fathers ; filled with pride in the ancient glories of his race ; and burning, therefore, with fierce hatred of the usurping and all-conquering Roman.

Such a man, aglow with Messianic hopes, and longing for the promised Deliverer, joins himself to the crowd of Christ's disciples, and soon feels a persuasion that this is indeed the long-hoped-for Messiah.

But he is a man of inquiring mind, who

wishes to know the why and the wherefore of everything ; and, as is natural with such a one, he begins from the very first to question and argue within himself concerning all that Christ does or says.

For a while the marvels wrought by the young Prophet, and the dignity and purity of His character, combine to sweep away Judas's doubts, and he is borne along on a flood of enthusiasm, until he enters the inner circle and becomes an Apostle.

The great difference between Judas and the other Apostles was this : that with them love to their Master became so deep and strong a principle that not all their doubts and misgivings could root it out ; whereas with Judas the doubts and the misgivings gradually gained the upper hand. In one case—as has so often happened since—love cast out fear ; but in the other, alas ! it was fear, born of doubt, that cast out love.

In a word, Judas betrayed his Lord, not because he hated Him—as most writers seem to think—but because he had lost faith in Him.

There have been many viler traitors since Judas, many worse men and women ; and there are many worse in the world to-day. But only one ever betrayed the Son of Man ; and, alas for Judas ! he was that one.

I do not pretend that this sketch provides a final solution to the mystery of the Great Betrayal. But I venture to think that no one can read it without feeling that it throws fresh light upon a career which has probably sorely puzzled us all ; and it is in this hope that I now offer it to the Christian public. I have taken the liberty of appending to it a portion of a paper written some years ago for a class of young men in Lancashire, the writing of which first set my thoughts working in the direction of which this little book is the outcome.

I make no apology for the lavish way in which I have made use of Old Testament phraseology ; but would merely remind my readers that the Jews of Christ's day were men of one Book, and that Book the Old Testament ; men who regarded all foreign literature as unholy, and even cursed the

man who taught it to his son. But the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were their constant study, and every Jew knew the greater part of what we now call the Old Testament by heart. Its language formed a part of his daily speech, and to its matchless stores of metaphor and imagery he ever turned when seeking expression for the deepest feelings of his heart.

And to what nobler fount of inspiration or of poetry could any man turn, be he Jew or Gentile ?

G. A. P.

NOTE.—The Chronology adopted in the following 'Diary' has been mostly taken from *The Bible Student's Life of our Lord*, by the Rev. S. J. Andrews.

THE DIARY OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

I

*Kerioth of Judaea ; in the house of Simon.
December, A.D. 26.*

HATH the Lord forgotten to be gracious ?
Is His mercy clean gone for ever ? Doth
His promise fail for evermore ?¹ Verily my
soul crieth out in anguish ; despair getteth
hold upon me ; for the land groaneth in
tribulation ; strangers devour it in our
presence² ; and the people of the Lord are
trampled underfoot by the enemies of our
God.

I am but now returned from Jerusalem,
where mine eyes have beheld the judgements
of the Lord, and His wrathful indignation
upon the men of this generation. Pilate and

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 8.

² Isa. i. 7.

his cruel Romans smiting down the sons of Jacob, even in the very Temple; the Holy City filled with noise and confusion; the carcasses of slain men lying in the streets, and their blood running down the gutters like water. And I myself am hardly escaped with my life.

Yet, verily, I went not up to Jerusalem with warlike intent, but rather to worship the God of my fathers in peace and with sincerity of heart. But how can peace abide in the land when the proud Roman sitteth in the Palace of David, and lordeth it even in the Temple of the Most High? The barbarian soldiers of Pilate, gathered from the ends of the earth—from the trackless forests of Germania and the green plains of Gaul, from the rocky caverns of far-off Britain or the gloomy marshes of Frisia—are not worthy to keep guard over the Holy Place, the Sanctuary of the God of all the earth. Our worship, with its manifold sacrifices and offerings, its hosts of priests and Levites, its blowing of trumpets and burning of incense, and all its splendour of gold and

silver vessels, seemeth unto them as a vain and empty show, because, forsooth, there is no idol-god to be seen; and what they understand not, moveth them only to mockery.

Thus it befell that, while I was worshipping in the Court of the Hebrews, certain of the uncircumcised barbarians who were keeping watch upon the northern wall of the Temple—there, where it joineth unto the Tower of Antonia—began to make a mock of the Levites, as they sounded the trumpets to call the people to the solemn assembly. Long time did we bear patiently their shouts and their laughter; but when at last they passed from words unto actions of vilest insult and contempt, the blood of one Tobias, a Benjamite of Mount Ephraim, grew too hot within him to be longer contained, and, plucking up a stone from the pavement of the court, he hurled it with so true an aim at the mocking soldiers that he smote one of them on the head, so that he fell down dead. Whereupon the soldiers, seizing their arms, rushed down the steps which lead from

Antonia into the Temple itself, and, falling upon the unarmed worshippers, like wolves upon the sheep, slew them by scores and profaned the Holy Place with blood.

The rumour of these doings quickly spread into the city, and all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Then came forth Simonides, the Zealot, with all his band, and, hurrying into the Temple, slew many of those soldiers, and drave the rest back into Antonia, with much noise of shouting and many bitter curses. But the Captain of the Castle, issuing forth with a stronger band, drave out Simonides and his Zealots, with all the rest of the Jews, into the streets; where Pilate, coming upon us from Mount Zion with another army, caught us as between the upper and the nether millstone, and ground us to powder. I took no sword with me into the Temple, but, when the fight grew furious, I seized one from the body of a slain Roman, and fought therewith as well as I was able. But God is departed from our midst, and therefore do the enemies of His people triumph over us. Verily, I also should have been

slain had not one Ben-Asher put forth his hand and drawn me into his house while I fought near the door. In like manner he saved three others, thereby acquitting himself as a brave man and a generous Jew. At nightfall we escaped by the Joppa Gate, and I am but now returned in safety unto Kerioth.¹

Surely for the iniquity of Judah hath God brought all these punishments upon us, and fulfilled once more, even as in the days of the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar, the word of the Prophet Jeremiah which he spake, saying: 'The carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth, and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land shall become a waste.'²

And yet men cease not to look for a de-

¹ An incident similar to this is described by Josephus.

² Jer. vii. 33, 34.

liverer. Even as the watchman on the tower watcheth for the morning, so doth Israel wait for the King who is to raise her up from the dust, and exalt her horn among the nations. They who are learned in such matters say that the times appointed by the Prophets are fulfilled, and that Messiah's coming is at hand. Nay, I have heard some affirm, whereof my father is one, that even now he is among us in the flesh, and waiteth only for the hour of his manifestation.

These things are often in my thoughts, both in the field and in the city, in the vineyard and in the market-place. Each morning, as I rise from sleep, my prayer goeth up unto God, and again at night as I lay me down, and ever do I cry unto Him that He will send help unto His people, and render unto our enemies sevenfold into their bosom the reproach wherewith they have reproached us.¹ Wherefore should the heathen rage against the people of God, and boast themselves that their gods be greater than the God of Abraham—greater, forsooth, than the

¹ Ps. lxxix. 12.

God which brought down Pharaoh, and humbled the pride of Egypt even to the dust; or than He who put a hook into the nose of Sennacherib, and turned him back by the way that he came? There is no nation under heaven that can tell of such deliverances as the people of Israel; and though for a season, and because of our sins, God hath hidden His face and suffered our foes to have the dominion over us, yet the time cometh, and is even now at hand, when the Lord shall make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.¹

II

Two days later. December, A.D. 26.

I SAT last night upon the roof of my father's house, and meditated deeply of the things concerning Israel. My heart was sore troubled

¹ Isa. lii. 10.

within me and much distraught with mingled hopes and fears; so that, looking up to heaven, I cried aloud in anguish of soul: 'How long, O Lord, wilt Thou forget us for ever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from us?'¹ And lo! even as I spake, the moon looked out at me from behind a cloud, and my father stood beside me. 'Wherefore, O my son,' said he, 'dost thou charge God with forgetfulness? Is He a man that He should forget? or a son of man that He should change? Hath He not promised, and will He not also perform? Canst thou not remember how that, in the self-same Psalm whereof thou hast already spoken one stanza, David boldly affirmeth: "My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because He hath dealt bountifully with me"?'²

'Yea, father, I know it,' was mine answer. 'But at times my soul groweth dark when I think how the Holy City is in the hands of her enemies, and see no sign of the expected Deliverer. Thou knowest the words of Solo-

¹ Ps. xiii 1.

² Ps. xiii. 5, 6.

mon: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." '1

'And truly did the great King speak,' replied my father; 'but there is medicine even for sick hearts. Our afflictions are the just reward of our iniquities; but if we turn unto the Lord, He will forgive our iniquities and purge away our dross.²—Come now, my son, let us commune together of these things. Peradventure we may gain comfort unto our souls. Thou hast heard me speak of the babe which was born King of the Jews, while as yet thou wast an infant on thy mother's breast—born in Bethlehem, the City of David; how that certain wise and wonderful men journeyed thither from far Euphrates, being guided across the pathless desert by a mysterious star, which went before them, even until it stood over the place where the young child lay.³ I was in Jerusalem when these men came, dusty and travel-stained, riding upon camels, the like of which for size and beauty mine eyes have not beheld before nor since. Chaldaeans were they

¹ Prov. xiii. 12.

² Isa. i. 25.

³ February, 4 B.C.

all, and strange both in speech and aspect ; but they were not ignorant of our Hebrew tongue, and had knowledge of our Law and Prophets. Such were they in dignity and gravity even as I imagine Daniel or Mordecai to have been, and even in the presence-chamber of King Herod they bore themselves as ambassadors of the King of kings. They departed quickly unto Bethlehem, whence they vanished as mysteriously as they had come. Thou knowest, moreover, how that the bloody-minded Herod sent privily a band of soldiers unto Bethlehem, and slew every man-child in the city and in the villages round about, from two years old and under.¹ Already in the cruelty of his jealousy he had slain every soul—not excepting his own wife Mariamne—who could claim descent from the lion-hearted Asmonean ; and he hoped in like manner to destroy this new-born King also, and thus secure unto his own reptile brood the throne of Judah.

‘ And since, from that day even until now, no single word hath been heard of the

¹ March, 4 B.C.

infant thus pointed out by God, many men, losing heart, have believed that Herod performed in very truth his cruel will, and slew the Son of David. But I do not thus believe. Thinkest thou that God would suffer Herod, or a thousand Herods, to lay his hand upon the Lord's Anointed? If this infant were the long-promised Messiah—in confirmation whereof I could tell thee other signs and portents—then, as sure as that the Lord reigneth in heaven, so surely doth this infant yet live upon the earth! Yea, and he will ere long call upon the sons of Abraham to root out their oppressors!

Then answered I and said: 'Truly, my father, I remember me well that thou hast spoken aforetime of these things, and I, too, have believed, and do even now believe, that Messiah liveth upon the earth. But have I not also heard thee say that certain persons beheld the child in the Temple, and gave thanks unto God before all the people for having at last sent a Deliverer unto Israel?'

'Yea, truly, son Judas, thou hast rightly

remembered. One Simeon, a godly man, a distant kinsman of mine own, one who waited in daily prayer for the coming of Messiah, being commanded of the Holy Spirit, went up one day unto the Temple, where a certain man, Joseph, and his wife Mary, were offering according to the Law of Moses for the woman's purification after the birth of her first-born son. It was there revealed unto Simeon that this was the Child of promise, the Saviour of Israel; and, taking up the infant in his arms, he spake noble words of thanksgiving and prophecy.¹ But this was before Herod sent out his cruel command to slay the infants in Bethlehem; and whither these three went after leaving the Temple no man knoweth. But that the child yet liveth, I believe with all mine heart.'

Greatly comforted by these brave and hopeful words of my father, I straightway cast myself upon my face and asked forgiveness of God for having falsely and foolishly charged Him with forgetfulness. Then, descending into the house, I slept peacefully

¹ Luke ii. 34, 35.

upon my bed, and dreamed sweetly of Messiah and his Kingdom.

III

The same place (next day).

December, A.D. 26.

ALAS! alas! With dawn of day the old bitterness once more returneth unto my soul. I am like unto a traveller in a dry and thirsty land, to whom the rising sun brings but renewal of his drought; for each morning bringeth fresh sorrows and heavier oppressions.

Three months are scarcely passed since my father paid his yearly taxes in hard-earned denarii, and took quittance therefor in due and legal form. And yet, this morning at break of day, that infamous renegade Elnakim, the publican, carried off our best yoke of oxen; and when my father raised his voice in protest, and brought forth the quittance as proof that all had been paid, the dog laughed in his face, saying that, as the

village had not paid its full proportion, he, as chief of the synagogue, was responsible for whatever lacked of the full sum. Verily my fingers did itch to take the thief by the throat and shake his ill-gotten money from his girdle. And, in truth, I would have done so, but that the hated helmets of a Roman cohort glistened in the valley below.

'Tis ever thus in this land of desolation and woe. The honest man is made to pay for the dishonest. Publicans and soldiers plunder us even in our very homes. Robbers lie in wait upon the road-sides, and, not content with stripping the traveller both of money and clothes, do oftentimes beat him until he is half-dead. The whole country is parched with misery, and groaneth under extortion and bitterness of heart. Uncircumcised heathen trample upon our most cherished feelings, persecuting us even in the Temple of our God. We are like unto the captive tribes in Babylon, and cannot sing the songs of Zion¹ as we fain would have them sung; for our very worship is mingled with sadness,

¹ Ps. cxxxvii, 4.

and it is no uncommon sight to behold tears trickling from the eyes of bearded men, as they join in the grand old Psalms of David, and compare their gorgeous imagery with the dismal realities of the present.

IV

The same place and day.

December, A.D. 26.

But, even as I write, there come strange tidings from the wilderness of a wonderful Prophet that hath arisen, a Prophet whose cry is ever of a Kingdom and a King that are at hand. The whole land, men say, is moved, and men flock unto the wilderness to hear and to behold the servant of the Lord. May not this be that same child, born King of the Jews thirty years ago, whereof my father did but yesterday discourse? Truly my heart cries out that it is he! and I go at daybreak to see and hear for myself.

V

*Four hours' journey from Keriath (next day).
December, A.D. 26.*

As I sit by the wayside eating my frugal meal of dates and honey, I once more take up my tablets to inscribe thereupon a strange story told unto us last night by one Jonadab, a traveller who lodged at our house, and is even now my companion in the way, being also bound, with me, unto the Prophet. He is a man of some fifty summers, a devout Jew, and one that looketh daily for the coming of Messiah, and for the restoration of the kingdom unto Israel.

And thus ran his story :

Many years ago,¹ when yet a stripling scarce twenty years of age, Jonadab went up unto Jerusalem, with his father and elder brother, partly upon family business, but partly also because a venerated neighbour, one Zacharias, of the priestly course of Abia, was for the space of fifteen days to be the chief of them that offer the daily sacrifice

¹ October, 6 B.C.

in the Temple. In so great honour were this man and his wife Elisabeth held by the men of their city, that when it was known that the lot had fallen upon Zacharias to burn incense upon the golden altar within the Sanctuary, many of his neighbours banded themselves into a caravan, and hastened up to Jerusalem, that they might behold him in his sacred office. Forasmuch as there be four-and-twenty courses of priests, and that each course doth serve but for fifteen days at a time, it followeth that each man sacrificeth but one half-month in a year. Moreover, there are in each course so many priests that long years do oft-times pass before the lot falleth upon a man to perform this most honourable duty. Therefore did it fall out that, although Zacharias was a man well stricken in years, and had waited on the Lord in His holy Temple from his thirtieth year onwards, yet was this the first time that such high honour—than which our Temple service knoweth but one higher—had been vouchsafed unto him.

When, therefore, Zacharias ascended the

marble steps which lead up to the Holy Place, and, passing beneath the golden vine, entered the blessed Sanctuary, there were many friends of his among the praying multitude which stood in the courts without.

At such moments there ever falleth upon the crowd a hush of solemn silence, because that intercession is being offered unto the God of Heaven even for the sins of every Jew. None dareth so much as to whisper unto his neighbour, and no sound is heard but the bleating, perchance, of sheep in the outer court, or the distant hum of the streets beyond. Eagerly did the friends of Zacharias peer into the dusky depths of the Sanctuary, if peradventure they might watch him about his holy office. Yet nought could they perceive but the seven twinkling lamps of the great golden candlestick shining dimly through the rising cloud of incense; for the floor of the Sanctuary is higher than the Court of Worshippers, so that one entering its portals passeth quickly out of sight of them below. Moreover, there are no windows to let in the light of day.

But (saith Jonadab my friend, the same who hath related this story) there came within the Sanctuary that morning a strange and mysterious brightness, which filled all the place, like unto the Shekinah of old, and a shining cloud hung as a veil before the door, so that not even the priests might look within. Many in the crowd cast themselves upon their faces in fear and adoration ; while all men held their breath and marvelled what had become of the priest.

At last he staggered forth, the golden censer yet swinging from his hand, but his aspect that of one who has seen things too great for utterance. For a space he stood beneath the great vine and gazed out upon the bowing multitude, as though he wist not wherefore they were there. Then, passing slowly to the topmost step of the Temple ascent, he essayed to pronounce the priestly benediction for which all men waited. But, alas ! his tongue refused its office ; he could not speak. But, pointing backwards to the Temple, and touching first his eyes and then his lips, he sought to show them that a vision

had been granted unto him so awful as to take away his power of speech. Then, solemnly raising his hands in the attitude of blessing, he silently dismissed the crowd.

Not until after many months did Zacharias reveal unto his neighbours the things seen and heard by him that day in the Temple. At first, when urged so to do, he only wrote upon his tablets that a Prophet of the Lord would shortly appear. But from his wife men learned, in course of time, that this Prophet was to be the child of Zacharias and Elisabeth, and that, even as Isaac was given unto Abraham and Sarah to bless their old age, and, through them, to establish a great nation, so also was this reverend but hitherto childless pair to be honoured with a child of promise. And verily, Elisabeth bare a son in her old age, to the great joy of all her neighbours, and they called his name John, in obedience to the word spoken by the angel in the Temple.

On the same day that the child was circumcised the tongue of the father was loosed, and, being filled with the Spirit of

God, he spake wonderful words of promise and prophecy, whereof some are even now ringing in mine ears while I write ; for they voice mine own heart's longings as no other words have done since first my father taught me to read in our sacred Law. ' Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David ; that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.' ¹

And this John, the child of promise, is the Prophet of the wilderness, whom now we go to see and hear.

My heart is aflame with hopes and joys. That day of which I dreamed even as a boy, and for which I have longed with the deeper thoughts of ripening years, is even now at hand. Fain would I cry aloud and shout for joy of heart, but that I fear men might think me mad. Nevertheless, my heart

¹ Luke i. 68, 69, 74, 75.

rusheth out in strong yearning after this Prophet of the Lord, the Captain of Israel, fore-ordained and appointed of God as the deliverer of Judah and the scourge of her enemies. Like as Moses stretched out his rod against Egypt, even so shall John stretch out his hand against Rome, and lo ! Caesar and all his proud legions shall be sunk in a sea deeper than that which swallowed Pharaoh and his hosts. Or even as Elijah, the hero of Carmel, will he pray unto God, and lo ! fire from heaven shall consume our enemies from before our face. Hath not the Lord spoken it by the mouth of Zacharias, His Prophet, saying ' that we shall be delivered from the hand of them that oppress us ' ?

VI

Kerioth (two weeks later).

January 3, A.D. 27.

BEHOLD me once again at Kerioth, in the house of my fathers. Ten days have I sojourned by the waters of Jordan, hearken-

ing unto the voice of the Prophet of the Lord; and now would I fain meditate in quietness upon all that I have beheld and heard.

A mighty Prophet is John! None can hear him and doubt that he is of God. There is majesty in his very gait; his eyes flash like unto the lightnings of Sinai; and before the thunder of his voice the people bow like ripe corn before a summer's gale.

And yet—John is not Messiah! I have heard him say it; not once, but many times, and in words that could not be misunderstood; for when men crowded to his feet, and craved deliverance from their miseries, he cried aloud and said: 'I am not the Christ.'¹ I am he of whom spake Isaiah: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight a pathway for our God."² But there cometh one after me who is mightier than I, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose; he shall carry his fan in his hand, and purge the nations like a threshing-floor, casting

¹ John i. 20.

² Isa. xl. 3.

the chaff into unquenchable fire, and saving the wheat unto himself.'¹

But if John be not Messiah, the Messiah is at hand! Nay, he is among us already, and we know him not; for John spake one day and said: "There standeth One among you whom ye know not; he it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me."² Of a truth we stand upon the threshold of mighty deeds. He of whom John speaketh is without doubt the Child of Bethlehem, grown now to man's estate. Born King of the Jews, he shall shortly appear to claim his kingdom and spread the empire of David unto the uttermost ends of the earth. He shall break his enemies like a potter's vessel; he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong!³

Unto this man, sent of God, promised to our first father Adam, and again to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, who hath been sung of in the Psalms and foretold by all the Prophets; unto him will I join myself. He shall be my king, my captain, my saviour.

¹ Luke iii. 16, 17. ² John i. 26, 27. ³ Jer. xlix. 19.

And I will be his servant, his soldier, his minister. I will be unto him eyes and hands and feet. He shall learn to know me, and to put confidence in me; so that when his kingdom is established, when Jerusalem shall have become the capital of the whole earth, and Rome but a heap of smoking ashes, I may be advanced to untold riches and honour. For, verily, it is not possible that any should serve so mighty a king, and not be rewarded with all that earth holds most fair and precious.

To-morrow will I finish the business upon which my father hath summoned me home, and then hasten once more with swift feet unto Jordan, where John still preacheth and baptizeth all who repent.

VII

On the banks of Jordan (three days later).

January 6, A.D. 27.

THIS day have I seen Messiah! My heart said unto me: It is he! and Heaven itself bare witness thereto.

Nevertheless, 'tis strange that the conqueror of the world should appear in such wise, solitary, unknown ; with neither friend nor follower ; clad only as a common Jew ; with never a sign whereby men might tell his rank and greatness. And yet, of a truth, the scene was such as I may not readily forget, but will dwell in the chambers of memory while God doth lend me breath and thought.

'Twas in the Vale of Jordan, there where the woods, which clothe its rugged banks in a green and rustling mantle, draw back a space from the rushing waters, and leave bare a small open plain, sandy and rock-strewn. But nor sand nor rocks could the eye behold this day ; for all the plain was full of men and women, from Judaea and far Galilee, from the mountains of Gilead and all the farthest coasts of Israel. Rabbis and priests were there, Pharisees and councillors. Even the jealous Samaritan and the haughty centurion, the greedy publican and the sanctimonious Essene had joined themselves unto the stream of them that flocked to hear the wondrous Prophet.

Standing to his knees in the river was John, whom all men call the Baptist. Tall and swarthy is the Prophet, with cheeks thin from much fasting, a nose curved like unto the crescent moon, and eyes whose glance is as coals of fire. His hair, black as night, and untrimmed since birth by knife or shears, floats around his shoulders like the mane of a war-horse, while his breast, where seen through the opening of his camel's-hair robe, is hairy as the breast of a lion.

Like as bees throng unto the hive, or as doves flock at night-fall to their windows, even so did the people throng about the water's edge. And, as they came, John spake words of counsel or reproof to each, and then poured water over their heads, or thrust them beneath the flood. But ever and anon he lifted up his voice and cried aloud in tones which echoed like a war-trumpet far and wide through all the glen: 'Repent and be baptized, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!'

Suddenly, as I watched from a little distance, I beheld one draw near, before whom

the Baptist bowed low in deep obeisance ; whom first he sought to wave back with outstretched palms, and then offered unto him the vessel wherewith he was wont to draw the water of baptism. Pushing quickly through the crowd, I drew near to the spot, and heard the stranger speak in tones of calm command : ‘ Suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness ! ’¹ And the Prophet spake no other word, but straightway did as he was commanded. Whereupon the stranger smiled graciously upon him and forthwith came up out of the water ; and immediately the heavens opened above his head, and a dove of wondrous whiteness, shining like the moon in her beauty, descended upon him and straightway vanished ; while a voice, soft as the rustling of summer forests, yet deep as the sound of many waters, proclaimed in the ears of all the multitude : ‘ This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. ’²

So solemn a hush fell upon the people at that awful voice that for a space no sound

¹ Matt. iii. 15.

² Matt. iii. 17.

was heard but only the rippling of the river and the sighing of the breeze ; and when men raised their heads and once more gazed about them, lo ! the stranger was gone from the place. But, turning round, I beheld him quietly climbing the steep bank of Jordan, where soon he disappeared among the trees.

As one turned into stone, the Baptist stood for many minutes in the river, motionless and silent, his face bowed low upon his hands, like one who prayeth. Then, speaking no word, and looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, he came up out of the water and walked swiftly away. No man dared to stay his step or to ask him what these things might mean ; but all quietly withdrew, wondering much, and pondering on what they had seen and heard.

VIII

On the banks of Jordan (one month later).

February 6, A.D. 27.

THE stranger hath vanished, no man knoweth whither. From the moment when

I beheld him pass into the leafy fringe of Jordan none hath seen his face ; and though many have sought him diligently, even as the sons of the prophets sought among the self-same mountains for the ascended Elijah, yet no sign hath been discovered whereby any might know if he still liveth. I wot not what this strange disappearance may portend, and even the Baptist seemeth to be lost in wonderment thereat. But it hath ever been said of old that God's mill grindeth slowly, and that in His sight a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. Therefore do I hope and believe that he whom God hath declared to be His Son is working out in silence the great plan of Israel's deliverance, and that ere long his trumpet will sound and call the Jews unto the banners of Messiah.

Meanwhile I have been baptized by the Prophet John, and am become one of his disciples. For, as he saith, all they who are his belong also to Messiah, and he doth but prepare men for entrance into the Kingdom of God. 'Messiah,' saith John, 'shall

increase, but I shall decrease ; and I am well content that thus it should be ; for therefore only am I sent.' ¹

I have sought also to glean knowledge from the Baptist concerning the Christ, of whom he saith that he is the forerunner. But John is a solitary man and of few words, and 'tis not easy to gain speech of him. Nevertheless, thus much have I learned. He who was baptized, now some thirty days since, was indeed Jesus, the Child of Bethlehem. His parents, Joseph and Mary, fled from Bethlehem into Egypt, being commanded thereto by God, and thus escaped the sword of Herod, who sought the young child's life. When Herod was dead, they journeyed to their home in Nazareth of Galilee, where Jesus hath since dwelt with his mother ; for Joseph, his father, is dead now these twelve years.

John hath, moreover, told me that Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Elisabeth his own mother, were cousins, and that while yet a youth he many times met the young Christ,

¹ John iii. 30.

it being the custom of both families to go up unto Jerusalem every year unto the Passover. Although John is himself one in whom dwelleth the Spirit of God, having been set apart from his birth as a Nazarite and a Prophet, yet doth he aver that in wisdom and in understanding of the Law this Jesus did, while yet a boy, as far excel him as the sun exceedeth the moon in brightness, or the cedar of Lebanon surpasseth in glory the bramble by the wayside. But from his twentieth year John hath dwelt apart in the wilderness, meditating of the Kingdom which was to come, and weaning his heart from the follies of the world, and had therefore not seen Jesus for full ten years, until suddenly he presented himself for baptism in Jordan. Whither he hath now gone, and wherefore, John knoweth not ; but doubteth not that in the fullness of time he will return and call men unto his Kingdom.

I had hoped to gain speech of the Christ, and to learn somewhat concerning him from his own mouth. But this hath not been possible, and to-morrow I must return unto

mine own home, having been summoned thither by my father Simon, who, being now somewhat stricken in years, loveth not that I leave the care of business to him alone. He hath been ever a good father unto me, and 'tis my delight to render unto him the love and obedience of a son.

IX

*In the City of Jerusalem, at the Feast
of the Passover.*

April 11, A.D. 27.

TRULY this Passover season is a time of heart-searching unto every right-minded Jew ; for, although it bringeth to our remembrance God's wonderful deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, yet doth it also make manifest to how deep a depth the sons of Jacob have fallen from their erstwhile high estate, and publisheth our humiliation before all the nations of men. Never have I taken part in the solemn ceremonies of this high festival—and I have not once failed so to do since my twelfth year—without being moved even

to tears by its memories of long-past greatness.

But now I weep no more as one without hope ; for have not mine eyes beheld the new Gideon, beneath whose banner we shall shortly break the oppressor's yoke from off our neck, and smite our foes hip and thigh ? Verily my prayers, the prayers of all Israel, have ascended up unto God, and the answer even now cometh down upon us in the gracious assurance of help.

This day at dawn my father and I stood in the Temple with folded hands, waiting in meditation and prayer while the priests made ready the lamb for the morning sacrifice. Suddenly we heard behind us in the outer court a great confusion and noise, the wild trampling of sheep and oxen, the crash of falling tables and shouts of angry men. But far above all the cries of beasts and men there arose a mighty voice, stern and commanding, which cried and said : ' Take these things hence ; make not my Father's House a house of merchandise ! ' ¹ Amazed and

¹ John ii. 16.

affrighted, we hastened to the place, and there beheld once more the mysterious Jesus, a scourge of small cords in his hand, imperiously driving before him both cattle and drovers, money-changers and dealers, while with uplifted voice he repeated his strange command. And verily there were such fiery indignation in his eyes, such majesty in his aspect, such terror in his tones, that none dared gainsay his word, or hesitate to obey its mandate. As dust flies before the whirlwind, so fled they all from before his face, staying not even to gather the gold and silver which lay, like leaves in autumn, strewn upon the ground.

When all had been driven forth from the Temple, Jesus laid aside his whip, and, calmly turning towards the altar, joined himself quietly unto the crowd of worshippers. But all men questioned eagerly among themselves who and what manner of man this might be that thus took upon himself to reprove the traffickers, and to speak of the Temple as his Father's House. But unto me there came the remembrance of certain words

spoken by the waters of Jordan: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!'—and I knew that this was the Son of God, Lord even of the Temple, born King of the Jews; and my heart trembled within me from excess of joy. But when I sought speech with him my courage failed me, and I therefore stood aside among the multitude and waited to see what would happen. For, verily, these dealers and money-changers are rich and powerful, and among them are servants of Annas, the Sadducee High-priest, a man greatly to be feared. This Annas is greedy of gain, and showeth small mercy unto the poor; for he hath seized unto himself the sole right to sell doves to them that come to sacrifice in the Temple. Moreover, so shrewdly hath he used this power that a dove, which by the Law of Moses was ordained to be the offering of the very poor, costeth now wellnigh as dearly as a lamb, so that the people hate him for his greed and oppression. But he is a terrible man, proud and crafty, who brooketh not that any intermeddle with his plans.

When the priests had ended the sacrifice and offered incense according to custom, Jesus withdrew himself unto the corridor of marble pillars which skirteth the Temple's northern wall, where, gathering quickly a crowd of curious listeners about him, he straightway began to teach them. But he had not spoken long, when there came pushing through the throng certain Levites and officers of the Temple, and with them also three of the chief priests. These courteously saluted Jesus and said unto him: 'Tell us, we pray thee, by what authority thou hast driven these men out of the Temple. If thou be the Christ, the Son of the Living God, thou canst not refuse to give unto us some sign, whereby we may know thee, who thou art. For, verily, if thou be indeed Messiah, we and all Israel are thy servants.'

To them he gave answer in few words and said: 'This sign give I unto you, whereby ye may know me, who I am: destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.'¹

¹ John ii, 19,

Whereat certain of the Levites could not forbear to laugh, and he who seemed the elder of the three priests cried out—and there was a sound as of scornful unbelief in his voice: ‘Forty-and-six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?’

To him Jesus vouchsafed no further answer, but turned him about and began again to teach the people. Whereupon the priests and their company left him in anger, and certain of them in the crowd murmured, saying that to destroy the Temple of God could not be a work well pleasing to Him, and that no true prophet would require such a deed at their hands. And, verily, unto me also doth it seem strange that Jesus should make so marvellous an answer to so reasonable a demand.

Nevertheless, if Jesus granted no sign unto them that asked for one, except such as they dared not put to the test, he hath not ceased since to work signs and miracles of healing such as the eyes of man have not seen since the world was. Of sick and halt and blind,

such as make a traffic of their infirmities and live by the alms of the charitable, there are ever multitudes to be found in Jerusalem at the time of Passover, being drawn by the hope of an abundant harvest from the many thousands who come thither to worship at that season. Truly they are a spectacle to move even a heathen to compassion, for they crowd the gates of the city and lie in numbers upon the ascents to the Temple. Among these miserable ones hath Jesus this day wrought many marvellous cures, healing some by the touch of his hand, and some with a word only, so that the people fought with one another that they might get at him; for many that did but touch the hem of his garment were immediately made whole of whatsoever diseases they had. At first the multitude shouted aloud for joy, when they beheld men that had been born blind looking round about with seeing eyes; or cripples dancing and leaping and waving their crutches, like children at play. But, as the number of them that were healed grew more and more, amazement fell upon all the beholders; their

shouts sank into whispers, and men gazed in awe and silent wonder upon him that could work such miracles. Some did even fall upon their faces before him, crying : ' Hail Christ, thou Son of David ! ' while others murmured : ' Verily this is he of whom the Prophets did speak, that should deliver Israel ! '

Yea, and of a truth, it is he ! and unto him will I straightway join myself and become his servant, if peradventure he will grant unto me to serve him.

X

The same place (one day later).

April 12, A.D. 27.

AMONG them that follow after Jesus are certain Galilaeans, whom aforesaid I saw with John Baptist by the waters of Jordan. From one of these men, whose name also is John, I have learned that when Jesus so marvelously vanished after his baptism, he did not again appear until full forty days had passed ; and his return was as sudden and mysterious

as his departure. One day, while the Baptist taught by the side of Jordan, suddenly he ceased speaking and became as one stricken dumb. Pointing with outstretched hand towards the woody thickets which fringe the river and cover its lofty banks, he stood silent for a space of many minutes. The people wist not at first wherefore he thus pointed, but soon they beheld Jesus walking alone among the trees and coming towards them. As he drew near they perceived that his face was as the face of one that had suffered many things, and was weary for lack of sleep. Then, while he was yet a little way off, John cried with a loud voice, saying: 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!'¹ Thrice did he repeat the cry, pointing ever to the advancing Christ; and then quietly withdrew unto his own abode, as though the day's task were ended.

Whereupon John and another named Andrew, likewise a Galilaeen, essayed to follow Jesus, who, smiling graciously upon them, suffered them to abide with him all that day,

¹ John i. 29.

and spake such words of power and wisdom as made their hearts to melt within them, so that they knew and believed that he is Messiah.

Not many days thereafter he departed unto Galilee, whither they also accompanied him, and where he hath since dwelt, preaching daily unto the people, and working many signs and wonders, so that the number of Galilaeans that believe on him is already very great.

John hath given me assurance that Jesus will certainly receive me as his disciple, if only I show myself wishful and apt to be taught, and be ready to follow him whithersoever he goeth ; for that he casteth out none that come unto him. This, therefore, I am resolved to do, and that right speedily.

XI

In Bethany, nigh unto Jerusalem (next day).

April 13, A.D. 27.

THIS day have I for the first time had speech of Messiah. Truly the thoughts of God are

not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways¹; for the Christ whom He hath sent speaketh a language strange unto mine ears.

This morning early he set out upon his journey toward Galilee, and, passing near the place of his birth, Bethlehem, the city of David, he made a circuit round Jerusalem and arrived at this place toward nightfall. Joining myself unto the company of them that followed, I tracked his footsteps to the house of one Lazarus, a man held in high reputation among the people of the Jews, with whom he lodgeth. Not adventuring to enter the house, nor to address him by the way, I tarried long time in the vicinity, hoping that, perchance, he would come out once more in the cool of twilight. And truly, when the stars appeared, he also came forth and walked to and fro beneath the date-palms² where-with the place is thickly garnished, seeming to be deep sunken in meditation. And as he walked he oft-times paused, gazing upward to the heavens and speaking in earnest tones,

¹ Is. lv. 8.

² The name of Bethany means 'The House of Dates.'

although no man was with him. I lingered afar off, not daring to draw nigh, and could not apprehend the sense of his speech, though methought I many times heard the word 'Father,' from which I judged that he prayed. As I watched from beneath the trees he became aware of me, and, halting in his walk, beckoned me to his presence, and, seeming to divine my purpose, said: 'Thou wouldst speak with me, my son?' Whereto I gave answer that such was my desire, and that I was one of them that look for the salvation of Israel. Moreover, I told how I had witnessed his baptism at the hands of John; had heard the holy voice proclaim him the Son of God; and coveted for myself the honour of entering into that Kingdom whereof John had spoken.

'The way into that Kingdom,' said he, 'is only through the gate of repentance. None can enter therein who are not cleansed from sin, for God desireth none other to serve Him. Canst thou, my son, depart from all evil and eschew all iniquity? Canst thou forsake father and mother, lands and

house, for my sake and the Kingdom's? For verily, if thou canst, then great shall be thy reward.'

Whereupon I gave him earnest assurance that I longed greatly for the deliverance of my people, and that for this end, and for the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth, I would willingly sacrifice all that I held most dear.

To this he answered: 'He that serveth me serveth also my Father who sent me; and the service which I demand is that a man love me above everything in the world, yea, above his own self. If thou canst so love me, then will thy service be one of joy and blessing. Thou wilt esteem no toil a burden and no denial a sacrifice, but, like a true soldier, wilt gladly endure hardship for thy Lord's sake. Such men do I seek for my service. Go thy way for this time. Pray earnestly unto the Father for guidance in this matter. Search well thy heart and see if thou canst suffer joyfully all these things for my sake and the Father's. I would not lure thee with the prospect of the glory foretold by the

prophets, but rather warn thee of the dangers and hardships by the way. If, on riper meditation in the secret chambers of thy spirit, thou art still minded to join thyself unto the company of my disciples, then will I gladly welcome and further instruct thee. Fare thee well !'

Such were the words he spake, and verily their sense is not such as I had looked for. Yet were they spoken with such grace and kindness of aspect that my soul was stirred to gratitude and obedience. Though much that he spake was of hardship and endurance, yet did he not fail to point me to the glories foretold in prophecy ; and truly no man is worthy to serve in the army of a great king who has no stomach for the trials and perils which beset a soldier's life. This Jesus doeth prudently in that he seeketh only such for his service as can approve themselves valiant and trustworthy warriors. God grant that he may find me such a one as he can use for the establishment of his Kingdom !

And what shall I say of Jesus ? His outward aspect is mean, and his garb that of a

peasant. He hath none of the outward trappings of rank, and no man would deem from his appearance that he was born to be a King. Yet in his presence there is an air of majesty and command. His voice, deep yet musical, is sweet and pleasant to the ear, yet withal charged with tones of authority ; while his eyes are such as I never yet beheld, for, though kindly and gentle of aspect, yet do they seem to search out the innermost caverns of the soul, like the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro throughout the whole earth.¹ No liar or hypocrite could hope to cheat their two-edged keenness, and I felt, while talking with him, that my thoughts lay open and naked to his view, and that he read my purpose or ever I uttered it.

But, verily, I am sincere in this matter, and need not shun his glance. My longing for the deliverance of Israel and my hatred for them that so cruelly oppress my people are the strongest and deepest sentiments of my bosom ; and though hopes of high preferment, of riches and of glory for myself, do

¹ 2 Chron. xvi. 9 and Zech. iv. 10.

sometimes mingle with my dreams of the Kingdom that is to be, yet are they not evil hopes. There is no sin in desiring to be great and rich. Glory and might were the rewards promised by God, through His servant Moses, to all them who diligently kept His Law ; and this I earnestly purpose to do. If I join myself unto this Jesus, I will serve him first and foremost ; I will love him, even as he saith, above all beside, yea, above mine own soul ; and the welfare of his Kingdom shall be my chiefest hope and aim.

XII

In the land of Judaea (one month later).

May, A.D. 27.

DAILY doth my amazement grow greater, till my wonder passeth all bounds. The marvels wrought by this man Jesus would fill many books, if one could be found to write them all down. Even the devils must flee before him, and depart at a word out of them whom they have possessed. Sometimes they

cry aloud in terror, calling him the Son of God ; but more often he bids them be silent, and they dare not disobey by so much as a word.

His progress through the land is like the march of an army ; for whithersoever he goeth multitudes follow him out of all the cities of Judæa. But I have not yet heard him call upon any to take up arms on his behalf. Hitherto his words have all been of repentance and a pure life, of forgiveness and of prayer. Nevertheless, he speaketh much of the Kingdom of God—the word is oft-times in his mouth—and declareth that this Kingdom is nigh at hand, even in our hearts.

Yea and of a truth, it is in the heart of every son of Abraham. We long for its appearing, and have been awaiting it for ages. All Israel groaneth in spirit for the day when this Kingdom shall be set up, and that of Caesar dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Notwithstanding the strangeness of Christ's doctrine, I think I perceive a great purpose in his preaching of repentance and his diligence in denouncing sin. Are not we Jews

the chosen people of the Lord? Hath not the Law been given unto us alone among the nations? Is not the Temple ours, and Jerusalem the only place in all the earth where sacrifice and worship may be offered to the Almighty? If these things be true, then it is right and fitting that, before our King can lead us forth conquering and to conquer, we be purified and prepared for our high position. I therefore admire this Jesus, that he will not have any wicked or profane soldiers, but is determined to train for himself an army of godly men. For, if the Kingdom is to be the Kingdom of God, it cannot be established by any but devout and God-fearing Jews.

Nevertheless, there is much in the teaching of Jesus that I cannot understand. Among the crowds who follow him are many of the holiest men in the land, not priests and Levites only, but also learned Rabbis and spotless Pharisees; men who observe the Law to keep all its smallest details, who are frequent in washings and liberal in alms-giving, whose phylacteries are of the broadest and their prayers of the longest; men who would

not touch me with the tip of their finger, lest they be defiled, and whose sanctity is so great that there be few with whom they can sit down to meat. I have heard these men say that the doctrine of Jesus is dangerous, and will bring the Temple itself into contempt. Myself have heard him tell them it would better beseem them to wash their hearts sometimes and their hands less often ; and that secret prayers are more grateful unto God than such as are offered publicly at the street-corners. He weareth no phylacteries himself ; mingleth freely with the poorest and most sinful of the people ; doth not always wash before eating ; and yesterday sat down to meat with a publican.

Truly I do not greatly love these Pharisees myself ; for, with all their religion, they are proud and overbearing, and in their much anxiety to win heaven for themselves seem oft-times as though they would thrust their brethren out. Nevertheless, our Rabbis have ever taught us that the Law of Moses can only be fully kept by observing its every letter. Were not our fathers sent into captivity for

breaking the Law ? And the many washings, purifyings, and ceremonies ordained by the Rabbis, are they not a hedge around the Law, to hinder us from mingling with uncircumcised heathen and learning to follow their idolatries ? And yet, alas ! so heavy lieth their burden upon our shoulders that no man can rightly follow the business of life, or traffic in merchandise upon the market, and be a strict Pharisee. Neither is it possible that all should become Essenes ; for the Essenes neither marry nor give in marriage, and such a religion would soon blot us out from among the nations of earth.

All these things are hard of understanding to an unlearned man, and my soul is sore perplexed concerning them.

Nevertheless, when I hearken unto Jesus I am constrained to accept every word that he uttereth ; for his teaching is as that of one having authority, and resembleth in no way that of the Scribes and Doctors.¹ The Rabbis never say aught as from themselves, but quote always the word of some earlier teacher—Ben

¹ Matt. vii. 29.

Israel, Hillel, or Shammai ; but Jesus speaketh as of his own knowledge, and affirmeth that his words are given unto him by the Father Himself. And truly they are words of power, such as no Rabbi ever spake before, and the common people hang upon his lips in breathless wonder. Moreover, when such words are followed by signs and mighty works, one is constrained to believe him that speaketh, even though Scribes and Priests may doubt and argue ; for even the great Shammai himself never wrought a miracle.

My mind, then, is fixed ; I am firmly resolved what to do. I have now followed this Jesus for weeks through all the cities and villages of Judaea, listening unto his strange and wonderful doctrine, hearkening unto the daily proclamation of a Kingdom nigh at hand, and witnessing his marvellous works. I have therefore determined to become one of his disciples. I am already known unto many of them ; and as he purposeth shortly to depart northwards, even unto Galilee, I will go with him and follow whithersoever he goeth.

And when at last he raiseth the standard of Messiah, and causeth the trumpet to sound forth defiance against the enemies of Israel, then shall all they who first joined themselves unto the good cause be assuredly made captains of his host and rulers, under him, over all the nations of the earth. This, therefore, shall be my proud hope, and the goal henceforth of my desires.

XIII

*The city of Sychar, in the country of the Samaritans.
(Two days later.) May, A.D. 27.*

TRULY old things are passing away, and all things are being made new! They who would follow Jesus must cease to think their old thoughts or cherish their old prejudices. Hath it ever been heard that a pious Jew sat down to meat with a Samaritan, or consorted as a friend with one of that nation? And yet these days hath Jesus done both these things. Nay, he hath done much more: he hath talked familiarly with a woman that is a

Samaritan, a woman, moreover, not of the better sort, but of loose behaviour and humble rank.

The stricter kind of Jews ever make it their custom, when passing from Judaea into Galilee, to cross over Jordan and travel by way of the land of Gilead, that they may not pass through the land of the impious Samaritans, with whom no true son of Abraham can have dealings; all men holding that their touch defileth worse even than that of an uncircumcised heathen. Nevertheless, it hath pleased Jesus to journey into Galilee by way of Samaria; and yesterday at noon we reached the Well of Jacob, nigh unto the city of Sychar, where, being weary with much travel, we would all fain have sat down to rest and eat. But our wallets being empty, and we not willing to eat meat beneath a Samaritan roof, it behoved some of our company to go into the city and buy food, that we might eat it at the Well, and thence continue our journey. For, although our Law doth not permit that we consort with men of this country, nor sit down with them, yet it

alloweth us to buy and sell, and even to eat food bought in their cities. Jesus therefore commanded that we should go into Sychar for this intent, saying that he desired to be left alone for a season.

What, then, was our amazement, when shortly afterwards we returned, to find him talking earnestly with a woman—a Samaritan woman—that had come unto the well to draw water. So long and so earnestly did they commune one with the other that, when we had spread our dinner beneath the palm-trees and called unto him to partake thereof, he hearkened not unto us, but continued still talking with the woman. Whereupon she suddenly departed in great haste, leaving her water-pot by the well, and, quickly returning, brought with her a multitude, both of men and women, to see Jesus. But even while the woman was gone, Jesus continued sitting apart—whether in meditation or in prayer, I wot not—and when we urged him to eat he answered us, saying: ‘I have meat to eat that ye know not of,’ whereat we marvelled much, and whispered one to another: ‘Hath

any man brought him aught to eat ? ' Whereupon, as though knowing our thought, he answered : ' My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.' Then, pointing with his finger towards the crowd which came hastily along the road from the city, he added : ' Lift up your eyes and look upon the fields ; for they be white already unto harvest. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour. Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.'¹

Afterward for the space of three hours he continued speaking unto the people, who gladly heard him and confessed openly that, ' Of a truth, this is Messiah who should come ! ' Nay, when we made as though we would continue our journey, they urged him to stay with them ; the which, to our great astonishment, he consented to do. Thus hath it come to pass that I have done that which I never thought to do, and for which, had it been done of my own free will, my conscience would harshly accuse me—I have sat at meat with a Samaritan and slept under his roof !

¹ John iv. 32-8.

All these things seem passing strange unto me ; and not to me only, but unto all the disciples. For though they be Galilaeans, and more accustomed to mingle with strangers than we who dwell in Judaea, yet did they murmur thereat, and would not enter into any house, nor recline at table with a Samaritan, until first they beheld that Jesus gave the example.

But this open converse with the woman was, of all things that I have beheld him do, the one that appeareth most strange unto me. I am not a Pharisee, nor yet are any of my kindred. Neither am I akin unto any that is a Rabbi, for my father is a merchant, as was his father before him ; and his brethren, for the most part, till their own ground, or do business in the market. Nevertheless, it hath ever been told me that all teachers of the Law esteem it a disgrace to speak publicly with a woman, and that the stricter sort among them will not so much as salute their own wives or daughters, if by chance they meet them in the street. Moreover, this woman is one that hath no very reputable character ;

for the man with whom she liveth is not her husband, and she hath already had five husbands before him. Notwithstanding these things, Jesus did talk with her concerning the mysteries of his Kingdom, telling her of the nature of God, and promising that his words should be in her like a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life.

Truly 'tis all strange together ! Both the precepts and the example of this Jesus are contrary unto all that ever I have heard or been taught, and much do I marvel whither such doctrine will tend. He hath no respect for persons ; but receiveth graciously all that come unto him, and turneth none away.

Meseems that not only are Samaritans to be made partakers of the New Kingdom, but even women also !

XIV

*The city of Capernaum, in the land of Galilee.
(Ten days later.) May, A.D. 27.*

WE are but now arrived from Samaria, where much people have believed on Jesus as Messiah, not only in the city of Sychar—

where we tarried for three days—but also in many of the towns and villages, where he hath taught and healed by the way.

Among them that follow Jesus and are become his disciples are men of all sorts, and not a few women, who minister unto him and provide that he lack not for daily bread. For so strangely filled is he with the zeal of preaching that he rarely maketh provision for the bodily needs of himself or of them that follow him. But, for the present he lodgeth in the house of one Simon, a fisherman, whose wife's mother he hath healed of a grievous distemper. As for the rest of his disciples, they are for the most part inhabitants of the country, and dwell at Capernaum, or at Tiberias, or at other cities hard by the Lake. I only am a stranger in the land, but have been hospitably entertained in the house of one Matthew, a Levite. The same was aforetime a publican and a man of great substance ; but, being called by Jesus to follow him, hath sold all that he had and given the half thereof unto the poor. Nay, he would have given all had I not counselled him to retain a portion

for the service of the Master. Whereupon he hath entreated me to hold it for him, saying that money and the love thereof have been ever a snare and a curse unto him, and that he therefore desireth henceforth to have no more dealings with the unclean thing. To this Jesus hath given consent, and likewise Simon and the rest; for as I am more accustomed unto the traffic of markets and merchandise than they, it is their desire that I carry the purse, and receive all that is put therein for the common use.

Thus, therefore, I am already advanced to an honourable trust, and become Chief Treasurer of the Kingdom of Messiah. That which at present cometh to my hands is but small in sum, and sufficeth hardly for our daily needs. But no man can tell to what these things may grow; for hath it not been foretold by the Prophet Isaiah, saying: 'Surely the ships of Tarshish shall bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel?'¹—'Thou shalt

¹ Isa. lx. 9.

suck the milk of the nations, and shalt suck the breast of kings' ?¹ What mean these promises, but that all the wealth and glory of the Gentiles shall flow unto the Kingdom of Messiah ! To-day 'tis Rome that doth suck the milk of all the nations, growing fat like a young heifer with the good things of the whole earth. Her princes are filled with pride, and her great ones flourish in cruelty. But Rome shall be bowed down and made to sit in the dust, even as the Lord humbled great Babylon and brought her glory to the ground. Her daughters shall take the mill-stones and grind meal for the sons of Jacob ; and all the ends of the earth shall know that Messiah reigneth, and that Israel is his chosen people !²

XV

The city of Magdala ; in the house of Mary, daughter of Nahum. (Two weeks later.) June, A.D. 27.

As is now his wonted custom, the Lord departed this day early from Capernaum, with intent to preach and teach in the neighbouring

¹ Isa. lx. 16.

² Isa. xlvii. 2.

villages and cities. Passing through Bethsaida, he came unto Magdala, where, it being now toward evening, he gathered a great multitude beneath the white cliffs which lie to westward of the place, and began straightway to preach and to heal their sick. But he had not spoken many words, when suddenly there was heard a voice of great tumult within the city gate, wild shrieking of women and the shouts of men, who cried unto the watchman to shut the gate. But ere he could gather the sense of their clamour, there rushed through the archway a strange, dishevelled figure—to wit, a woman, clad in rich attire, whereof the half had been torn to rags in her flight; with costly jewels upon her feet and hands, which, as she ran, she sought to pluck from their place and hurl at her pursuers. The long black tresses of her hair hung loose upon her naked shoulders, or streamed behind like a war-pennon, while ever and anon she staggered and stumbled, as one that could not rightly command her feet. As she drew near to the place where we stood, I saw that the people fled from before her, crying: ‘It

is Mary, the possessed one ! She hath seven devils ! Let not her come nigh !' But she stayed not her flight, but came ever onwards, crying out with a voice strange and terrible, like unto the scream of a jackal, or the laugh of a hyaena. But no word could she utter, but only cries as of a beast in agony ; while ever, as she ran, her fingers plucked at her hair or tore her vesture ; and her eyes blazed like two live coals fresh from the brazier.

She came right to the place where Jesus stood, the people moving quickly to the right and left to let her pass. Then suddenly her strength failed, and she fell prone upon the earth, her limbs writhing like unto the limbs of a dying animal, her bosom panting with the fury of her running, while blood rushed from her mouth and stained her neck and face with crimson. Verily mine eyes ne'er saw so pitiable a sight, for the woman was both young and fair to look upon, and it was grievous to behold her thus vexed and tormented.

Jesus had spoken no single word since the tumult began ; but, fixing his eyes upon the flying woman, even while she was yet afar off,

he seemed to draw her towards him, until she fell prone at his feet. Whereupon he, stooping down, gently laid a hand upon her head, and spake softly unto her, saying: 'Mary, arise! Thou art loosed from thy bondage.' And straightway she arose and gazed in wonder upon the face of him that had healed her. And thus she stood while one might count sixty; and no man in all that crowd stirred or spake a word, so that the humming of a bee might clearly be heard, as it passed homeward to its nest. Then with a loud voice she cried, saying, 'My Lord and my God!' and straightway fell at Jesus' feet, and, kissing them like unto one beside herself, she wept as I never yet saw man or woman weep before. Verily, it did seem as though the unwept tears of many years were now pouring out at her eyes in a stream of joy and gratitude.

But Jesus raised her up and bade her return unto the city and come again on the morrow, saying that he, too, purposed to abide that night at Magdala. Whereupon she replied: 'Lord, thy handmaiden is not worthy so much

as to look upon thy face : nevertheless, if thou and thy disciples will honour my poor roof by lodging under its shelter, all that I have is thine, and shall be while I live.'

To which the Lord answered : ' Mary, thou hast suffered much, and thou lovest much. Be it even as thou sayest.'

I, Judas, am now writing my record in the house of this same woman, Mary of Magdala, or the Magdalene, as she is commonly called ; and truly 'tis a house large and magnificent. Her father, Nahum, was a man of great substance, and lord of many camels, mules, and slaves, whereby he transported the merchandise of others unto distant cities, even from Alexandria and the River Nilus unto Damascus and Babylon and the far-off lands of India. Thus did he gain many friends and grow rich and powerful ; but, dying suddenly, left two motherless infants, a son and this Mary, to the care of a trusted slave, Cleomenes. So faithfully did Cleomenes fulfil his trust that the father's wealth grew and multiplied mightily, until Mary became famed as the richest maiden in all Galilee ; for, her brother

dying while yet a child, she became sole heiress of all Nahum's possessions. Moreover, the maiden was wondrous fair to look upon, but withal of a proud and haughty spirit, and would not mate with those of her own tribe or kindred, but said that she desired to be a princess or to wed with a king. Thus when it came to pass that devils entered into her, and she became lunatic, and must be guarded by day and by night, lest she kill herself or slay others, men said that it was a judgement from God for her unseemly pride. She hath now been in this miserable case for four years, tormented, so men say, by seven devils; for the plague took her sometimes one way and sometimes another. One day she would be blind, and the next day dumb: then by turns, deaf, palsied, convulsed, or without strength or power of motion. Again, she would possess the strength of ten, and roar like a wild beast, or beat herself, until men were fain to bind her fast with strong cords. Then for a space her right mind came again unto her, and she became as other women; but these were her times of bitterest woe, for she did nought

but weep and bewail her wretched state, and beg and command her slaves to slay her and end her misery. Yet even in her worst torments hath she ever shown a love of fine apparel and worn costly raiment and gems of price ; and her house is furnished forth with much magnificence.

Verily, Jesus spake truly when he said unto Mary that she had suffered much and therefore loveth much ; for never did I behold such love as hers. Were she a slave, the vilest in the land, she could not stoop more humbly to serve him—and not to serve him alone, but all them also that are of his company. Forgetful of her pride, and that she hath crowds of slaves that wait her bidding, she would fain have washed all our feet with her own hands, had not the Master bidden her forbear. But since we came in she hath not ceased to minister unto us, and nought that she hath is too good, even for the meanest among us. But chiefly doth she delight to gaze upon him that ended her bondage. With hands crossed upon her breast, she standeth behind his couch, looking through tears upon his face, smiling

the while with joy, and murmuring blessings and thanksgivings unto God.

Much gain do I foresee unto the cause of Christ's Kingdom from this wonderful miracle of healing; for the woman was famous throughout all Galilee, and men will speak everywhere of her marvellous cure. But that which seemeth unto me yet more important is her great wealth, which henceforth will be altogether given to his service; and wealth bringeth might unto them that possess it. Hitherto the followers of Jesus have been, for the most part, poor and of small account in the world; and though many rich and great have stood among the crowds listening unto his discourse, yet none have vowed to give unto him all that they possess, save only the publican Matthew. But henceforth wealth and riches shall flow into his treasury, and the words of Isaiah be fulfilled which he spake, saying: 'Ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.'¹

Nevertheless, I cannot cease from marvel-

¹ Isa. lxi. 6.

ling at the gracious kindness wherewith Jesus beareth himself towards this Mary—and not towards her only, but also to all the women that wait upon him, or follow in his train. Unto the Pharisees this allowance of womenkind giveth great offence, and also to many others ; for it hath never yet been seen among us that a Rabbi suffered women to minister unto him, or even to come into his presence. Nay, some have taught that to instruct a woman in the Law is folly ; and there be certain Pharisees who get to themselves great honour—whom people call ‘ stumbling Pharisees ’—by ever walking through the streets with closed eyes, lest they behold a woman and be thereby led to commit sin.

But this Jesus is of another spirit ; for he suffereth women to approach freely unto his presence, and communeth with them openly, teaching and exhorting them, even as the men.

XVI

*On the Mount of Hattin, in the land of Galilee.
(Seven months later.) February, A.D. 28.*

‘MAKE a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: . . . let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; . . . let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity!’¹

This hath been a day of great things! The armies of Israel shall soon be summoned unto the banner of their King; for this day the Christ hath named the Captains of Thousands and of Ten-Thousands in his host.

My heart is inditing a good matter,² and a new song is in my mouth; for my Lord hath looked graciously upon me, and made me great among my brethren. Nay, I may even claim to be the first among them; for whereas he hath chosen us Twelve, whereof many are Galilaeans, me only hath he chosen from the

¹ Ps. xcvi. 4, 6, 9.

² Ps. xlv. 1.

royal Tribe, the Tribe of Judah, the Tribe from which springeth Messiah himself.

And yet—my soul is filled with doubts and fears, when I think of the strange election, and of the men that are elected. Verily, the ways of this Jesus are not as my ways, nor his thoughts as my thoughts. No trumpet sounded to tell the world that a Kingdom had been established. None blew the rams-horns, or chaunted the joyful psalm. Not a lamb was offered, nor was there even a solemn anointing. But the Christ summoned his disciples apart upon a hill-side, and chose out twelve men, whom he called his Apostles, or Sent-ones—whereof I, Judas, am one—and gave unto them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and disease.

But if Jesus can give unto us, his Apostles, to have power over sicknesses and over demons, can he not add thereunto all other power, as seemeth him good? It mattereth not, therefore, that we are poor and unlearned men; for all might hath been given unto our Lord, and he can make us able to conquer the

strongest and the wisest among the sons of men. For this cause, then, will I laugh my doubts to scorn, and will let my heart grow fat upon the hopes of glory and greatness which fill its dreams by day and by night.

Nevertheless, my doubts refuse to flee quite away, but buzz around me like flies in summer. Of all our band one only hath ever drawn the sword, or knoweth aught of a soldier's life—one Simon, a Zealot, who aforetime fought against the Roman power—and yet against us stand arrayed all the legions of Caesar and the hosts of an uncircumcised world. No priest or Rabbi hath been chosen : although I have heard Jesus call the Temple his Father's House, and his Kingdom the Kingdom of God. True, there is a son of Levi among us ; but he is one who had forgotten his birthright, and sunk to the base calling of a publican. The rest are men of low estate, poor and of no account among their neighbours.

Truly a feeble band to lead a world in captivity !

Not thus had I pictured to myself the first beginnings of Messiah's Kingdom. I dreamed

of pomp and majesty, the blare of trumpets and of cymbals, the shout of a host preparing for battle.

Even our Leader is but a carpenter, who was taught letters in a village school: whereas Moses was trained in the palace of Pharaoh, and was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Samuel served from a child in the House of God. David, although born a shepherd, practised warfare in the armies of Saul. And Daniel was skilful in all wisdom, cunning in knowledge and understanding science, so that he was wiser than all the wise men of the Chaldaeans.

Yet none can say that Jesus is not wise, though no man hath taught him wisdom. And he worketh marvels the like of which have not been seen since the world began even until now. Therefore have I followed him, and do most earnestly believe in his power to subdue unto himself all the kingdoms of the world, and to make his faithful followers the princes, nobles, and great ones of the earth. Nevertheless do I wonder that among his chosen Apostles are none of the

princes of Israel, none of her rulers and nobles, none of the Chief Priests and Rabbis, or of them that are accounted wise and great among the sons of Abraham.

But I must leave wondering ; for so much is wonderful in the sayings and doings of this man Jesus, that one might ever be marvelling thereat. Let me rather write of myself and the men who are my fellow captains in the host of Messiah.

Already am I moved to jealousy against some. Four of them are akin to the Christ, and though it be only on the mother's side, yet do I fear that he may show favour unto his own kindred, and that I may suffer damage thereby. Zebedee's wife Salome is sister unto Mary the mother of Jesus, and her sons James and John are greatly beloved of their cousin. Besides these twain there is yet another James, surnamed the Less, who, with his brother Jude, is son to one Alphaeus, whose wife is also of the family of Mary ; and much do I fear that these four will conspire to gain for themselves the highest places in the New Kingdom. But, more than all these,

do I distrust and am jealous of Simon—to whom the Lord hath given a new name of Peter. He is a bold, prompt man, who feareth not to speak with his tongue that which he thinketh in his heart, and will ever push himself forward. The other six are quiet men, like unto myself, modest and slow of speech ; but this Peter, I trow, will be a rock of offence unto me, and against him and the sons of Alphaeus and Zebedee must I be ever on the watch, lest they thrust me away from my Lord, even as Gehazi sought to thrust away the Shunammitish woman from before Elisha the Prophet.

The while I think these thoughts in my heart, and write them down upon my tablets, great multitudes of men and women out of every city of Galilee and Decapolis have been gathering about Jesus, and he even now prepareth to preach unto them concerning his New Kingdom. I must hasten back to his side, that I may hear and consider what he saith ; for, verily, from this day forth he will show more clearly what is his will, and the things which he purposeth in his mind to do.

XVII

*The same day at even.
February, A.D. 28.*

LIKE as Moses led the children of Israel unto Mount Sinai, that God might make known unto them His Law out of the midst of the cloud, even so hath the Christ this day led his people up on to a mountain, where, sitting down in the midst, he hath discoursed strange things unto them.

And, verily, as I hearkened unto his words, I marvelled much at the laws of this New Kingdom ; for I wot not how by such doctrine the world can be subdued. Moreover, the rewards offered unto such as serve him are not those which my heart lusteth after. When Moses repeated all the Law in the ears of the people in the land of Moab, he promised many and great blessings unto all them that should hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God to obey Him : blessings in the city and in the field, blessings of the basket and of the store ; increase of cattle and of flocks ; and victory over all their enemies. ‘ The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure,’ said

Moses; 'the heaven to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.'¹

But Jesus hath not said aught concerning these things. Much was there in his discourse of poverty and persecution, of hungering and thirsting; but of riches did I hear but one word—a word bidding men not to lay up treasure upon earth, but rather in heaven, where moth destroyeth not, and thieves steal not. I suppose that commandments such as these are meant for the ears of the common people only, and for them who shall serve as archers and spearmen in the army, and upon whom will fall the heat and burden of warfare. It behoveth all such to endure hardship as becometh good soldiers, and not to encumber themselves with a weight of riches, which might hinder them in marching. But unto us who are the chief Captains, and unto whom is committed the governance of great provinces, special rewards will be given, whereof Jesus will assuredly speak unto us privately.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 12.

One promise did he make of great preciousness, whereof I shall cherish the remembrance until that day cometh in the which I can with clear conscience claim its fulfilment. It readeth thus upon my tablets: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. For if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?'¹ Verily, I will ask for whatsoever my soul desireth, and will henceforth seek after all good. Meanwhile will I serve my Lord with all diligence of soul and strength, and strive valiantly against all his enemies. I will tread upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon will I trample under feet.² I will not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day³; because with mine eyes I shall behold and see

¹ Matt. vii. 7-11.

² Ps. xci. 13.

³ Ps. xci. 5.

the reward of the wicked,¹ and triumph in that day when all the enemies of Israel shall lick the dust. Then, when the kings of Tarshish and of the Isles bring presents, and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts,² I will ask great things for myself, having assurance already that my prayer will be granted.

There were also many things in the sermon preached this day by Jesus concerning mercy, kindness, forgiveness, patience, righteousness—matters hard to be understood, and yet harder of fulfilment. These virtues are very good things among brethren, and it is right and proper that all who are soldiers of the Christ be filled with love one toward another; for how can a host prevail that is divided against itself? But the sayings of Jesus exceed greatly all that yet ever entered into the heart of man to speak; for he even gave commandment that we should love our enemies, and do good to them that despitefully use us. Verily, I did think mine ears had played the traitor and deceived my mind; but on asking John, who stood by me on the

¹ Ps. xci. 8.

² Ps. lxxii. 10.

hill-side, he assured me that the words spoken were even as I had heard.

How, then, shall I interpret these dark sayings of our Leader? They are to me as the riddle which Samson put forth unto the men of Timnath¹; therefore as riddles I seek to declare their meaning unto myself. I suppose that our Lord desireth us to deal mercifully with our conquered enemies, and not utterly to destroy them, as Saul destroyed Amalek²; but to spare them, even as Joshua spared the inhabitants of Gibeon.³ But when was it known that a conqueror spoiled not him whom he had taken with his bow and with his spear? Said not Nahum the Prophet: 'Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold?'⁴ and hath not Isaiah told of the joy of them that 'rejoice when they divide the spoil'?⁵ Therefore, before we can love our enemies, as saith Jesus, we first must subdue them; must take away their fenced cities and their choice vineyards, their bars of gold and their costly raiment. Then, if they be willing and obedi-

¹ Judges xiv. 12. ² 1 Sam. xv. 3. ³ Josh. ix. 3-15.

⁴ Nahum ii. 9.

⁵ Isa. ix. 3.

ent, and peaceably bow their necks under our yoke, we will so far love them as to permit them to live and become hewers of wood and drawers of water unto the men of Israel. Peradventure we may even receive them into the congregation of Israel, and circumcise all such as shall be accounted worthy among them of so great honour, and in this manner show ourselves submissive unto that strange command of Jesus, to love our enemies and do good unto them that hate us and despitefully use us.

I am the more built up in this view by another saying of the Christ, which I read upon my tablets, to wit: 'Think not that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.'¹—How could the Law and the Prophets be more perfectly fulfilled than by bringing all nations of the earth into subjection thereunto? Is not this that which the Prophet Isaiah foretold when he said: 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea'?² And hath not Malachi also prophesied, saying: 'From the rising of the

¹ Matt. v. 17.

² Isa. xi. 9.

sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering : for My name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts ' ? ¹

Thus shall we do good unto our enemies by compelling them to forsake their idols, and offer worship unto the Lord of Hosts. Then shall the candle of Israel be no longer hidden under a bushel, but shall give light unto all that dwell on the earth. Jerusalem shall be as a city set upon an exceeding high hill, that cannot be hid. And all they that be true Jews, and sons of the Kingdom, shall become—even as the Christ hath said—the ‘ salt of the earth.’ In us, the seed of Abraham, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

From these discourses of Jesus I perceive plainly that he hath small love for the Pharisees, and doth not greatly esteem their outward show of religion. Nay, he hath even declared unto the multitude that, except their righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and

¹ Mal. i. 11.

Pharisees, they shall in no wise enter into his Kingdom.¹ At which saying many that were near me did openly murmur, affirming that if this were so, they could not hope to enter therein; for that the Pharisees be the most holy men in the land, and much to be preferred before all Priests or Levites.

Unto me also seemeth it neither wise nor prudent to anger these men, for they are both rich and powerful, and have boundless influence with the common people, who reverence them as patterns of holiness and good living. Moreover, they possess also this virtue, that they hate the Roman domination and are not time-servers, as are the Sadducees and Chief Priests, but they keep alive in men's hearts the love of freedom and the expectation of Messiah. Although I love not the arrogancy wherewith these Pharisees flaunt their religion in the eyes of men, and boast themselves of superior holiness, as though all others were but dirt to be trodden underfoot yet are they the leaders among the Jewish people; and it was unto them that I looked

¹ Matt. v. 20.

to be the chief ministers of Messiah's Kingdom, and not unto such as Simon, or John, or myself—men of no reputation and without influence to lead others.

Nevertheless, I am not sorry that Jesus asks not his followers to take pattern from the Pharisees, or to become even such as they ; for a world full of Pharisees, in which each sought to outdo his neighbour in length of prayer and width of phylactery, refusing each to consort with the other, saying, 'Stand aside, for I am holier than thou!' would be but a strange world in which to live and earn one's daily bread.

But this man Christ hath a more joyous manner of life. He greeteth cheerfully all them that draw nigh, asking no questions concerning purifyings and observances ; but requiring only that men do his will and turn away from all sin.

XVIII

At Jerusalem.

The Eve of the Passover (two months later).

March 29, A.D. 28.

ONCE more we are in the City of David. Again my feet have trodden the courts of the House of God, and mine eyes feasted upon the splendours of His Temple!

Base indeed must be the soul of that Jew who visiteth Jerusalem at the season of her great feasts and is not stirred to the innermost depths of his heart. 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King! Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces that ye may tell it to the generation following.' Memorials of our ancient greatness stand on every hand; and high above them tower the glory of Israel, the peerless Temple of Jehovah, the perfection of beauty,¹ from which aforetime God hath shined, and which He is even now about to repossess.

¹ Ps. xlviii. 2, 12, 13.

² Ps. l. 2.

As I drew near unto the city and beheld the innumerable multitudes gathering thither from all the ends of the earth ; as I hearkened unto their voices, chaunting the songs of David, and marked their zeal and obedience unto the Law of Moses, I remembered that these things were being done in solemn memorial of God's great deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, wrought many hundreds of years ago. And I thought within myself, What cannot that nation do which is as one man in its devotion to the Law and in its reverence for the Temple ; a nation which hath but one heart and one faith ; which neither sword nor fire, neither bonds nor stripes can separate from the one true God ; but which to-day cometh up to the Passover innumerable as an army of locusts upon the wings of the wind, or as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered ?

But when mine eyes travelled beyond the Temple, and fell upon the black Tower of Antonia frowning over against it, and marked the glitter of sunlight upon the armour of the soldiers that paced hither and thither upon

the outer Temple-wall, or stood upon the steps which go down unto the sacred court itself, my heart flamed hot within me, and I cursed the cruel Roman between my teeth. When, moreover, I beheld on Mount Zion the splendid palace of Idumaeen Herod, whose wonders are the talk of all that have seen them, and saw issuing therefrom a Roman cohort, with flaunting eagles and echoing trumpets, verily the palm of my hand did itch for a sword, that I might smite a good stroke for the liberty of my people.

Then indeed did my heart turn itself in hope unto him who walked beside me : Jesus, Messiah, the Mighty One of Jacob ! I marked his footstep, light and firm, the dignity of his aspect, the calm and fearless glance of his keen grey eye, the air of majesty and power which sat so easy on his head ; and my soul leaped up within me. Already I seemed to see those proud eagles grovelling in the dust, and to behold the cruel Pilate, and even mighty Caesar, bowing their necks under the yoke of the Son of David !

And, truly, this is no empty dream which

thus stirs my blood. If God was able by the hand of Moses to bring out the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, when as yet there was neither wise man nor soldier in all the host, surely it will be an easy thing for His servant Christ to make this people great, who have even now a Temple more glorious than all the temples of the heathen ; whose Rabbis are wise in all the wisdom of the fathers, and their soldiers mighty men of valour !

And it is at Jerusalem that the work must begin. Verily, I look for great things in these next days !

XIX

Jerusalem (three days later).
April 1, A.D. 28.

‘ WHY do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing ? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed.’¹ Thus sang the sweet Singer of

¹ Ps, ii, 1, 2.

Israel long years ago, and to-day the word seemeth to be fulfilled even before mine eyes ; for all the city is moved to an uproar, and the Christ hath been haled like a malefactor before the Council, his accusers being even the rulers and chief men of his own nation. I know not wherefore God hath suffered such things to be ; but this is how the matter fell about.

There is in the city, hard by the Sheep-gate, a Pool called Bethesda, whose waters are famed for the healing of all manner of diseases. Thither resorteth daily a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt and withered, who wait there under porches which charity hath built for their shelter. At certain times the waters are troubled, and whosoever then first after the troubling of the water steppeth in, is made whole of whatsoever disease he hath. It came to pass that, after teaching in the Temple on the Sabbath day, Jesus descended through the Sheep-gate unto this pool, and, beholding there a certain man which had an infirmity thirty-and-eight years, and could in no wise step quickly into

the water to be made whole, he straightway healed him with a word. Moreover, he commanded him to take up the mat whereon he lay, and walk. The man, therefore, nothing doubting, did immediately as he was commanded, and set out to carry his mat unto his own home, although it was the Sabbath day.

Howbeit, when the Jews saw this, they were exceeding wroth, and would fain have stayed him. But he answered them, saying: 'He that made me whole, the same said unto me: "Take up thy bed and walk."' But he wist not who it was that had healed him; for Jesus tarried not in that place, but returned straightway into the Temple. Afterward Jesus findeth the man there, and saith unto him: 'Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.'¹ The man was offended at that saying, and went quickly and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

Now there is nothing in all the Law of Moses concerning which the Pharisees and

¹ John v. 14.

Rabbis are so strict as in keeping holy the Sabbath day, and doing no manner of work thereon. Nay, to that pitch of strictness are they grown that the holy-day hath become a day of sore bondage unto the whole nation of the Jews. In time of war our enemies wait for the Sabbath before delivering their assaults, knowing that on that day it is not lawful for any Jew to carry a sword. The Rabbis suffer not to give medicine unto a sick man, to set a broken bone, nor to put back a dislocated joint. One may not even carry bread or money ; nor wear shoes with nails in the soles thereof ; nor write one word with ink on paper ; nor even eat meat with a neighbour on the Sabbath day. I do not altogether hold with this excessive strictness, which maketh the holy-day to stink in the nostrils of the common people, and causeth many to offend. Nevertheless, I marvelled greatly when I heard Jesus command the cripple to carry his mat on the Sabbath day, and did fear lest the priests be sore vexed at him for so doing.

And truly, the man whom he healed had not been long gone from him when there came

certain officers of the Temple, who led Jesus away before the Council to answer for having taught one to break the Sabbath. I also followed after, to hear what he might say unto them.

I remember not all the words which he spake in the Hall of Council, whither he was led; but I perceived that they gave great offence unto the priests and rulers, who at the last, I verily believe, would have slain him, but that they feared the people, who all take Jesus to be a prophet. Howbeit, he knoweth not what it is to be afraid; for he spake boldly unto his judges—not as one pleading for liberty, but as if himself were the judge, and they the prisoners. Nay, he even affirmed, and that openly and with much clearness, that the Father hath given all judgement into his hand, and that because they will not receive him, they have not the love of God in them, but are accursed and condemned by Moses, in whom they trust. Whereat I perceived that their rage turned to dumbness, so that they had not so much as a word to say in reply, but gazed upon him in speechless

amaze. Nevertheless, I see clearly that from henceforth these men will be his enemies, and that it is not through them that he purposeth to establish the Kingdom.

Truly the ways of Jesus are past finding out; for he maketh enemies of them that should be the chief corner-stones of his Kingdom, and chooseth such to be Apostles and Captains who are of small esteem in the eyes of men. Wherefore he doeth these things I know not; but, seeing he hath appointed me one of his chief men, I will not complain thereat. Notwithstanding, I marvel much that he did not smite his accusers with blindness, even as the Lord smote the Syrians with blindness that came up to take Elisha captive.¹ But Jesus is ever gentle and slow to anger, and careth nought what men say or do unto him. And he hath even taught unto us, his disciples, that when we are reviled we ought not to revile again, but give ever a soft answer to turn away wrath; for thereby, saith he, shall we heap coals of fire upon the heads of our adversaries.

¹ 2 Kings vi. 18.

XX

*In Cana of Galilee (seven months later).
November, A.D. 28.*

EVEN as the mother of Sisera longed for the return of her son, and cried out through the lattice: 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?'¹ so likewise doth my soul impatiently look for the day when Messiah shall come in the greatness of his Kingdom.

Nevertheless, I begin to perceive from much that hath been spoken by Jesus, both privately unto his disciples, and also publicly unto the people, that he purposeth at first to draw men unto his Kingdom by persuasion and gentleness; to convince them of sin, and lead them to repentance and good living, so that they be made worthy of citizenship therein. In the sermon that he preached upon the Mount of Hattin he spake many things with this intent; telling men that they must be righteous and merciful, pure in heart, not quick to anger, but patient under provo-

¹ Judges v. 28.

cation. Even as Isaiah called upon the men of Jerusalem to wash and be clean, to put away evil and learn to do well¹; so now doth Jesus call all men to righteousness and obedience, so that, as good trees bear good fruit, they also may glorify their Lord by doing things well-pleasing in the sight of God.

This method of establishing the Kingdom worketh well with all such as be by nature inclined to follow after good, and whose hearts Satan hath not hardened. Thereby also are made manifest all such as be obedient unto the call of Messiah, and are willing to forsake father and mother, houses and lands, that they may enlist in the army of Jehovah and fight against the powers of darkness.

Howbeit, I do not suppose that Jesus will thus continue for long: but wait for a time when his hand shall take the sword of judgment and smite all that yield not obedience unto his word. He hath already uttered divers words of threatening, whereby I learn that he will not always forbear, but that in due course the vials of his wrath shall be

¹ Isa. i, 16.

poured out on the disobedient and on them that love iniquity. The unrighteous, saith Jesus, shall in no wise enter into his Kingdom¹; the salt which hath lost its savour shall be cast out and trodden underfoot²; the tree which beareth not fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire³; and all they that hearken not unto his sayings to do them shall be like houses built upon the sand, which winds and rains shall destroy utterly.⁴

Notwithstanding these manifold threatenings, I perceive plainly that for the present the peaceable methods are those which Jesus purposeth to use; and, until he speaketh the word of command, we, who are his Apostles, must use them likewise. For this end hath he sent us out into the towns and villages of Galilee, bidding us go two and two, and call men everywhere to repentance, warning them that the Kingdom is at hand, and that all they that would be citizens thereof must forsake the evil of their doings and live justly and virtuously in the sight of God and man.

¹ Matt. v. 20.

² Matt. v. 13.

³ Matt. vii. 19.

⁴ Matt. vii. 27.

Moreover, Jesus hath given us power over evil spirits and authority over all sickness and disease, so that we may work signs and wonders, even as he. Verily the words of Isaiah the prophet are fulfilled unto us, which he spake, saying: 'Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you the Ministers of our God.'¹

Behold me, therefore, in the city of Cana, the same wherein it hath been told me that Jesus wrought his first miracle by changing water into wine. The companion of my wanderings is one Simon, a Zealot, a man of fierce zeal, who was aforetime bound by secret oath to slay all enemies of the Law, and hath even fought against the Roman. In this matter, therefore, Simon and I are of one mind and heart, and much do we delight to speak one with the other of the coming downfall of Caesar's empire, and of the destruction which shall speedily overwhelm the gods of the heathen. Oftentimes have our hearts burned within us while our tongues discoursed of the glories of Messiah's Kingdom,

¹ Isa. lxi. 6.

for the which we yearn with a yearning strong as that of a captive looking for his ransom, or of a mother for her long-lost son. Wherefore we both have given diligence, whithersoever we went, to search out all men like-minded with ourselves, such as look earnestly for the coming of Messiah, and are desirous of serving him. And, verily, they are not few; for the people receive us gladly, and many have sworn that, whensoever the trumpet shall sound unto the battle, they will hasten to the standard of our King, and fight for him even unto the death.

Moreover, we have gotten much honour unto our Master by the miracles which we have wrought in his name; for in all cities and villages we have healed much sick folk. Even the demons are subject unto our word, and many that were possessed of devils are even now in their right minds, and burning with desire to bear the sword in the righteous warfare. Truly it seemeth that the hour is almost come, and that ere many weeks are gone we shall begin to sweep from the earth, even as with a besom of destruction, all

them that refuse the gracious summons of Messiah.

XXI

*The same place (next day).
November, A.D. 28.*

STRANGE tidings have this day been told among the people,¹ tidings that have made both the ears of them that heard them to tingle. Herod Antipas hath laid ungodly hands upon the Baptist, and cast him into the prison of Machaerus, where now he sitteth in bonds. 'Tis said that John reprov'd the tyrant for taking to wife Herodias, while yet her husband lived. Adultery is no new thing in the household of the Herods; but in this matter Antipas hath exceeded the wickedness of others, in that the woman he hath taken was his own brother's wife. Men tell of her that she is a woman comely to look upon, but of a foul and cruel heart, that sticketh at no crime whereby she may forward her lust of

¹ This event took place somewhat earlier, viz. about the date of Christ's second Passover (say March, A.D. 28); but is brought in here for greater convenience in the narrative.

power and greatness. Nay, it is commonly reported that Antipas would not have done this great wrong unto his brother but that by her cunning and wanton suggestions she seduced him thereto ; and now he is as one bewitched, and doeth whatsoever she desireth of him. Were it not that I look unto Jesus speedily to deliver John from the hand of his enemies, I should greatly fear for his life. A she-bear robbed of her whelps is not more bitter or unappeasable than an adulterous woman that one would rob of her paramour ; and Herodias will assuredly seek to slay John, if, by any means, she can persuade Herod unto his death.

Howbeit, I do not imagine that Jesus will suffer it thus to be ; but my expectation is that, even as Joseph was brought out of prison to become the second man in Egypt, so will John also be promoted from his dungeon and made a mighty ruler in the Kingdom of Messiah.

XXII

*Written by the wayside in the land of Galilee.
(One month later.) December, A.D. 28.*

SMALL leisure have Zelotes and I for converse one with another ; for the people throng around us whithersoever we go, and are eager to hear tidings of Messiah and his Kingdom. Nevertheless, occasions for quiet discourse have not altogether lacked, and at such times our talk hath ever been of Jesus and his doctrine, of the Kingdom which is at hand, and the methods whereby it shall be established. Zelotes hath aforetime been a soldier, and in this hath therefore the advantage of me—that, whereas a soldier obeyeth in all things them that are set over him, never questioning nor doubting of their wisdom or authority, I perpetually vex myself with such disputation, ever seeking to know wherefore this thing is done, or that thing left undone. I know not whether of us twain be the wiser ; for although much questioning bringeth sorrow, and they be happy that doubt not, yet hath it ever been considered the mark of

a wise man to seek after all knowledge, and the Lord God hath Himself said: 'I will be inquired of by the House of Israel.'¹

This day, as we journeyed towards Tiberias, I said unto my companion: 'Hast thou noted, O Zelotes, that our Master speaketh never of a Temple nor of priests in his New Kingdom; and that no word hath he yet spoken of peace-offerings or sin-offerings, of ceremonies or of washings?'

'Truly, friend Judas,' said he in reply, 'I have not noted the matter. But unto me it seemeth that, wheresoever Jesus is, there also is the Temple of God; and that I can better worship the Lord of Heaven when I stand beside the Messiah whom He hath sent.'

To which I gave answer: 'Peradventure there is truth in what thou sayest. Nevertheless, I cannot cease from marvelling that no priest is among the Twelve. Did not Jesus say that, if the Temple were destroyed, he would build it again in three days?² Whereby I judge that the Temple will be continued, and likewise the daily offering, for ever; for

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 37,

² John ii. 19.

which purpose there must of necessity also be a Priesthood. But if the priests of the House of Aaron be not called, who then shall be priests in the Temple of God when Messiah cometh to his Kingdom?—Thou and I and the rest of the Twelve are to be Judges, for thus Jesus hath said, sitting upon twelve thrones and judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.¹ Who then will be priests? and who shall judge the Gentiles?’

Whereat Simon did laugh and spake, saying: ‘O Judas! thou consumest thy heart with vain questionings about to-morrow. Canst thou not wait until the Master appointeth whom he will? He hath the wisdom of God, and can do no wrong. Therefore am I content to abide his time and to do his bidding, without burdening my soul with doubts and fears.’

‘Ah, Simon!’ said I, ‘thou art happy indeed that canst do thus; for doubts and fears are truly a burden, as thou sayest; and there come unto me moments when the burden is exceeding heavy. These last days I have

¹ Matt. xix. 28.

continually been asking myself, Wherefore do the Priests and Rulers, the Rabbis, the Scribes, the Pharisees, all hold scorn of our Master? They held John for a Prophet, and heard him gladly; and yet John openly testified that he is not worthy so much as to unloose the shoes of Jesus. Explain unto me, O thou man without doubts or fears, wherefore these things be, and thou wilt lighten my burden not a little.'

Whereunto Zelotes gave reply: 'Thou art in error, Judas, if thou thinkest that the Scribes and Pharisees heard John gladly; for though some few were baptized, yet the larger part held aloof, and spake scornfully of him, saying he was beside himself and had a devil.¹ As for the Christ, it seemeth unto me that they are offended with him because he maketh religion to consist more in the inward cleansing of the heart than in outward observance of purifyings and ceremonies. The Pharisees make a show of their righteousness, and are proud thereof; but Jesus holdeth that the righteousness whereof a man boasteth is no

¹ Matt. xi. 18.

righteousness at all. Moreover, they make of religion a burden most grievously heavy, so that, if a man would observe all their commandments and traditions to keep them, he must put away from him half the joys of life, and likewise many of its duties. What thinkest thou, O Judas ? if the service of God be so grievous upon earth, and His pleasure so hard of attainment, how will it fare with us in heaven, where His eye will ever be upon us, and no smallest observance can we escape ? Verily, I would fain hope that we shall not all be Pharisees in heaven. But with Jesus it is not so. With him religion is a free and joyous service, in the which one seeketh to do good unto others—yea, unto the vile and wretched. He feareth not even to touch the leper ; and biddeth all men come unto him, be they clean or unclean. If the heart be right, he alloweth liberty in many things, whereby, as thou knowest, he hath given much offence unto the Scribes and Priests.’

While thus we talked together, there came one running, with his clothes rent and casting dust upon his head, who cried unto us from

afar, saying that John Baptist was dead, having been beheaded in the prison by Antipas. At which tidings of woe Zelotes and I became as men stricken dumb, and a great trembling took hold upon me, so that I could not walk, but must needs sit upon the ground.

‘Alas! alas!’ said I unto Simon, when the man had ended his tale, ‘wherefore hath Jesus suffered this deed of darkness to be wrought? If he can heal sickness and raise the dead, can he not also slay? Wherefore then hath he not slain Herod and the vile harlot Herodias, and delivered his servant John out of their hands? John was his herald, his friend, his kinsman, who for reprov- ing of sin was cast into prison, and deserved not to die. Christ could doubtless have saved him by a word. Wherefore, then, hath he not spoken that word? O Simon! Simon! my heart is sick within me! I am even as one whom the archers have sorely stricken!’

‘Peace! peace!’ cried Simon, lifting me up on to my feet. ‘Thou speakest rashly and foolishly. I know not wherefore Christ hath suffered John to die. Peradventure he hath

done something amiss, whereof we are ignorant. Let us now hasten back unto Capernaum, where Jesus by this time awaiteth our return. There, perchance, we may learn more concerning this matter.'

XXIII

*On the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, nigh unto
the city of Bethsaida-Julias.*

(Two days later.) January, A.D. 29.

ERE we reached Capernaum the news of John's death was in everybody's mouth, and men's hearts were moved thereat more than if Caesar himself were dead. Each one asked of his neighbour, 'Wherefore did not this man Jesus cause that John perish not, seeing he worketh such mighty deeds?' And from us likewise did men ask the same thing; but unto none could we give an answer; and I perceived that the Apostles also were greatly troubled about the matter. Nevertheless, no man dared openly to ask Jesus wherefore

he suffered John to be slain, although the question lay long upon all our tongues. Howbeit Jesus, who seemeth ever to read the thoughts of our hearts, hath essayed to comfort us, saying that John had finished the work whereunto God had sent him, and therefore God had taken him unto Himself, even as He took Elijah. 'Have I not told you,' said he, 'that not even a sparrow falleth to the earth without your heavenly Father's knowledge?'¹ Be assured, therefore, that the thing which hath befallen John was also according to God's will, and that the sword of Herod was but God's messenger to call John unto a crown of eternal glory. Notwithstanding, and seeing that my work is not yet accomplished, let us pass over unto the other side of the Lake, lest Herod seek at this time to slay me also. Moreover, I perceive that ye are all aweary with much travelling, and have many things whereof ye desire to question me; and here there is no quietness because of the multitude.'²

Behold us, therefore, once more gathered

¹ Matt. x. 29.

² Mark vi. 31.

about our Master, who hath led us into this wilderness, where there are no villages, but only barren mountain-sides, and where we hope peacefully to commune with him, and learn his latest purposes concerning the Kingdom.

Were it not for the death of John Baptist, our hearts would be full of joy, not because we once more see each other face to face, and can hearken to the words of our beloved Lord, but also because of the great and marvellous things that have befallen us all by the way. Everywhere hath our message been eagerly received, and all Galilee waiteth as one man for the trumpet-blast that shall call the Tribes of Israel to the banner of their Messiah. Many a sword is being sharpened in secret, and many a breastplate burnished; and all we now lack is the summons of our Leader.

Moreover, Jesus hath very graciously received us, and spoken unto us many loving words of praise and encouragement. Nay, he hath assured us that, if we be faithful unto him and do his will, he will grant unto us power to work yet greater works than those

we have already wrought, so that even the mountains shall remove at our word.¹

But, alas! wheresoever Jesus goeth, he cannot be hid. Even here, where we thought to have peace and quietness, the multitude hath sought him out, so that from the morning even until now he hath been continually preaching and healing their sick.

XXIV

*The same day at even.
January, A.D. 29.*

ALTHOUGH I weary myself with much questioning concerning the doctrine and methods of Jesus, and am oft-times sorely perplexed thereat, yet is my soul filled with a solemn confidence in his power, the which manifesteth itself day by day in ever stranger and more wonderful ways. There are but few weeks since, by the magic of his word, he compelled a multitude of fishes to pass into the nets of Simon and his partners—a multitude

¹ Matt. xxi. 21.

so great that the nets brake, and the ship must be quickly run ashore lest it should sink with their weight. Moreover, Simon and they that were with him had toiled all night and taken nothing, by which one seeth the more clearly that this wonderful draught was miraculously wrought by Jesus.

I have heard also that in the first time, before Jesus taught in Judaea, he, being present at a marriage feast, and the store of wine too small for the guests, did by the word of his power change water into good wine, so that the men had enough thereof and to spare.¹

But this day hath he wrought another miracle yet more astonishing than these, whereof the signs are even now before mine eyes, to wit, twelve baskets filled with broken pieces of bread and fish. The whole multitude of them that came hither unto him—five thousand men, besides many women and children—hath he fed with five barley loaves and two small fishes. And in such wise hath he fed them that each one had as much as he

¹ February, A.D. 27.

could eat, and there remaineth over all this number of baskets full of fragments.

Verily no army could perish of hunger under the leadership of such a Captain ! Hath it not been said that, of all the enemies against which an army contendeth in time of war, the most terrible are famine and pestilence ? But now I see clearly that these enemies are conquered or ever we enter upon the warfare ; for, if Jesus can feed a thousand men with a loaf of bread, doubtless he could as easily feed a hundred legions, and likewise draw them water from the rocks, or wine out of the ground. Nay, even though there were not a morsel of bread or corn left upon the earth, yet I doubt not that, like as God sent manna to feed His people in the wilderness, so now could Jesus cause food to fall from heaven, or quails to rush in myriads to the slaughter.

Moreover, the pestilence that walketh in darkness can no longer hurt them that fight for Israel, neither can arrow or spear-head wound any that are Christ's soldiers. For our Captain cureth all diseases, and driveth them out by a word ; so that all who march beneath his

banner shall ever be in perfect safety, and can in no wise be harmed by the enemy.

Surely, therefore, our victories shall be both easy and bloodless! As the walls of Jericho fell before Joshua at the sound of the rams-horns,¹ even so shall the strong towns and fenced cities of the Gentiles fall before the blast of our trumpets. What can avail the might of Rome or the valour of her legions, the multitude of her riches or the wisdom of her senators? Before our Captain—a Captain in whose hand are all the powers of God—they shall be swept from the earth, even as fire licketh up the dry herbage on the hill-sides; so that when one asketh, ‘Where are they?’ there shall be none that can answer.

But in one matter have I this day suffered grievous disappointment: for when the people beheld how that Jesus had fed them bounteously with a few morsels of food, they clamoured with one accord to make him King, and would have crowned him then and there.² But he bade them desist, and that with so stern a voice that they were fain to

¹ Josh. vi. 20.

² John vi. 15.

obey. Nevertheless, for one brief moment did I think that the hour had come for which my soul so long hath yearned ; and earnestly I added my voice unto the solicitations of the people.

But Jesus is wiser than I, and knoweth full well that to strike too soon is wellnigh as foolish as to strike when it is too late. Peradventure is my judgement blinded by the fierce hatred of Rome wherewith my heart consumeth within me, so that I perceive not clearly the signs of the times. Therefore must I fain possess my soul in patience until such time as it shall please Messiah to take the Kingdom for himself.

'Tis true that, amid all my visions of the future, there mingle sometimes thoughts of myself, and I dream of the riches and honour which shall be mine when Jehovah reigneth in the earth, and hath made of all the thrones of the Gentiles a footstool for the feet of His Anointed. Nevertheless, it is the deepest and most earnest longing of my heart to see the throne of David established in Jerusalem, and to be one of them that help in the glorious

work. For this great end I am ready even to die ; and, having joined myself unto this man Jesus, whom I believe to be the Christ, the Sent of God, I am determin'd to follow him even unto the end.

XXV

Capernaum (next morning).
January, A.D. 29.

'THEY that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters ; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths : their soul melteth away because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.'¹

Thus sang King David ; but never until now did I know the meaning of his words. Howbeit, last night my soul was melted

¹ Ps. cvii. 23-7.

within me, and I was verily at my wits' end. And notwithstanding that the promise was fulfilled, and He brought me out of my distresses, and made the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof were still, yet do I desire never to be in the like case again.

And this is what befell unto me. After that Jesus had dismissed the multitude, he bade us also return in the ship unto Capernaum, and leave him alone on the further side of the Lake. For he is a man mighty in prayer, and loveth much to pray in quiet and solitary places. We therefore did as he commanded ; but had scarce gotten a quarter of the way, when there came a mighty wind, rushing down from the mountains, and smote upon our ship, so that, verily, I thought to find a grave at the bottom of the Lake. Peter and John and sundry others of the Apostles are fishermen, and unto them a storm on the sea was no new thing. But I had never seen the like before ; and when the big waves stood above our heads, like walls of solid blackness, so that even the heavens were blotted out of sight, I cried aloud in fear ; for it seemed as if the pit of

hell were opening to swallow us alive, even as the earth swallowed Korah and all his company in the wilderness.¹ Then—while yet this thought was in my mind—lo! the black walls had vanished in a moment, and we mounted up into heaven, as if to fly away upon the wings of the storm, which smote us shrewdly in the face, and filled our eyes with blinding spray, howling and screaming the while, as though all the fiends of Gehenna were let loose on the blast. Moreover, my inward parts began to rage and heave violently, so that a tempest of sickness drave me beneath the deck, where I lay as one without hope, and longed for death as for a deliverer.

But suddenly, all in a moment, the turmoil ceased, my sickness passed away, and the ship grew steady and quiet as on the calmest day of summer. And even as I rose unto my feet I heard the voice of Jesus speaking in tones of gentle reproof, saying: 'O ye of little faith! wherefore did your hearts misgive you? Wist ye not that I was nigh at hand?' Hastening to the deck, I learned that he

¹ Num. xvi. 31, 32.

² Matt. xiv. 31.

had come unto the ship by walking across the stormy waters, and that immediately he entered therein the storm had ceased, and the ship was at the place whither it was sailing. Truly it did seem like a dream. Even Peter and the rest wist not what to say or think ; for I beheld amazement and terror on their faces, and heard them murmur one to another : ‘ What manner of man is this ? Surely no man, but God ! ’ And with one accord they fell upon their faces and worshipped him.

XXVI

Capernaum (next day).
January, A.D. 29.

I AM even as the man of Uz, upon whom the Lord’s hand was heavy, so that his soul cried out in anguish, and his complaint was bitter : ‘ Oh that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me ! ’¹ For then ‘ I was at ease ’ ; but now

¹ Job xxix. 2.

‘ He hath dashed me in pieces ’¹; ‘ and as for my hope, who shall see it ? ’²

Thus do I also look back with sorrow unto the happy days that are past, when my heart was filled with hope, and the morrow seemed bright with anticipated joys. But now ‘ horror taketh hold on my flesh,’³ and my soul within me mourneth ! For Jesus vexeth me daily more and more, and turneth all my confidence into doubt.

This day hath he spoken strange things unto the people—things so dark and mysterious that many have taken offence thereat and are gone back from following after him.⁴

Scarcely were we landed from the ship after our tempestuous crossing, when the multitudes came running together in great haste, being desirous to see a man who can feed thousands with a few loaves. Whereupon Christ straightway returned unto Capernaum, and, entering into the synagogue, spake long concerning the manna which God gave unto our forefathers in the wilderness.

¹ Job xvi. 12.

³ Job xxi. 6.

² Job xvii. 15.

⁴ John vi. 66.

Moreover, he spake also of some new bread which God shall send down from heaven, the which he calleth 'Bread of Life.'—'This Bread,' saith he, 'am I myself; and whoso eateth thereof shall live for ever: yea, and the Bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'¹ . . . 'For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.'² Much more did he say on this wise, whereat all men marvelled greatly; and some were offended and went away in anger.

When we were come out from the synagogue Jesus asked of the Apostles straitly: 'Will ye also go away?' Whereupon Peter, ever foremost in speech, answered him quickly: 'Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.'³ So likewise said they all. But Jesus, looking round about upon the Twelve, and perceiving that I spake not, but looked doubtfully at him, answered wrathfully, say-

¹ John vi. 51.

² John vi, 55,

³ John vi. 68, 69,

ing: 'Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?'¹

The rest knew not of whom he spake; but each one turned in fear and amazement to his neighbour, wondering much what this saying might portend. Nevertheless, I believe that the word was meant even for myself, and am greatly afflicted thereat. Wherefore should my Lord speak thus harshly concerning me? I have done no evil. I did not make as though I go away from him, as others; neither did I seek to gainsay aught that he had spoken, although his sayings seemed unto me impossible of belief. Did not Elihu say unto Job that 'The ear trieth words, even as the palate tasteth meat'?²—Herein only consisteth mine offence, that I also have sought to try the words of Christ, if, peradventure, I can understand their sense.

But he brooketh not that any misdoubt him; but, contrariwise, demandeth from all his disciples that they believe his sayings, even as the sayings of God. Nay, he oft-times affirmeth that the words which he speaketh

¹ John vi. 70.

² Job xxxiv. 3.

have been given unto him by the Father¹; and that whoso doubteth the same shall be shut out from the Kingdom.²

I will therefore seek to forget that Jesus hath spoken of me by so foul a name; for, amid all my doubts and fears, there yet liveth within me a belief that he is indeed sent of God, and that in his own good time all that is now dark and strange shall be made plain.

Nevertheless, I am angered that he should speak such words concerning me: for I have done him no wrong!

Howbeit, I perceive clearly that his love for me hath been hereby minished, and that my hopes of high preferment have suffered loss. Wherefore it shall henceforth be my care to make some provision for the future, lest, being deposed from mine office of Apostle and Treasurer, I fall into poverty and want.

¹ John iii. 34.

² John iii. 18.

XXVII

Capernaum (two days later).
January, A.D. 29.

THERE have been great disputings this day between Jesus and certain Pharisees and lawyers concerning the washing of hands, and of cups, pots, and other household vessels, in which Christ hath said many grievous things against these men, whereat they are waxed exceeding mad.¹ The Rabbis teach us that to eat with unwashen hands, or not to wash after eating, is to be as bad as a murderer ; for, say they, the devil Schibta sitteth on unwashen hands, and likewise upon the bread thus eaten.² Nay, they have so many rules concerning these matters that a man might spend his days in learning of them and yet not be perfect therein. Now Jesus setteth small store by such things, and permitteth large freedom unto his disciples ; whereat the Pharisees are greatly enraged.

Moreover, he hath to-day answered them in

¹ Mark vii. 2, &c.

² Geikie, *Life and Words of Christ.*

such wise that they were put to open confusion before all the people, and are gone away vowing to compass his destruction. Nay, he called them hypocrites, even to their face, saying that by their wicked traditions they make the Law of Moses of none effect, and are an offence unto God.¹ The Apostles and all they that stood around, hearing such words spoken against men whom we have ever been taught to reverence, were stricken with amazement and terror. But when certain of the disciples asked Jesus if he knew how greatly the Pharisees were offended at his words, he answered, saying: 'They are a plant which God hath not planted, and must therefore be rooted out and destroyed; for,' said he, 'they be blind leaders of the blind, and shall fall into the ditch, with all such as walk by their teaching.'²

Verily I fear the malice of these men, for they are of great authority in Jerusalem, and are not like to forgive so open a rebuke. Already they pursue after Jesus with a bitter hatred, and my heart misgiveth me con-

¹ Mark vii. 6-13.

² Matt. xv. 12-14.

cerning the days to come ; for if Jesus destroy them not, it is certain they will not rest until they have destroyed both him and all his following.

I would, therefore, that he were more gentle with them that think not as himself, and did not seek so diligently to root out whatsoever he holdeth to be error.

Or else—I would fain have him to lay bare his arm in the sight of all his adversaries, and blast them utterly with the breath of his nostrils.

XXVIII

In the forests of Hermon, beyond Caesarea Philippi.

(Five months later.) June, A.D. 29.

MY heart is sore disquieted within me, and sorrows, as of death, have compassed me about. Floods of ungodly men make me afraid ;¹ for my light is turned into darkness, and my hopes are swallowed up in fear.

Many weeks are passed since last I inscribed aught upon my tablets, and verily they

¹ 2 Sam. xxii. 5, 6.

have been weeks of trouble and disappointment. The world, which aforetime seemed to have gone after Christ, hath turned away from him; and they that should have been his friends are become enemies, and seek to slay him. Even in Nazareth, the city wherein he dwelt for wellnigh thirty years, the people refused him audience, and sought to cast him from a high rock that they might kill him.¹ And they that be of his own household, his mother and his brethren, have tried to restrain him from preaching, saying that he is beside himself.² Moreover, certain Rabbis and Pharisees from Jerusalem follow whithersoever he goeth, exciting the people against him, affirming that he worketh contrary to the Law of Moses, and that his mighty deeds are wrought by the aid of Beelzebub, Prince of Devils.³

Howbeit, these are not the things that do chiefly disquiet me; for, notwithstanding them all, I am persuaded that Jesus is a man sent from God, and that he teacheth and worketh nought but that which is righteous

¹ May, A.D. 28.

² Mark iii. 21.

³ Matt. xii. 24.

and well-pleasing in the sight of Heaven. Moreover, I know that he seeketh to establish a Kingdom whereof the foundation shall be truth and equity, and that he desireth rather to draw men thereto by persuasion than by force to compel their obedience. All these things have I learned from his discourses, and from his daily walk and converse. But that which I cannot learn from any of these is the manner and time of its establishment. Although John in the beginning did affirm that the Kingdom was 'nigh at hand,' yet have I many times heard Jesus say, 'Mine hour is not yet come.'¹ Wherefore my soul hath waxed impatient, and I have sought earnestly for signs whereby to know the nearness of that hour.

But now, alas! methinks the hour will never come! My glorious hopes have turned to dust and ashes. Men refuse to be persuaded; many that did follow Christ are turned back; the leaders of our nation openly mock at him, calling him 'glutton and wine-bibber, friend of publicans and sinners'; and

¹ John vii. 8.

now Herod seeketh to destroy him, even as he destroyed John.

The place where now I write is one whereunto we have fled to hide ourselves from persecution. He unto whom I looked as King of the Jews and Lord of the Gentiles is even now in hiding, as one outlawed and in danger of his life. And not from mighty Caesar hath he fled, from the master of the world and lord of many legions, but from a degenerate grandson of the great Herod, Tetrarch of a small province, whom to conquer would be no great honour. Methought when John was beheaded that Christ would straightway go unto Machaerus, or send one of his Apostles, armed with might, to sweep the bloody-minded tyrant and all his viper-brood from off the face of the earth. But no word of vengeance hath Jesus spoken from that day even unto this ; but, contrariwise, hath sojourned chiefly in quiet and distant places—to wit, the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and the deserts beyond Bethsaida. And now we lurk like robbers among the forests of Hermon, as though fearful of being seen of men.

These are the things whereat my soul is disquieted and cast down. These are the sorrows, as of death, that compass me about. And this day hath Jesus himself added thereunto, for he also, as it seemeth, hath ceased to hope, and bodeth only calamity and death as his doom.

Bonds and stripes, saith he, await him in Jerusalem ; many things must he suffer of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed and raised again the third day.¹ What this being raised the third day may signify none of us knoweth ; but the others are words easy to be understood, and truly they have filled my heart with dismay. If the Leader, the Master, the Teacher be slain, what then may not the disciples look for ? Verily, if stripes and death await him, then also do they wait for us his followers ; and all our dreams of glory and dominion shall finish in destruction.

And yet, amid all my fears and tremblings, I cannot quite lose confidence in Jesus. Fain would I urge him to a bolder and more open

¹ Matt. xvi. 21.

conduct ; for that he hath the power to sweep all enemies from his path none that knoweth him can doubt. Nevertheless, when Peter essayed to remonstrate with him, and cried out in terror of soul, ‘ Be it far from thee, Lord ! these things shall not be unto thee ! ’ he turned upon him with an awful sternness and replied : ‘ Get thee behind me, thou Adversary ! for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men ! ’¹

Can it, then, be the will of God that His Messiah should be rejected of the Chief Priests and rulers, and be put to death ? God forbid ! Kingdoms are not established nor thrones won by weakness and disaster. ‘ A living dog,’ saith Solomon, ‘ is better than a dead lion ’² ; and only by a living Messiah can the world be subdued and the Kingdom of David set up in Jerusalem. Surely, therefore, these sayings of Jesus are but another parable, wherein is hidden some lesson that in due time he will make plain unto us. For oft-times his sayings are dark and hard of understanding ; but he hath ever this grace, that he

¹ Matt. xvi. 22, 23.

² Eccles. ix. 4.

seeketh to interpret unto us whatsoever we have failed to comprehend. I will therefore certainly ask him further concerning this matter ; but, for the present, am so greatly cast down that I have not the courage to ask him aught.

XXIX

*At the foot of Mount Hermon,
(Six days later.) June, A.D. 29.*

THIS hath been a week of much heart-searching and questioning among the disciples. Jesus hath continued daily speaking unto us of dangers and of death which await him, and commandeth all them that would follow him to take up their cross and go with him whithersoever he goeth.¹ Nevertheless, there have been many gracious and pleasant words mingled with these evil forebodings, so that our hearts are in a maze, not knowing whither we go, whether to sorrow or to joy. For Jesus declareth plainly that the Son of Man

¹ Matt. xvi. 24.

shall come in the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels with him,¹ when he will reward his followers according to their deservings; moreover, saith he, there be some among our company that shall not taste of death until they see these things.*

But this talk of death misliketh me much. First Jesus telleth of death for himself, and now he speaketh of death also for some—perchance many—of his disciples; and all this before the glory shall be revealed—that glory toward which we have been pressing onward, even as hunters press after the prey. Did not John say, now more than two years ago, that the Kingdom was nigh at hand? and yet now it seemeth that many years may pass, and most of us be dead, or ere it be established and our hopes fulfilled. Howbeit, patience was never a virtue beloved by me, and it fitteth not with my desires to wait long for those honours and riches which I had learned to look upon as my certain portion, and grievously do I mourn over this unlooked-for delay. I am even as one perishing of

¹ Matt. xxv. 31.

² Mark ix. 1.

thirst in the wilderness, who, beholding a vision as of palm-trees and water before him, hasteneth thereunto, and findeth nought but a deceiving mirage. Even so is the water for which my soul perisheth removed from before my lips, and my hopes are all melted into thin air.

Verily, in wisdom did the wise King speak when he said concerning the labour that he had laboured to do: 'Behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind, and there is no profit under the sun!'¹ Even my companions among the Apostles are a cause of grief and disquiet unto me; for they are jealous one of another, and chiefly of me, the Judaeon; seeking each one to be first in his Lord's favour, and disputing which shall sit next unto him in his Kingdom. My evil forebodings concerning Peter and the sons of Zebedee have been but too truly fulfilled; for unto these three Christ showeth greater favour than unto the rest, and is even now gone apart with them upon the mountain, leaving us below to preach unto the multitude.

¹ Eccles. ii. 11.

Moreover, he hath made promise unto Peter of greater honour than to any of the others, saying that he shall be a Rock upon which he will build his Church, and that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against him.¹

XXX

Same day and place.
June, A.D. 29.

EVEN as I finished writing the last sentence there came one bringing unto Jesus his lunatic son to be healed. The lad was sore vexed of a devil, which cast him oft-times into the fire and oft into the water, so that he must ever be watched and warded, lest he perish. Jesus being absent upon the mountain with the three, the man addressed himself first unto Nathanael, and besought him to cast out the demon; which he, essaying to do, was not able, although he thrice commanded it to depart in the name of Jesus. Whereupon Matthew also tried, and after him all the other

¹ Matt. xvi. 18.

Apostles, myself the last, but in vain. Being greatly perplexed thereat, we took counsel together, and, setting the youth in our midst, stood round about him in a ring, and, crying as with one voice, commanded the evil spirit to come out of the lad. But our much crying and adjuring prevailed nought, but rather provoked the demon to greater fury; for it mocked us to our face and tormented the unhappy youth before our eyes, so that he fell down as one dead. Whereat the people began to be greatly enraged, and reviled us, murmuring one to another that we were deceivers and ought to be stoned.

Even while we contended with the multitude, and besought them to have patience until Jesus should return, lo! we beheld him descending the mountain towards us, and Peter, James, and John with him. Whereupon we all hastened to meet them, bearing the boy with us, out of whom the devil departed at the first word of Jesus.

Afterward, when the people had gone away, we asked him wherefore we were not able to cast out this demon, seeing that hitherto none

had disobeyed our word. To which Jesus gave answer that it was because of the little-ness of our faith ; for, said he, this sort goeth not out except with prayer and fasting. The which I verily believe to be the truth ; for since Christ hath spoken to us of death and tribulation as awaiting him in the time to come, our faith in him hath been grievously weakened, and the hours that we aforetime gave unto prayer have been passed in re-pining and doubt.

XXXI

The same place, next day.

June, A.D. 29.

I KNOW not what manner of communica-tions have passed between Jesus and the three men that were with him in the moun-tain ; but I perceive that by some means they have been greatly changed. For, whereas they were but yesterday discouraged and cast down, even as the rest, they are to-day filled with faith and courage, confidently affirming,

as with one voice, that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. Howbeit, when I inquired of John what it was that had thus turned their gloom into strong confidence, he said Jesus had bidden them tell no man what things they had seen and heard in the mountain until the day that he should be risen from the dead. I wot not what this saying signifieth, neither do I love that revelations be made unto these men that are denied unto me.

Nevertheless, I rejoyce that somewhat of hope is come into all our hearts, and that the countenances of my companions are become more cheerful of aspect than for many days past.

XXXII

*In the hill-country north of the Sea of Galilee.
(Three weeks later.) July, A.D. 29.*

SOLOMON the wise hath among his proverbs one that runneth much in my mind at this present time, to wit : ‘ He that tilleth his land

shall have plenty of bread : but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.’¹ Had I but stayed in Kerieth, helping my father with his lands and his merchandise, I had verily had bread enough and to spare ; but now oft-times I wot not in the morning whence to obtain bread for my evening meal. Although the wherewithal to satisfy hunger hath never once failed us, yet is it many times but the bread of charity ; and it revolteth my soul to live upon alms as beggars, when we looked to be lords of the whole earth. ‘ The destruction of the poor,’ saith King Solomon, ‘ is their poverty.’² And truly, it is like to be also our destruction, for Jesus hath no pleasure in riches, but whensoever there cometh money into my bag more than is needful for the day’s provision, he straightway commandeth that it be given unto the poor. Happily, there be certain women which follow after our company—Mary Magdalene and another Mary ; also Joanna, who is wife to Chuza, Herod’s steward, and sundry others—which are women of substance

¹ Prov. xxviii. 19.

² Prov. x. 15.

and minister liberally thereof unto Jesus. Moreover, it oft-times cometh to pass that such as have been healed by him desire to show gratitude by gifts of silver and gold. But he suffereth no one to give more than sufficeth for the one day's provision, and if any be exceeding urgent in the matter he biddeth him give the overplus unto the poor.

On this wise my bag ever remaineth empty, and small chance do I behold of gaining those riches after which my heart lusteth—not, indeed, for myself alone, but likewise for my Lord; for that is a true saying, which saith: 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city.'¹ But how shall a kingdom be established or an army sustained if there be no money in the treasury? And though our Master possesseth all might, and can perchance cause both bread and gold to spring up at a word, yet methinks he doeth not wisely thus to cast away that which cometh of itself.

Howbeit, I am resolved that henceforth I will at the least secure some small portion of this gold unto myself; for who knoweth

¹ Prov. x. 15.

what may befall? If death be indeed the doom of Jesus, even as he saith, I shall be in a sorry case, left alone, without money, and among enemies—if, indeed, I escape with my life. But I must do this thing privily; for the other Apostles are men simple of heart, who take no thought for the morrow, but are content with all that Jesus doeth or commandeth. Moreover, have I not left father and friends, house and lands, to follow after Jesus? and if at the end of all our wanderings there be no Kingdom, but rather suffering and death, for our Leader, I shall be greatly the loser thereby, and do therefore merit some share in all this wealth which he so lightly contemneth.

As for that power of working miracles wherewith the Christ hath endowed his Apostles, I wot not if it will continue unto us after he be dead. Besides which, I have found that this gift availeth nought for our own service, but only for the blessing of others. Wherefore this is so, I know not. Peradventure it is for the testing of our obedience; for Jesus hath commanded us, whensoever we go into towns

and villages, to carry no wallet nor purse, but to look only to the hospitality of the faithful for our daily bread.

Nevertheless, being one day an-hungered, and likewise Zelotes also, who was with me, and having in my hand a morsel of bread given unto us by a wayfaring man, we essayed to multiply the same, even as we had seen Jesus do it when he fed the five thousand. But we could work no change upon the bread, and were fain to wait for the wherewithal to stay our hunger until we came unto the next village.

Likewise at another time, when Simon, looking not carefully unto his steps, struck his foot against a stone and bruised it, so that for a season he could not walk without much pain, we both were greatly amazed to find that we might not heal his hurt, although even in that same hour we had cured a man of his lameness that had been a cripple from his birth.

Simon doth aver that these things are done for the perfecting of our discipline ; for, saith he, if we could supply all our needs and cure

all our hurts—even when these are the fruit of our own lack of care—we should soon grow delicate and feeble, our hands would be too soft for warfare, and our spirits become slack and womanish. We are to be soldiers, saith he, and fight valorously against the bravest armies of the earth, and the soldier must ever be schooled by much privation and hardship, so that nothing shall affright him or enfeeble his strength.

Peradventure Zelotes hath found the true answer to our questionings. Nevertheless, I am not by training a soldier, and in my heart I crave for the power to bless myself also, as well as others.

Seeing, therefore, that Christ will not suffer me to gather money for the strengthening of his Kingdom, so that mine office of Treasurer procureth me neither honour nor profit; and that, moreover, I am not able by a miracle to heap up riches in a moment, and thus replenish the waste which he causeth by his large bounty to the poor, I am resolved what I will do. I will take somewhat from all the moneys given into my hand, and will hide the

same in some secret place, where it shall lie, even as corn lieth in the granary, until the day when I shall be in want thereof. For even if no evil befall us, and the Kingdom be duly established in glory and might, it can do no harm, but only good, unto my Lord to have a Treasury well furnished with silver and gold.

Moreover, I will pray Mary of Magdala to grant unto me the administration of her possessions, even as hath been already done by Matthew, and therefrom will I likewise set aside a portion for the day of trouble, lest it be all wasted upon the poor until nothing be left. In this manner shall I secure unto myself a refuge from the terrors of poverty, and be able also to give help unto my Lord against the power of his enemies.

It hath even come into my thoughts to ask the hand of the Magdalene in marriage; for the woman is both young and fair, and hath abundant wealth, both in lands and money. Nevertheless, I fear to anger Jesus by proffering unto him such a request; for he speaketh ever unto Mary as unto a daughter,

and she hath no thought for any but for him alone. Moreover, it is certain that, if Christ establish his Kingdom, and smite his foes with blasting, I shall be able to look for a nobler bride than the woman of Magdala; for in that day kings shall surely strive for mine alliance, and be proud to hail me as their son.

XXXIII

*Capernaum (two weeks later).
End of July, A.D. 29.*

WE are now some days returned from the country of Caesarea Philippi, and Jesus hath again been teaching the people and healing their sick as heretofore. I perceive not that he changeth in any wise his manner of acting, or maketh preparation for a more earnest resistance to his enemies. These grow daily bolder and more fierce, and follow him with a bitterness of hatred hard to be understood. It is true, he teacheth contrary to the traditions of the Pharisees, and hath spoken hard

words concerning them and the Sadducees, telling men to beware of the leaven of their doctrine; for that they be hypocrites, who lay heavy burdens upon the people, which they will not help by so much as a finger to carry. But I know not that he hath ever done a harm to any man; but, contrariwise, there be thousands who will ever bless God that they have seen him; for in every town and village where he cometh he leaveth some behind whom he hath blessed with healing. And many there be that love him with a love surpassing words, and would die ten thousand deaths, if thereby they might save him from sorrow or pain. Unto these the words he hath lately spoken of tribulation and death awaiting him in Jerusalem have occasioned much questioning and not a little weeping. And this day he hath added thereunto the further saying that the hand of a traitor shall betray him unto his enemies.¹

Who this traitor may be I wot not; neither can any of the Apostles discover of whom Jesus speaketh, although we have earnestly

¹ Matt. xvii. 22.

sought among the crowd of them that follow after us. Verily, it behoveth us to be ever upon our guard ; for so great is the subtilty of the Pharisees that they may even suborn men to become disciples of Jesus, so that hereafter they may the more easily betray him into their hands.

XXXIV

*The same place and day.
End of July, A.D. 29.*

WHILE as yet we were among the forests of Hermon, Jesus asked of the Twelve a question concerning himself, unto the which I seek even yet in mine own mind for an answer. First he asked us : ‘ Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am ? ’¹ Whereunto we gave divers replies ; for the people say many things of Jesus, some holding him for Elijah, others for Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets come again in the flesh. Some there be also—among whom, men say, is Herod Antipas—that

¹ Matt. xvi. 13.

believe him to be John the Baptist, whom God, they affirm, hath raised from the dead. This last saying we know to be foolish ; for Jesus wrought and taught while as yet John lived on earth.

Afterward Jesus asked us : ‘ But who do *ye* say that I am ? ’—and this is the question whereunto I would fain seek an answer. Peter, who ever putteth himself forward, cried out at once : ‘ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ! ’ whereat Jesus was greatly pleased, and did bless Peter for the saying. Would to God that I likewise could say the same words with like strong conviction of their truth ! At the beginning I held this belief, and clung thereunto with all my heart : and even now, notwithstanding that the sunshine of my hopes hath been overcast by many black and threatening clouds, I cannot cease from believing in the power of Jesus to do whatsoever he will. By the waters of Jordan I heard the voice of God, speaking from the clouds and proclaiming, ‘ This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ And since that day I have witnessed so many of his

mighty works that, verily, the tale thereof is more than I can tell. He hath twice fed a multitude with a few loaves and fishes ; twice hath he stilled the raging of the storm ; twice hath he raised to life them that were dead ; he hath driven out many devils and healed multitudes of sick ; so that we, who are his companions, are fully persuaded that there is no work too hard or too great for him to perform. And when I am with him there are such grace and majesty in his aspect and manner of speech, and, of a truth, my soul is drawn unto him with so strong a love and reverence, that I could cast myself upon his neck, or fall at his feet in worship, crying, even in the words of Peter, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God !’

But whensoever I quit the presence of Jesus and mingle with the world, or sit solitary and aloof, then do fears assail my soul, and my heart becometh a very battlefield of doubts. I cannot muse in quiet by the sea but what the Roman trumpet soundeth shrill and clear from proud Tiberias, as though triumphing over the downfall of Jacob. I cannot walk

the streets of Capernaum without being thrust aside to make way for some dog of a Gentile, whose clanking armour and glittering sword proclaim him my lord and master. Our very cities are named after our conquerors; our religion is mocked at and held in derision; and we, the chosen people of Jehovah, the sacred seed, are scorned and trodden under-foot. Our most solemn feasts are held in presence of the armed bands of an alien Caesar, whose effigy Pilate hath even sought to set up in the Holy Place. Nay, the very vestments of our High-priests are taken away from us and lodged in Antonia, there to be defiled by unholy hands, and are only given back into our charge for the yearly Feasts.

And all these things we have borne, and have patiently submitted ourselves thereunto, because we were stayed and enheartened by strong hope of a Deliverer, a Messiah. Are not the Scriptures filled with prophesyings concerning the glory that shall be given unto Israel? Hath it not been written: 'The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised

thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.’¹ ‘Strangers also shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers’?² Standeth it not also in another place, that ‘Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and shall lick the dust of thy feet’?³

Wherefore, when Jesus came, proclaiming a Kingdom nigh at hand; being furnished, moreover, with power to work miracles, such as have not been seen since the day that the Lord brought up Israel with a high hand out of Egypt, my heart clave unto him, and I revered him as the promised King and Saviour. I dreamed dreams and saw visions; and they were filled with glory and splendour, with might and dominion, with judgement and vengeance. I saw my desires upon the enemies of my country, and seemed already to possess their wealth and glory.

But now! now!—I know not what to hope for, nor what to believe. I dream no longer;

¹ Isa. lx. 14.

² Isa. lxi. 5.

³ Isa. xlix. 23.

or if, perchance, a dream visiteth me in the night season, it is of death and derision, of poverty and sorrow. I am even as Job, who cried saying : ‘ He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. . . .¹ When I looked for good, then evil came, and when I waited for light there came darkness² ; . . . therefore is my harp turned to mourning, and my pipe into the voice of them that weep.’³

That Jesus hath the power to fulfil all my hopes and abundantly to perform my expectation I do earnestly believe, but that he lacketh the will so to do beginneth now plainly to dawn upon my soul. He that would seize thrones must be ready to dash in pieces them that sit thereon ; he that would conquer a world must have courage to crush all opponents, even as corn is crushed between the millstones. But this Jesus would persuade all men to serve him, would draw them by parables and precepts, by healing their sick and teaching their women. Alas ! the world refuseth to be persuaded ; men will not be

¹ Job xxx. 19.² Job xxx. 26.³ Job xxx. 31.

drawn. At the first our whole nation ran after him, for all believed—even as I did—that he was Messiah. But now that the newness hath passed away from his doctrine, and that none of our burdens are lightened, they that at first believed are become enemies, and the Christ himself goeth about in peril of his life.

When I think upon these things my soul is grievously torn and tossed within me. My love and reverence for the Master turn even into hatred and contempt. I am as one filled with bitterness, who hath been sated with wormwood.¹ Oh that I could put my spirit into the breast of Jesus, and arm his soul with my ardour! When I behold how his enemies point at him with the finger of scorn, and hear them mutter, ‘He hath a devil,’ ‘he is mad,’ ‘away with such a fellow!’ ‘he is not fit to live,’ my indignation burneth as a fire, and I long to sweep them away as with a breath. But, alas! I cannot; I can only heal, I have no power to hurt.

And when I remember all my broken hopes,

¹ Lam. iii. 15.

which lie strewn upon my heart, even as white ashes upon a dead fire; and bethink me of all these many months wasted in wanderings hither and thither, homeless and in much poverty, when I might have been winning solid substance for myself in my father's house at Kerioth—verily, I curse myself for a fool, and him likewise that hath lured me to such folly.

And thus, between blessing and cursing, between hatred and love, is my soul tossed up and down as a locust; I am gone like the shadow when it declineth, and covered with shame as with a mantle.¹

XXXV

*In Jericho, the City of Palm-trees. (Two months later,
shortly before the Feast of Tabernacles.)
October 5, A.D. 29.*

EVEN as our forefathers trembled and were afraid when tidings came unto them of the walled cities in the land of Canaan, and of the Anakim that dwelt therein, so that they wept

¹ Ps. cix. 23, 29.

all night long and murmured against Moses and against Aaron ; so likewise do I tremble and fear to enter into Jerusalem, whither Christ now goeth up unto the Feast of Tabernacles.

And yet I wot not if it would not better beseem me to rejoice thereat ; for I know that Jesus possesseth such strength and power that none may stand before him, or gainsay his will. Nevertheless, he hath hitherto only used that power in healing and blessing others, and in no wise to help or to bless himself. And though his enemies be many and powerful, yet in Galilee, where many still honour and reverence his name, they could do him no real hurt ; and therefore hath he ever dealt tenderly and mercifully with them. But now that he draweth nigh unto Jerusalem, where they that hate him are gathered together as one band, peradventure they will be emboldened to lay hands of violence upon him, and thus compel him to make manifest his might in the eyes of all men. And on this wise there shall come good out of evil ; and the rage and fury of Christ's enemies be made a

means of quickening the establishment of his Kingdom. Verily, I would fain hope that thus it may be!

Many things are come to pass since last I wrote concerning Jesus upon my tablets, whereof some have given me occasion to rejoice, and others to sorrow.

Notwithstanding, when I seek in mine own mind to weight the one against the other, I fear that sorrow hath the pre-eminence, for we all have suffered much discouragement; and, though I labour diligently to stuff myself with hopes, yet doubt lurketh ever in my breast, and fear goeth before my face.

Of all the things that have befallen us since we quitted Capernaum, I will here record but one.

Jesus remained of set purpose in that city five days after the multitude of pilgrims had departed unto the Feast. He then set out with his whole company, and, arriving at the borders of Samaria, sent forth messengers, according to his custom, unto one of the Samaritan villages to ask if peradventure he and his disciples might lodge there one night.

But the people of the place—being jealous that we went up to worship at Jerusalem, and not at their temple on Mount Gerizim—treated his messengers rudely and would not receive us.

Whereupon we all were filled with indignation, and James and John—whom Jesus hath surnamed Sons of Thunder—besought him that they might call down fire from heaven and consume all the village, even as Elijah brought down fire upon the servants of Ahaziah.¹ Howbeit, Jesus suffered it not; but, contrariwise, spake sharply unto the sons of Zebedee, saying they knew not of what spirit they were; for that he came not to kill, but to make alive.

Truly the spirit that was in Joshua and in all the prophets dwelleth not in Jesus: for they slew without mercy all that would not call upon the name of the Lord, beginning at this Jericho, where now we lodge, even unto that day when Josiah burnt the bones of the priests of Baal upon their own altars.² Moreover, it is not to be borne that vile Samaritans,

¹ 2 Kings i. 10, 12.

² 2 Chron. xxxiv. 5.

who are but as the offscouring of the earth, should insult the Lord's Messiah and refuse unto him the shelter of a roof. 'Tis surely bad enough to be reviled and persecuted by Rabbis and Priests and Pharisees; and oft-times I have marvelled that Jesus suffereth their bitter words to go unpunished. But from the son of a Samaritan no Jew that is a man of spirit can receive such words and leave them unrequited. Wherefore in my heart I said, even in the words of David: 'How long, O God, shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name for ever? Why drawest Thou back Thy hand, even Thy right hand? Pluck it out of Thy bosom, and consume them!'—And I looked earnestly that Jesus should curse the Samaritans, and break them in pieces, even as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again¹; so that every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.²

But Jesus spake not another word, but

¹ Ps. lxxiv. 10, 11.

² Jer. xix. 11.

³ Jer. xix. 8.

mekly passed on unto the next town. Nay, his indignation seemed not to be in any wise moved against the men of that village, but rather against them that besought him to chastise it.

Howbeit, he shortly after sent forth other seventy disciples, giving them power to cast out devils and to work cures, even as he had aforetime done unto the Twelve; bidding them, moreover, to preach the Kingdom of God in all the towns and villages whither he would come. And great things have been done in his name, whereat the people are mightily astonished, and the Seventy also filled with rejoicing.

Thus cometh it to pass that, whereas I am one day cast down even to despair with doubts and discouragements, yet am I the next day lifted up with confidence and strong hope in my Lord. Would that I knew whereunto our wanderings will lead, and whether the end thereof will be in joy or in sorrow! For verily, when I look into mine own breast it is full of dead hopes, even as a sepulchre is full of dead men's bones; and daily do I add

thereunto the carcasses of other hopes, newly slain.

Likewise all the Apostles, as I perceive, are greatly discouraged; for fear hath fallen upon them, so that they are sad of countenance and speak softly, like men in peril. Nevertheless, they cleave close unto Jesus, and can find no fault in him, being filled with faith and love, so that whatsoever he doeth is pleasing unto them. In this thing they differ much from myself; for, whereas they cease not to dispute as to which shall be greatest in the Kingdom of Messiah, I have so far lost my faith that oft-times I believe there will be no Kingdom at all.

XXXVI

Bethany; in the house of Lazarus.
(*Eight days later.*) October 13, A.D. 29.

As a bird escaped out of the snare of the fowler, so are we escaped out of the city¹; and as men that flee from the noise of fear,

¹ Ps. cxxiv. 7.

so are we fled away out of Jerusalem.¹ Jesus our Master, he whom we call Messiah, and that nameth the Lord Jehovah for his Father, hath been driven out of the Temple as a blasphemer ; and we, who are his disciples, have run for our lives before the anger of the people !

Truly the Kingdom seemeth not presently to prosper, and the greatness whereof I dreamed slippeth away from my hand, even as water runneth through the fingers of him that would gather it up.

And yet Jesus hath never spoken more boldly, nor with greater authority concerning himself, than these last days, affirming clearly that he hath been sent of God and doeth only His works, speaking only the things which he hath seen and learned of the Father. Nay, he said moreover that he will return unto the Father ;² and that, because men believe not in him, therefore shall they die in their sins.

But when he went on to say unto the people : ‘ Ye are of your father the devil,

¹ Isa. xxiv. 18.

² John vii. 33.

and the lusts of your father ye will do,' they cried out in a rage : ' Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil ! ' and shortly after took up stones to stone him,¹ so that he withdrew from the place, and hath led us out beyond the Mount of Olives.

Verily, I am beside myself with wonder and amaze concerning this man ; for his word is mighty, and his miracles are marvellous ; and yet he doeth nought for the Kingdom whereof he speaketh, but, contrariwise, suffereth his enemies everywhere to prevail. I am as one that walketh in darkness, groping after the light, who discerneth things only by the handling of the hands, but can find nor door nor window whereby to admit the day. I would fain cleave unto the Christ ; for if he be not Messiah, verily there is no truth in man, and God hath revealed Himself in one that is a deceiver : and yet I know not which way lieth my safety.

What meaneth that strange saying of Jesus, that he will return unto Him that sent him ? Can it be that, because the Jews receive him

¹ John viii. 44-48.

not, therefore he will go away from us, and come again unto a later generation? And if he thus depart, will he take us with him? For, truly, if he leave us alone, the Jews will slay us!

Would that I understood these dark sayings, and knew whereunto the words and deeds of these three years will lead me! For my heart is consumed within me, and I am sore disquieted.

Of a truth, the times are marvellously changed since first I came up unto Jerusalem with Jesus. Then was I glad and full of hope, looking for the speedy deliverance of Israel. But now all things are changed—within me and without! Methinks the very sun shineth not so brightly upon the earth as aforetime; that the flowers have lost their fragrance; that the song of birds soundeth less sweetly in mine ears. Yea, bitterness hath filled my heart, and driven out faith and hope and love; so that I loathe myself and hate all men—even him whom I have thus far followed as both Lord and Messiah.

XXXVII

In the hill-country of Judaea.

(One month later.) November, A.D. 29.

AFTER sojourning some brief time in the village of Bethany we are now removed into the country about Hebron, where Christ abideth now these three weeks, passing from town to town, preaching and healing, even as he did aforetime in Galilee. But, although the people follow him in multitudes, yet maketh he not many disciples: for the priests have lately forbidden to open the synagogues unto him, so that men dare not speak well of him, or join themselves unto him, lest they also be put out of the synagogues.

Of women, indeed, we have a great company, and they confess him more boldly than the men, being not so much afraid of the Rabbis. Moreover, there came unto him this day many such women, bringing their children also, whom they desired, with much urging, that Jesus should bless. Howbeit, he was at that time speaking unto the Apostles, unto whom this tumult of women and children

gave offence; so that we essayed to drive them away, bidding them not to trouble the Master, for that he was occupied with matters of weightier import than the blessing of a few children.

Whereupon Jesus brake forth into greater anger than I have at any time witnessed in him, and chode sternly the Twelve, and me most of all—for I was foremost in that work—saying: ‘Forbid not the children from coming unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!’¹

Verily, a strange Kingdom!—and a strange Messiah!

XXXVIII

*Jerusalem, at the Feast of Dedication.*²
(One month later.) December, A.D. 29.

VERILY that was a day never to be forgotten, but ever held in joyful remembrance by all the sons of Jacob, when Judas, ‘The Hammer of God,’ having broken in pieces

¹ Mark x. 14.

² John x. 22.

the armies of Syria, kindled afresh the sacred flame upon its seven-branched candlestick, and took from before the Sanctuary the abomination of desolation wherewith Antiochus had defiled the Holy Place. Oft hath mine heart swelled within me to hear from my father's lips the glorious story, which his father's father told unto him while yet a boy; so that unto me this Feast of Dedication seemeth ever more full of hope and gladsomeness than any of our yearly feasts.

Therefore was I greatly rejoiced when Jesus, after wandering three months hither and thither through the country of Judaea, turned his steps once more toward Jerusalem, and came up hither to take part in this 'Festival of Lights.' And truly, it doeth good unto my soul like a medicine to behold so great a multitude rejoicing and praising God because of the deliverance which He wrought wellnigh ten score years ago, by the hand of His servants the Maccabees. Crowded are the streets of the city with men and women who bear, for the most part, palm-branches in their hands, with lamps

also and torches ; while from every window there glitter lights, so that even at night there is a brightness almost as of noonday. On every hand friend joyfully saluteth friend, while sounds of mingled mirth and music steal through the open casements of the houses or echo widely from the Temple courts. All Jerusalem is given over to joyfulness and praise ; and, were it not for the accursed legionaries of Pilate, who stalk to and fro among the crowd, scowling darkly at a mirth they cannot partake, one might dream that the Lion of Asmoneus still sat upon the throne of David, and that Judaea were once more a land of free men.

But that which most mightily doth stir my breast is the wild, fond hope that Jesus will lay hold upon so happy an occasion to hurl defiance at his foes, and to pour destruction upon them that oppress his people. What time in all the year more fitting for the setting up of the Kingdom of Messiah than that which saw the triumph of Maccabeus, and his solemn rededication of the Holy Places of God ? Wherefore I look

daily for the glory of Israel and the manifestation of Messiah's might. Surely the hour is come whereof he spake, the hour wherein shall be fulfilled all those words of prophecy which tell of the glory that shall be ours, and the power and dominion which are to be the everlasting portion of Jacob. The Kingdom was 'nigh at hand,' said John three years ago, and lo! my heart telleth me that now, at last, it is come, and shall endure for ever!

Jesus, the while, walketh calm and serene amid all the throng and tumult of the people, taking no active part in their mirth or thanksgiving; but watching and musing, like unto one weighted with the thought of some great design. And while he thus thinketh and prepareth himself for his mighty enterprise, my spirit within me is like unto a bow that is tightly strung, and upon which resteth the arrow poised for its flight. I am as a hound that is held in leash, ready to cast myself upon the foe, and to do battle for God and my nation, whensoever our Captain shall set up his ensign on high.

And, of a truth, 'tis only at Jerusalem that the glorious work can be begun; for here alone is the Temple of the Most High, and this is the place which God hath chosen to set His name therein. Here was the throne of David and of Solomon; hither did the Children of the Captivity return with joy and singing; and here it was that Judas, the son of Mattathias, restored the fallen glories of Israel. Hath it not been spoken by the Prophet Micah, that 'Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem'?¹ Wherefore I will be glad and take fresh courage, for the hour of deliverance is surely at hand.

Whence cometh it that in Jerusalem I am ever confident and full of boldness? that my doubts and fears vanish like the mists of morning, and my soul leapeth forth as the lark to greet the light of day? In Galilee and elsewhere, away from these beloved walls, I am fearful and doubting; dread falleth upon me as a cloud, and unbelief covereth me as a pall of thick darkness, so

¹ Mic. iv. 2.

that my hopes die within me, and I give myself over unto despair.

But here it is not so; and I fain would hope that into Jesus also there cometh the like inspiration of courage and action, so that he may gird his loins with strength and fight valiantly against all the enemies of Israel.

XXXIX

*In Bethabara beyond Jordan, in the land of Perea.¹
(Fifteen days later.) January, A.D. 30.*

ALAS! alas! how are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!² Jesus hath fled away again from before the face of his adversaries, and we are become as partridges that one hunteth in the mountains.³ Nay, we were all in jeopardy of our lives; for the people sought to stone him with stones, so that with difficulty we escaped from their hands.

¹ John x. 40.

² 2 Sam. i. 27.

³ 1 Sam. xxvi. 20.

Methought the hour of deliverance had come, and lo! now it seemeth further away from our sight than in the beginning! I am as one that hath fallen from a lofty place; all my bones ache because of my mourning; I am distracted because of terrors; I am afflicted and ready to die!¹

XL

*At the Fords of Jordan, over against Jericho.
(One week later.) January, A.D. 30.*

AGAIN we wend our way towards the City of Zion, and soon shall feast our eyes upon the splendours of its holy Temple. Howbeit, we go not up to worship, but rather to comfort them that mourn; for Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, is dead.

This Lazarus was a man of no small substance, and held in much esteem among the Jews. Moreover, he dwelt not in Jerusalem, but in Bethany, a place of trees and olive-gardens, among the which Jesus ever loveth to lodge, rather than amid the streets and

¹ Ps. lxxxviii, 15.

busy haunts of town or city. Wherefore it came to pass that, whensoever Jesus visited Jerusalem, he abode in the house of this Lazarus, and they twain were knit together in strong bonds of love, so that men spake of Lazarus as 'he whom Jesus loved.'

There was furthermore in the same house a sister of Lazarus, called Mary; and a little way off dwelt also another sister, Martha, the widow of one Simon, a leper, whom Jesus had aforetime healed of his leprosy, but who hath since deceased. These twain were exceeding zealous in ministering unto Jesus, and likewise unto the Apostles; so that our sojourn in that place was ever pleasant and of great comfort.

Notwithstanding these things, we go not willingly at this time unto Bethany, but are all filled with fears; for there are not yet twenty days since the Jews sought to stone Jesus because he said he was the Son of God. Since the day that he spake bitterly unto me in Capernaum I have not dared to gainsay him in any wise¹; but certain other of the

¹ John vi. 70,

Apostles have sought to hinder him from returning so soon unto Judaea ; and when he would not be persuaded, Thomas cried out unto the rest : ‘ Let us then go with him, that we also may die with him ! ’¹

But greatly though I love and reverence this Jesus, and though I would adventure much to serve him, yet is it not my desire to perish with him. Far other was the object wherewith I set out to be his disciple : and though my hopes have suffered loss since the day that first I beheld him by the waters of this same Jordan, yet are they not sunk so low that I covet death as an end for which to labour.

At seasons such as this I oft debate within myself whether it were not wiser and better to forsake Jesus and return unto my father’s house. I ask myself, Wherefore do I yet follow this man ? Hath he aught to offer that may satisfy the cravings of my heart ? Doth he truly purpose to sweep away that Roman tyranny which eateth into my soul like fetters of iron ? And is it now possible

¹ John xi. 16.

that he may establish that Kingdom whereof he speaketh even yet, and which hath so oft been foretold by the Prophets? And sometimes I answer: 'Nay! he hath nought for me!' And otherwhiles my soul crieth out: 'Yea! he hath yet much for me, the which he will reveal in his own good time!'

And to-day these musings work strongly within me, and thus do I reason with myself: 'Tis manifest from much that Jesus hath spoken, and yet more from that which be-falleth us daily, that his service doth not lead quickly to that richness of dominion and possession which aforetime I regarded as the certain portion of all his followers. Perchance it may hap that in the distant future all my dreams will be fulfilled; but between that day and this present there lieth much tribulation—nay, suffering and death—for some, perchance for all, of our company.

Wherefore, then, should I go forward with this undertaking, seeing that Jesus willeth not to destroy his persecutors, nor to set up his throne by the strong right hand of violence? In my father's house I should be at peace;

none would dare molest me, or make me afraid ; I should have food to eat and raiment to wear, and should live out all my days in quietness and in plenty. I could join happily in the worship of my fathers, and come up safely unto the yearly feasts of my people : whereas now I tremble when I behold a priest ; and am become an offence unto the rulers and teachers of mine own nation.

Howbeit, when I consider Jesus and behold his mighty works, there come other thoughts into my mind, the which hinder me from going away, and keep me ever close beside him.

And this is how I at such times give answer unto myself : Although this Jesus maketh no shift to destroy his enemies, but rather hideth himself from them ; yet doth he speak with a marvellous boldness, and seemeth to have no fear. Moreover, he ceaseth not, day nor night, to tell of a Kingdom that shall certainly be set up on the earth ; and saith openly that he is the Son of God, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd ; that unto him the Father hath given all power and

all judgement, and that whosoever believeth not on him believeth not on God, and is already condemned. He speaketh also with majesty and conviction, as one having authority; so that when I listen unto his words I cannot but believe them true, although, alas! I fail oft-times to comprehend their meaning.

And then the works that he doeth, these testify daily concerning him; so that many times, when doubts have fallen thick upon my soul, like an army of locusts, which would fain eat up every green thing out of my heart, leaving it naked and barren as a rock, some miracle hath come, like an east wind, and carried them all away into the sea. As at sunrise the mists vanish, the clouds are scattered, and darkness is turned into brightness, thus hath it ever been with my soul and Jesus. When hopes have sunk low, and all the light is gone out of life, then cometh Jesus, and healeth, perchance, ten lepers with a word; or sendeth health unto a sick one many miles away from the place where he standeth: and lo! joy springs anew in my

breast, and all the world seemeth to be filled with gladness.

Moreover, there be other and darker thoughts which come unto me, thoughts which I dare not tell unto Zelotes, my friend. My mind runneth forward into the future and meditateth of what might chance if I return unto my father, cutting myself loose from Christ and the Twelve, and then later learn that he had indeed established his Kingdom in Jerusalem and become Lord of all the kingdoms of the earth. Should I not become a scorn and a derision unto all men? When the other Eleven have risen to be princes and judges in the earth, and even the meanest of Christ's disciples is mighty both in riches and in power, I should be but a poor merchant in Kerioth. And men will point at me, saying one to another: 'There goeth Judas Iscariot, that might have been lord of all the treasuries of the earth: and lo! he cheapeneth a bushel of wheat and chaffereth for a measure of wine!'

And while men mock at me, I shall curse mine own self, and loathe the unbelief which drave me from the side of Messiah.

Therefore do I remain ; and therefore will I remain until I see the end of the matter.

XLI

*Bethany (next day at even).
January, A.D. 30.*

I WILL verily take into my lips the words of Moses and of Miriam, which they sang over the dead corpses of the Egyptians, saying: 'I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously! He is my strength and song, and is become my salvation!' ¹

For the Christ hath vanquished Death and gloriously triumphed over the Grave! The Terrible One hath been brought low; and from the Greedy One hath the prey been snatched away! Henceforth there is light even in the land of darkness and of the shadow of death, for Jesus hath called back one that had been four days dead, and set him again among the living!

And hereby know we of a certainty that

¹ Exod. xv. 1, 2.

there is life beyond the grave, and that Jesus is Lord even of them that be dead, for he hath plainly declared : ‘ I am the Resurrection and the Life : he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live ! ’¹

I will henceforth say unto my doubts, Begone ! and to my fears, Get you hence ! I will gird up the loins of my soul and give diligence to serve my Lord ; for, verily, his might is past finding out, and his pathway goeth right on to victory !

XLII

*At Bethany ; in the house of Simon the Leper.
(Four months later, and six days before the Passover.)
Friday, March 31, A.D. 30.*

SINCE the day that Jesus raised up Lazarus from the dead we have peaceably sojourned in a city called Ephraim, nigh unto the wilderness,² where Jesus hath daily instructed us, speaking many things concerning his

¹ John xi. 25.

² John xi. 54.

Kingdom. Howbeit, when the time drew nigh for the Feast of Passover, he removed thence unto Bethabara beyond Jordan and abode there certain days, after which he set out with the Twelve to go up unto Jerusalem.

And as he went he spake thus unto us, saying: 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the Prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and shamefully entreated and spit upon: and they shall scourge and kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.'¹

From these and other like words which he spake we perceive that during the days of this Passover great things shall be accomplished and many prophecies fulfilled, whereof some shall be bitter and sorrowful, but the most part, we hope, joyous and of great glory. For if all the prophecies concerning Messiah be now fulfilled, we know that they speak marvellous things of the exceeding majesty and glory of his dominion. Wherefore, notwithstand-

¹ Luke xviii. 31-3.

ing the dark forebodings wherewith his words are mixed, we all are filled with confidence and joy.

After we had passed through Jericho and were come unto the steep ascent which leadeth up unto this place, Jesus went on alone, speaking to no man, neither taking heed if any spake unto him ; but seeming as one deep sunk in meditation, that prepareth himself by much thought for some great action. Moreover, his countenance was changed and grew more majestic, and his step became quicker and more firm, as of one going unto battle and to victory ; so that we who followed after were filled with fear and gazed upon him with amazement.¹

XLIII

*Jerusalem ; in the house of one Nicodemus,
a Ruler of the Jews.*

(The first day of the week in Passover Week.)

Sunday, April 2, A.D. 30.

LIFT up your heads, O ye gates ! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King

¹ Mark x. 32.

of Glory shall come in ! Who is the King of Glory ? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.¹

Say among the nations, The Lord reigneth :² let the earth rejoice thereat ; let the multitude of isles be glad³ : for Messiah cometh to judge the earth⁴ ; therefore let the peoples tremble !⁵

Awake ! awake ! put on thy strength, O Zion ! put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the Holy City !⁶ Let Mount Zion be glad ! let the daughters of Judah rejoice !⁷ Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth ! break forth and sing for joy ; yea, sing praises. Sing praises unto the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the voice of melody ! With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord !⁸

For behold, Messiah cometh unto his Kingdom ; and thy throne, O David, shall be exalted among the nations ! The yoke shall

¹ Ps. xxiv. 7, 8.

² Ps. xcvi. 10.

³ Ps. xvii. 1.

⁴ Ps. xcvi. 9.

⁵ Ps. xcix. 1.

⁶ Isa. lii. 1.

⁷ Ps. xlviii. 11.

⁸ Ps. xcvi. 4-6.

be taken from off the neck of Judah ; and the enemies of Jerusalem become as a footstool for the feet of her sons. They shall tread upon them ! Yea, they shall trample them underfoot as mire ! for unto our Jesus every knee shall bow, and all flesh shall see it together !¹

Moreover, unto Jerusalem shall be given the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places² ; so that silver shall be in her streets as stones for abundance, and gold shall be plentiful as iron.³

Verily, I am like unto one that dreameth ; my mouth is filled with laughter and my tongue with singing !⁴ For the Lord hath done great things this day, whereof I am glad !

At last ! at last ! Jesus hath declared himself as King and Saviour of the Jews, and I am but now come hither from the Temple, whither all the world is gone after him. Hitherto, when the people desired to show him honour he suffered it not, but sent them

¹ Isa. xl. 5.

² Isa. xlv. 3.

³ 1 Kings x. 27.

⁴ Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2.

away, or retired unto some desert place. But to-day he bade the disciples fetch him an ass whereon never man had sat, and, being set thereon, entered the Holy City in triumph, a vast multitude going before and following after, crying aloud and singing: 'Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the Kingdom that cometh, the Kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the Highest!'¹

And when certain Pharisees from among the crowd besought him to rebuke them, he answered, saying: 'I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out.'²

Moreover, many of the disciples and others cut down palm-branches and waved them joyously before him, while others spread garments upon the ground, that his beast might walk thereupon. Nay, to that height of joy was the multitude moved that not a few danced before his face, even as David danced before the ark of the Lord.

But of all the crowd none surely danced or

¹ Mark xi. 9, 10.

² Luke xix. 40.

sang more joyously than I! With my hands also I clapped, and shouted unto God with the voice of triumph; for, verily, the Redeemer is come to Zion! The acceptable year of the Lord is come, and the day of vengeance of our God!¹ Garlands shall henceforth be given unto us for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness!²

The 'hour' whereof Jesus spake is here! The voice of prophecy is fulfilled, and the rod of the oppressor broken! The yoke of his burden is removed from off our necks;³ for out of Jacob the Star is come, and the Sceptre is risen out of Israel!⁴ Shiloh is come! is come! and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be!⁵

And while thus we danced and sang, behold the Roman soldiers ran together upon the wall and gazed in wonder at us from their strong towers: and my heart rejoiced yet more and more to see them; for now I know that their day is past, and that soon they

¹ Isa. lxi. 2.

² Isa. lxi. 3.

³ Isa. ix. 4.

⁴ Num. xxiv. 17.

⁵ Gen. xlix. 10.

shall be all cast out as dung, and their carcasses spread abroad upon the earth, to become meat unto the fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the field.

And thou Rome, thou cruel one ! that wast exalted unto heaven, and whose foundations were laid in hell ; who didst vaunt thyself lord of all the earth and trustedst to endure for ever ; behold, thou shalt be brought down and laid low and levelled with the earth. Thou that wast the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Gentiles' pride, shalt be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomcrrah. Thou shalt never be inhabited, nor dwelt in from generation to generation : but wild beasts of the desert shall lie in thee and thy houses be full of doleful creatures. Wolves shall cry in thy castles, and satyrs shall dance in thy pleasant palaces !¹

And I, Judas, the son of Simon of Kerioth in the land of Judaea, shall become exceeding great in the earth. The choice treasure of palaces shall be mine, and precious things shall come into my house. Princes shall be

¹ Isa. xiii. 19, 22.

my servants, and their sons my bondservants. Kings shall serve at my table, and the kings' daughters be my handmaidens; for the glory of the Gentiles shall flow unto me, and my lot be established in the strong places of the earth.

I am come hither into this house to call Nicodemus unto his Lord, and to tell the glad tidings of the day in his ears. For, although a ruler of the Jews, he hath long been a disciple of Jesus—but secretly, for fear of the people.

While he therefore hasteneth unto Christ I tarry a moment behind to refresh myself with food and wine; and likewise to record the joyful news on my tables, lest there be no quietness on the morrow.

XLIV

*Bethany; in the house of Martha, the widow of
Simon the Leper.*

(The same day at even.) Sunday, April 2, A.D. 30.

VERILY, I wot not what to think of this Jesus! for he hath let slip the golden oppor-

tunity, which may not soon return! While the heart of the people was hot within them, and all men hailed him King and Lord, he might with ease have driven out Pilate and all his legions, even as chaff is driven before the wind. They would have fled from before his face, as the Philistines fled before Samson, or as the beasts flee at the roaring of a lion. But when I returned unto the Temple, behold, he was gone! He had but looked round about upon the sacred courts, and returned in quietness unto Bethany!¹

'Tis not thus that men are led to victory. 'Tis not by going backwards that the enemy can be destroyed. The hour was come! Victory stood before us! The people were ripe for conquest! We had but to shake the branches, and, lo! the grapes would have fallen into our lap!

As the blacksmith smiteth the iron while it is hot, and weldeth it, and fashioneth thereof whatsoever he will; even so might Jesus have wrought terrible things with the zeal of this people, and made them as lions to

¹ Mark xi. 11.

destroy all his adversaries. One word from his mouth would have turned their singing into fury, and kindled a fire which not Caesar nor all his legions could have quenched.

And, lo! he hath gone back to Bethany: to sit among the women! to teach and to talk concerning that Kingdom which now he hath let slip from his hands for ever.

Truly, there is but one way whereby he can be made to put forth all his strength. And himself hath shown me that way!

Did he not say unto us, even while we were yet in the land of Galilee, that the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men,¹ and we would not believe the saying? But, verily, the word had a meaning whereof no man dreamed, but which beginneth in these latter days to shine in upon my mind.

Wherefore should the Son of Man be betrayed, and cast bound into the hands of his foes, if it be not that he may thereby the more abundantly make manifest his glorious might in the eyes of all the world? Even as God suffered Daniel to be cast into

¹ Matt. xvii. 22.

the den of lions, and forbade not to thrust Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, bound hand and foot, into the burning fiery furnace, and delivered them not until their enemies had rejoiced over them, as over men that went to destruction, so likewise must Jesus be delivered over to the destroyers, that his triumph may be the more glorious.

Moreover, the man hath no stomach for greatness. Pomp and majesty, dominion and riches charm him not. He hath more joy in preaching to the multitude than in all king's palaces, and giveth more diligence to the healing of a sick man than to the mustering of an army. He came to take the Kingdom, and yet desireth it not. When the sceptre lieth within his grasp he turneth away therefrom, and goeth back unto his teaching.

What, then, can be done unto such an one? —Verily, there is but one way: he must be compelled to show his power. The crown must by might be forced upon him, and the sceptre thrust violently into his hand.

Notwithstanding, I tremble while I think

on these things, and sorely doth my heart misgive me. To betray my Lord is to become a traitor; and 'tis an ugly word! Men speak ever scornfully and with loathing of the betrayer: and though I do it, perchance, for the good of him that is betrayed, yet the world may think evil concerning my good intent, and will peradventure curse my name for ever.

Therefore would I yet delay a while; for I know Jesus to be both wise and prudent, and would fain hope for some better way.

XLV

The same place, two days later.

Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30.

WHERE shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? ¹ 'There is a time,' saith Solomon, 'to every purpose under heaven: a time to kill and a time to heal; a time for war and a time for peace.'²

And surely a time hath also come unto

¹ Job xxviii. 12.

² Eccles. iii. 1.

Jesus when he may well forbear from healing and turn his thoughts unto slaughter. The day of peace is overpast, and the hour hath come in which war may righteously be made against all that hate him. Would that he also could read the signs of the times, even as I ; and knew that men wait only for the manifestation of Messiah, and that, if he but speak the word, all Israel will flow unto him, as waters run unto the sea ; and he shall be King indeed !

Howbeit, he yet delayeth to say the word : and, contrariwise, doth but add fuel unto the fury of his adversaries, who seek daily how they may destroy him.

Yesterday methought he repented himself that so great an opportunity had been let slip, and desired straightway to recover that which was lost ; for scarcely were we come unto the Temple when he brake forth into anger against the sellers and money-changers who traffic in the outer court, and drave them out with many bitter words. Moreover, the children began again to cry out : ' Hosanna to the Son of David ! ' and he

rebuked them not ¹; so that the flower of my hopes, which had grievously withered, began once more to bloom and put forth fresh blossom.

Nevertheless, he stayed his hand, and did nought but heal a few blind and lame that came unto him in the Temple ²: whereat my hopes died again within me, and my expectation passed away as a cloud.

Furthermore, this day, when the Chief Priests and elders asked of him, By what authority he did these things, he refused to answer them; but, instead thereof, spake sundry parables against them, whereby their anger was made yet more fierce.

Verily, it seemeth that, since he came up this time unto Jerusalem, he hath sought of set purpose to anger these men yet more and more; for whereas aforetime he avoided from their presence, now he seeketh them out boldly and preacheth against them. And his words are sharp as an ox-goad and bitter as gall. They bite like adders' teeth, and sting like the tail of a scorpion; so that the

¹ Matt. xxi. 15, 16.

² Matt. xxi. 14.

priests and Pharisees are beside themselves with fury, and rage against him like waves driven by the tempest. Nay, he hath solemnly cursed them before the people, proclaiming a sevenfold Woe upon them and all their works ; so that the multitude was silent with amazement, and fear fell on all the disciples.¹

And while I hearkened unto his words, lo ! my purpose grew strong within me, and the fears that had held me back changed suddenly into boldness. Verily, said I unto myself, this man seeketh destruction ! He runneth greedily upon danger, as a horse rusheth to battle, and stirreth up his enemies as one stirreth a fire ! Therefore, if I betray him unto these men, I shall but finish his own work, and bring that to pass whereunto he hath laboured !

Moreover, by this means shall I make friends for myself among the priests and elders ; for if, notwithstanding all his mighty works, Jesus be not Messiah, and perish therefore miserably at the hands of his enemies,

¹ Matt. xxiii. 13-36.

with all them that cleave unto him, I shall be saved from the like destruction. Nay, men will even thankfully receive me as a deliverer, and as one that hath cut short the work of an adversary. For it is certain that the priests and Pharisees look upon Jesus as a man that seeketh to subvert our religion and to destroy the Temple.

Therefore I am resolved what I will do. I will go secretly unto Caiaphas the High-priest and will offer to betray Jesus into his hands, so that he may take him privily and without tumult of the people.

Then, verily, we shall see whether he be Messiah or no !

XLVI

The same place (the same day at even).

Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30.

It is done ! the lot is cast into the lap ; and my choice is made ! I am entered upon a path in the which there can be no going back, neither turning to the right hand nor

to the left ; but I must ever go right forward. And whither it will lead I know not, but am as one that walketh in darkness, hoping for daylight, yet fearing lest I stumble by the way.

Sometimes my soul is lifted up within me, and rejoicing filleth my lips ; so that with strong confidence I cry out and say : ‘ My heart is fixed, O God ! my heart is fixed ! ’ Though I have done that which seemeth evil, yet shall it turn unto good ; and men shall bless me because I had boldness and was not afraid, but went right onward and did this thing. When Messiah hath mightily conquered his enemies, and destroyed all them that despitefully used him, he shall reward me openly in the sight of all men for the deed wrought this day in secret and with much trembling.

Nevertheless, at other times my soul sinketh beneath a weight of fears, and my light hideth itself in darkness. Terrors are turned upon me, they chase mine honour as the wind ; and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.² I

¹ Ps. lvii. 7.

² Job xxx. 15.

am as one that hath been plunged in the ditch, so that my clothes abhor me, and am become a loathing unto myself.¹

Even while I spake unto Caiaphas I trembled exceedingly and would have fled. But he suffered me not to escape; but, having learnt my purpose, he urged me with much solicitation—nay, even with commands—affirming solemnly that Jesus is a deceiver, that worketh contrary to the Word of God, seeking to draw away the people from the Law and the Temple.

Moreover, he offered me much money if I would do this deed; and though at first I refused—for, verily, I sought no such base reward—yet he compelled me to take somewhat, even though it were but the price of a slave. And thus, at last, I yielded to his much persuading, and am now bound by an oath that I will not fail to do as I have promised.

Oh that it were finished! Oh that the end were come! that I knew whereunto I am hastening; for now my soul is torn with

¹ Job ix. 31.

terrors : horror and anguish have made me afraid !

XLVII

*Under the walls of Jerusalem, nigh unto the Temple
(three days later).*

Friday, April 7th, A.D. 30, before sunrise.

It is finished ! the task is done ! I have kept my oath ! The Christ is in the hands of his enemies, and it is I that have done the deed !

For a brief space I thought success had crowned my plan, for, as the soldiers advanced to take Jesus, the majesty of his presence smote them to the earth, and they fell at the sound of his voice, even as rotten branches before the blast of a tempest.

But he forbore to destroy them, bidding them rather take him alone, and let the others go, although Peter, in a fury of rage, had smitten off the ear of one of them with his sword. But I wot well wherefore he thus yielded up himself and suffered the soldiers to lead him away. He held scorn—and rightly so—to wreak vengeance upon these mean underlings, who did but fulfil the com-

mand of those who sent them. But upon the Chief Priests, the Rulers, the Scribes, the Pharisees, and them that so bitterly strive against him—upon these he will assuredly this day pour out the vials of his indignation and blast them with the breath of his nostrils. Even now, as I linger here in a poor cottage without the walls, I strain my ears, hearkening for the shout of battle. Surely at last God shall smite through the head of His enemies, the hairy scalp of such as go on still in their guiltiness¹; and shall fill the places with their dead bodies.²

The day just past has been a time of many and strange happenings. Although we might have eaten the Passover in Bethany, away from the perils of the City, yet, by command of the Master, Peter and John made ready early for the feast in a large upper room in the house of one John, surnamed Mark,³ where towards sundown we assembled for the supper. I spent the morning hours in wandering

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 21.

² Ps. cx. 6.

³ This is merely a supposition, for even tradition is silent as to the house in which this momentous gathering took place.

solitary among the people gathered in their hosts from every quarter under heaven ; and much talk did I hear of the Galilaean Prophet, and the hopes raised by his triumphal entry into the City but five days ago. Even now men are asking when the standard of David shall be uplifted, and all look for the proclamation of the Kingdom. Of a truth, this people thirsteth for Messiah ; its flesh longeth for him, in a dry and weary land, where no water is, to see his power and his glory.¹ They are like unto pastures scorched by the summer sun, which a little spark would kindle to a devouring flame. Oh that I knew how to strike that spark ! Oh that the deed this day performed may accomplish that whereunto I have wrought it !

When I look abroad upon the countless multitudes of my people, thronging like bees into the Temple, singing and shouting the songs of Zion, and making ready to celebrate God's glorious deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, I feel that nothing is impossible to such a nation, if only one would arise to be

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 1 and 2.

its leader and captain. And lo! that One is here! the Leader and Captain is even now within the city walls, and all things and all men are ready for his signal of command. I watched a band of pilgrims arriving this day, and, as they drew nigh unto the City, half their company sang in the words of David: 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in!' Whereto the other part responded: 'Who is the King of Glory?' and then all the host, with many more of them that stood around, cried with a triumphant shout: 'The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: He is the King of Glory!'¹ And I knew and felt that if Jesus, whom I have loved and served these three years, would put forth a tenth part of that power which he possesseth, he, too, could speedily be hailed as the King of Glory.

Thus did I spend the day—wandering amid the countless tents which whiten all the country round, or roaming through the narrow streets of the City, seeking comfort and hope

¹ Ps. xxiv. 7, 8 and 10.

for the morrow, yet wrestling the while with an army of gloomy fears and doubts, which buzzed about my heart like swarms of angry hornets.

On reaching the house of John Mark I found Jesus and the Eleven already assembled, and quickly perceived, from the faces of my brother Apostles, that fearfulness and trembling had come upon them,¹ and that a horror of dark foreboding seemed wellnigh to overwhelm them. Drawing my friend Zelotes aside, I inquired of him the reason, and he told me that Jesus had again been speaking of his decease, and had even said that the Son of man shall be delivered to be crucified,² 'Nevertheless,' added Simon, 'he did also speak of coming again in his glory, and all the angels with him, and of sitting on the throne of his glory to judge all the nations of the earth³ ; so that I know not what to think, and am in a strait betwixt two, whether to lament and be sad, or to rejoice and give thanks.'

¹ Ps. lv. 5.

² Matt. xxvi. 2.

³ Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

Supper being now ready, a disputation arose among the Apostles concerning the seats they should occupy, whereat Jesus was grieved, and, rising from his place, silently cast off his outer garment, girded himself with a long linen towel after the manner of a slave, and, taking a large brazen bowl, filled it with water from one of the water-pots. All this he did, yet spake no word; while the rest stood wondering around and questioned in their minds what this preparation might mean. Then, signing unto Peter to sit upon the couch, he made as though to wash his feet; whereat Peter, amazed and ashamed, exclaimed: 'Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet!' To whom Jesus answered: 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' Whereupon the other cried: 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said unto him: 'He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all.'¹

Wherefore those last words—'but not

¹ John xiii. 4-10.

all' ? I could not away with the thought that Jesus, who reads the hearts of men, even as I would read a book, had perceived my purpose, and even knew, perchance, that I had already been to the Chief Priests. And, verily, my hands are not clean in this matter ; for they have touched the price of treason ! Yet—yet do I hope that my treason may work for salvation. Doth not God make the very wrath of man to praise Him ?¹ And may not the jealous envy of the Priests and my impatient zeal be made the instruments of establishing a Kingdom that shall endure for ever ?

When Jesus had washed Peter's feet he proceeded straightway to wash the feet of all the Apostles, and mine also. No man spake a word, for shame had shut the door of our lips—shame that our Lord should so demean himself, and that we should be unable to prevent it.

The washing ended, he resumed his garment and took his place again upon the couch. After singing the appointed Psalms,² we began

¹ Ps. lxxvi. 10.

² Ps. cxiii. and cxiv.

to eat; but gloom sat on every face, and none had stomach for his meat. Jesus the while spake of that which he had but just done, saying that he meant it for an ensample unto us; and as he, our Lord, had washed our feet, so must we wash each other's feet; and that whoso would be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven must serve most and be the servant of all.¹ Truly a dark saying and hard to be understood! Our Lord we would gladly serve; but to wash each other's feet seemeth but a base task for the captains of his army and the governors of his provinces!

While my indignation concerning these words still burned within me, Jesus began once more to speak, and again methought his speech was aimed at me. 'He that eateth bread with me,' said he, 'hath lifted up his heel against me.'² And a little later he added: 'One of you shall betray me'³; whereat the rest were filled with consternation and gazed upon him in horror, like men that had seen a spirit. Then, taking courage, they began one by one to question him, saying:

¹ Luke xxii. 26.

² John xiii. 18.

³ *Ib.*, v. 21.

'Lord, is it I?' But unto none did he vouchsafe any answer. Last of all, Peter signed unto John, the best-beloved, who leaned upon the Master's bosom, to inquire who it was. To him Jesus whispered somewhat in reply, but in so soft a tone that only John might hear. Not long thereafter Jesus dipped a morsel of bread in the *charoseth*¹ and gave it me to eat; whereupon I also asked him: 'Lord, is it I?' whereto he answered, 'Thou hast said,' adding shortly: 'Do quickly that thou hast to do.'² Taking the bread from his hand, I rose from my place and went immediately out.

What could I think but that he read my purpose and desired its fulfilment—nay, that it be done quickly?

That he loves my method, I cannot believe. Do I not loathe and abhor it myself? To be

¹ The *charoseth* was a dish composed of dates, figs, &c., of a brick colour to remind them of the bricks and mortar of Egypt. Buxtorf says it was of dry dates or figs, or dried grapes and the like, pounded and made up with vinegar, &c. (*Lex Talm.* 831). The dish itself was for liquids, and held about half a pint.—Geikie, *Dict. of Antiquities*.

² John xiii. 27.

a traitor is to be a villain ; and, even though my evil deed may turn to blessing, yet will it go hard with me to justify my villany to others. But I was now so far gone in this business that I could not go back ; for had I not sworn unto the High-priest to deliver him into his hands ? Knowing therefore that after supper Jesus would certainly go to the Gethsemane Garden on Mount Olivet, a place quiet and retired, even amid the turmoil of Passover, I hastened straightway to Caiaphas, to warn him that the hour and the opportunity had come. And as I went the air rang everywhere with the chaunting of the Hallel.¹ All Israel made melody unto the Lord, and from every house, from every valley and hill round about Jerusalem, the voice of singing and praise ascended unto heaven. And the sound brought strength to my heart and confirmed me in my purpose.

The band which Caiaphas sent with me to apprehend Jesus was drawn from the Temple Guard and armed with swords and staves.² The road being rough, some few car-

¹ Psalms cxiii. to cxviii inclusive.

² Mark xiv. 43.

ried torches ; while behind them, as though ashamed to be seen about such a business, there followed many Scribes and Priests. As we drew nigh to the place I bade the men go softly, lest, being warned by their noise, Jesus should escape ; and, as there were many trees in the garden, and the place was dark, I covenanted to show them which was the man by kissing him.

But ere we reached the gate Jesus came forth to meet us and said, ' Whom seek ye ? ' They answered, ' Jesus of Nazareth. ' Jesus said, ' I am he ' ; but as soon as he so spake the men staggered backward, as though an angel had smitten them, and fell flat upon the ground.¹ Whereat my heart leaped up with joy, for now, thought I, he will surely smite them with blasting. But, as hath been already written, he forbore, and even as I write I hearken diligently for the shout which shall tell me that he hath utterly consumed them that sent the soldiers. Seeing plainly that he desired to be apprehended, and not wishing to fail in one tittle of my promise to

¹ John xviii. 6.

them who were with me, I advanced and kissed him on the cheek. Whereon he spake, saying, 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?'¹ Truly my heart sank at that word, and I could utter nothing in reply.

And now it is done! I cannot turn back, even if I would, but must abide the consequences of my deed. Oh that I knew whereto this thing will tend!

As soon as the Apostles perceived that Jesus submitted to be bound they all forsook him and fled²; though Peter—and for this I honour him—would fain have fought for his Master, but he forbade him.³ When, therefore, the soldiers led Jesus away, I went not with them, but lingered behind and hid myself in the cottage of a friend, where now I wait and write, seeking the while to comfort my soul with the words of prophecy. Hath not Ezekiel said: 'O thou that dwellest in the land, the time is come, the day of trouble is near. Now will I shortly pour out my fury

¹ Luke xxii. 48.

² Mark xiv. 50.

³ Matt. xxvi. 52.

upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thy abominations. Behold the day, it is come ; thy doom is gone forth !' ¹

God grant that this may be the day whereof the prophet spake !

XLVIII

*On the slopes of Mount Olivet, near the Garden
of Gethsemane.*

(The same day.) Friday, April 7, A.D. 30.

WOE ! woe ! woe is me ! for I have rewarded evil for good ! I am undone ! I am accursed ! I am abhorred of God and man ! Blasting hath smitten me, and destruction is become my portion ! for I have wrought wickedly, and forgot to be thankful unto him that was my Teacher and my Friend. With deceit have I betrayed my Lord, and sold my King for filthy lucre. Nay, for the price of a slave have I delivered him over unto the might of his adversaries, unto them that desired his life to slay him. I have committed

¹ Ezek. vii. 7 and 10.

villany in Israel! and wrought horribly against the Prince of my people; so that there is no more any hope in me, and I am altogether vile in mine own eyes.

Truly am I fallen into mine own net, and my wicked devices have returned upon mine own head. I thought to compel Jesus to show forth his might, and destroy all them that fought against him: and lo! he hath bowed his head unto their stroke, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so hath he not opened his mouth.¹

Oh, blind and foolish that I have been! blind in the midst of light! foolish in presence of the divine Wisdom! Now are mine eyes opened, and I behold wondrous things out of the life of Jesus—things which Satan and mine own pride had hidden from me, so that I could not perceive them. For this Jesus is he of whom the Prophet did speak: the ‘despised and rejected of men,’ the ‘Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’ upon whom hath been laid ‘the chastisement of our peace,’ and with whose ‘stripes we are healed.’²—And I knew

¹ Isa. liii. 7.

² Isa. liii. 3, 5.

it not!—I dwelt with him; I served him; nay, I loved him: and yet I knew him not! In the blindness and narrowness of my heart I dreamed only of earthly kingdoms and temporal crowns: forgetting that God's throne is in the hearts of men, and that there only can His Kingdom be set up. I coveted gold for myself, and dominion for them that should come after me; and raged furiously in my heart against Jesus because he sought them not also for himself.

Did he not say unto us that all these things should come to pass? that he, the Son of Man, should be betrayed unto the Chief Priests to mock and to scourge and to crucify? And we would not believe the saying; but thought he spake unto us some strange new parable.

And now the traitor's curse hath already been spoken against me: 'Woe unto the man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born!' ¹

And that man am I! Accursed of Jesus! accursed of the disciples! accursed of the

¹ Matt. xxvi. 24.

Jews! accursed of all men! accursed for evermore! Would God my mother had strangled me at the birth, or that I had perished in the innocency of my youth! for henceforth I shall be a byword among all nations; even the Gentiles shall scorn my name; and whoso speaketh it shall spit out thereafter with loathing.

Oh that I knew where I might hide myself! I would go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth.¹ I would say to the mountains, 'Cover me!' and to the hills, 'Fall on me!'² But my transgression cannot be hid; my sin crieth unto Heaven, so that if I would say: 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me shall be night; even the darkness hideth not from God, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Him.'³

What, then, shall I do? whither must I flee? If I ascend up into Heaven, He is there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold He

¹ Isa. ii. 19.

² Hos. x. 8.

³ Ps. cxxxix. 11, 12.

is there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall His wrath find me, and His fiery indignation consume me !¹

Nay, though I should even escape from the hand of God, and hide me where His eye could not find ; yet am I chained fast unto myself, and conscience goeth ever with me, scourging me as with whips of scorpions. Already I feel within my soul the torments of hell, for where I am is hell ! Pains, worse than of death, have gat hold upon me ! Hell itself is moved from beneath to meet me,² and I go down alive into the pit,³ where I will ever seek out unto myself its deepest depths. For, verily, none so base has ever entered there, and even among the damned I shall be accounted vile !

Oh that I could pray ! Oh that I knew unto whom a prayer might reach ! I would cry aloud like a trumpet ; I would shed tears like a fountain of waters ; I would weary the air with petitions, and make the winds into my

¹ Ps. cxxxix. 8-10.

² Isa. xiv. 9.

³ Num. xvi. 33.

messengers, so that no breeze should blow which did not carry on its wings some cry for mercy !

But, alas ! there is none that will hearken ! There can be no forgiveness for iniquity like unto mine !

Nevertheless, if Jesus were here—he whom so wickedly I have betrayed—I would adventure myself even unto his feet and crave his pardon ; for he was ever gracious, tender-hearted and easy to be entreated. He could but spurn me from his presence, or curse me anew with bitter curses—but with none more bitter than they with which I curse myself.

Wherefore I will even cry aloud unto the Lord Jehovah—unto Him whom Christ hath taught me to call my Father—and will ask Him once again to forgive me—even me !—before I die. Peradventure He will hearken unto the voice of my crying, which goeth not out of feigned lips,¹ but from the depths of a despairing heart. For, verily, when I betrayed His Son I wist not what I did, nor who he was that I betrayed. But now that mine

¹ Ps. xvii. 1.

eyes are opened to understand the mystery of Christ's life, and to know the greatness of my sin, I abhor myself and am loathsome in mine own sight. Nevertheless, it is revealed unto me that through my iniquity all the ends of the earth shall be blessed ; for the day will surely come when Christ shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.¹

Notwithstanding this hope, which the Father permitteth to shine in upon my misery, I may no longer live among the sons of men. Like a second Cain, I am accursed from the earth, and whosoever findeth me shall slay me.² Nay, rather, will they not flee away from before my face, even as from a pestilence ? All things that touch me shall die. No flowers shall bloom when I am near ; the singing of birds shall cease at my approach, and the laughter of children be turned into terror.

Therefore will I die, and that before another sun shall rise to bless the earth ; for if he rise to-morrow and find me yet among the living, verily he will veil his face in anger and refuse to shine any more !

¹ Isa. liii. 11.

² Gen. iv. 14.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

The following brief paper was written for a class of young men at Barton-on-Irwell, Lancashire, and was the germ whence sprang the larger work, to which the author now appends it for the sake, mainly, of its reference to other theories of Judas's betrayal.

IN one of the most powerful scenes of Dante's immortal Trilogy,¹ the poet, when describing the Infernal Regions, exhibits Judas Iscariot in the lowest Hell, eternally quivering between the jaws of the Arch-fiend Lucifer, who, while gnawing his body with bloody teeth, still

... from his back oft tore the skin away

with vicious and terrible claws.

This sanguinary picture is an index of the intense loathing and abhorrence with which the traitor has ever been regarded, alike by Christians and non-Christians, wheresoever his story is known. Indeed, Judas is beyond

¹ *Inf.* Canto 34,

doubt the best-hated man who ever lived, and the 'Judas kiss' has everywhere become the synonym for all that is basest and most treacherous in human nature.

His character is one of the greatest enigmas that our many-sided humanity has ever produced, and many theories have been advanced in explanation of the man's extraordinary and unparalleled treason. It may, therefore, not be unprofitable to spend a short time in seeking for some light upon so remarkable a career.

My own view of Judas is that his original motive in joining Christ's band of disciples was personal ambition, and the hope of advancement to high rank and power. Like all Jews of that age—the Apostles not excepted—he believed that when Messiah came He would found a great earthly empire of unexampled splendour, which should embrace all the races of man, and perpetuate its dominion for ever and ever. The advent of Jesus and the rumour of His marvellous works soon reached the ears of the man of Kerioth, and brought him quickly to the side of the young Prophet, whose natural dignity

and divine power at once excited his highest hopes and enlisted him among that Prophet's followers. Possibly Judas had heard John preaching in the wilderness, which was not far from where he lived, and the strange announcement that 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand'¹ had scarcely ceased to ring in his ears when he heard Christ also use nearly the same words: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel'²—or good news; and He was quite ready to believe the good news when he heard it from the mouth of a Man gifted with such miraculous powers, and whose every word and act were those of 'One having authority.'

That Judas should fail to perceive the spirituality of Christ's claims, and think only of the temporal glory of His kingdom, is not to be wondered at; for James and John had at first no higher views, and even on the morning of our Lord's ascension we find the Apostles naively inquiring: 'Lord, wilt Thou at this time [even now] restore again the

¹ Matt. iii. 2.

² Mark i. 15.

kingdom to Israel ? ' ¹ But the fundamental or root-difference between Judas and the rest was that, whereas they were all devout Jews, longing to advance the cause of Jewish greatness and the Jewish religion—which they regarded as the cause of God—Judas thought only, or chiefly, of himself, and joined Christ as the quickest and surest method of advancing his own private and selfish interests. That there was anything criminal or in any degree evil in his motives at this period I do not for a moment imagine ; but, unfortunately for Judas, Christ's methods were but little calculated to advance such schemes of earthly ambition as those which floated before his mind.

The process of disenchantment which Judas suffered was necessarily only gradual, and it might afford both entertainment and profit to any one gifted with the needful imagination to follow the tragedy through its successive stages to the end.

In any such attempt it would be necessary to bear in mind that the first year of our

¹ Acts i. 6.

Lord's public ministry was accompanied by remarkable signs of success. Wheresoever He went the people followed Him in crowds; Pharisees, Scribes, priests and rulers were among His hearers; and had He then seen fit openly to assert His Messiahship, and to head an insurrection against the Roman power, there can be no doubt that the whole Jewish nation would have risen at His call as one man. But He never gave any encouragement to the popular feelings of patriotism, and carefully avoided everything that might excite the alarm or suspicion of the ruling powers. Whenever the crowds became too large or too demonstrative, He quietly slipped away from them and withdrew to remote or desert places, and in this way prevented any outbreaks which might interfere with His spiritual plans.

But these signs of general favour did not last long. The second year of Christ's ministry was marked by much priestly and pharisaic opposition—chiefly upon the question of Sabbath observance; and this soon grew so bitter that at last it became dangerous for Christ to show Himself in Judaea, and His

visits to Jerusalem were henceforth both rare and brief.

Of Judas's feelings during these years of wandering homelessness, of growing opposition, of poverty and of peril, we have but the very faintest trace in the Gospels. Whether he succeeded in hiding them from his fellow Apostles or not, we cannot say. We only know that on one occasion he openly protested against an act of humble love shown to his Master, charging Mary with wasting that which ought to have been given to the poor. Whether he ever ventured to oppose Christ Himself in any of His deeds of mercy and self-sacrifice is not stated; but we may well imagine him as one of the foremost in striving to silence poor Bartimeus, or to drive away the mothers who brought their darlings to Jesus for His blessing.

That our Lord Himself read the heart of Judas from the very first, there can be no doubt, and some may wonder how such a man ever came to be included among the inner circle of His disciples. Two explanations of the fact may be given, the first of which is

contained in Christ's last recorded prayer : ' that the Scripture might be fulfilled ' ¹ ; the Scripture referred to being in the 109th Psalm. The second reason is implied in those words of the Epistle to the Hebrews : ' He was in all points tempted [or tried] like as we are. ' ² There are few trials harder to bear than that of base ingratitude ; and here we see how Christ deliberately put Himself in a position to suffer this trial in its worst form, so that He might the better sympathize with all human souls smarting from a like temptation.

With what matchless patience Jesus bore this daily trial is shown by the fact that He never evinced the smallest feeling against Judas, but treated him in all respects like the other Apostles, and on the fatal night of betrayal even washed the traitor's feet with His own gentle hands. Still we can well imagine that it was with a sigh of relief that Jesus saw him leave the upper room on his hateful errand ; for it was not until Judas had departed that Christ's most tender words of

¹ John xvii. 12.

² Heb. iv. 15.

comfort and warning were spoken to His disciples.

That Judas should have continued a member of that chosen band right up to the tragic close of Christ's life is one of the most mysterious features about the man's entire career. Why had he not long since thrown up his discipleship in sheer disgust, and gone back to his home at Kerioth, wearied out by the disappointments, privations, and ill-success of such a life? On the ordinary supposition that he followed Christ out of pure avarice, he must have long since been convinced that wealth did not lie that way, for although food and shelter appear always to have been freely placed at the disposal of the Master, yet little hard coin indeed would ever find its way into that bag of which Judas was the custodian. I can only account for the mystery on the ground of Christ's own fascinating personality, which not even the selfish Judas could resist. Besides this, the young Rabbi continued to work such astounding miracles that Judas may well have thought He was only biding His time, waiting for a fitting

opportunity to strike such a blow as should destroy all opponents, and at once establish His everlasting Kingdom. The raising of Lazarus, for instance, which was one of Christ's most astonishing miracles, was wrought only a few months, five or six, before the crucifixion, and coming, as it did, during a period of apparent flight, when Christ was hiding from His enemies, a wonder like this would revive the fainting hopes of Judas and restore his faith in his Master's power to do whatever He might wish.

My own theory of the motive which impelled Judas to his last desperate act of betrayal is that he lost patience with Christ's apparently dilatory tactics, and hoped, by throwing Him into the hands of His bitterest enemies, to hasten the long-delayed and long-hoped-for crisis, and thereby compel Him to exert His superhuman might for the establishment of the promised kingdom. I can imagine that, among the shouting crowd which cast palm-branches and spread mantles before the coming Messiah on that first Palm-Sunday morning, there was none more sincerely tri-

umphant than the cold-hearted Judas. 'Now at last,' thought he, 'our Leader is beginning to show Himself in His true character. To-day He will be crowned King of the Jews; and to-morrow Pilate and all his hated legions will be driven into the sea, and I, Judas, shall be made ruler of a great province, and shall be rich and powerful. Nobles shall wait at my table, and kings shall be my servants!'

But, alas for the ambitious Judas! Christ merely 'looked round about upon all things in the temple, and went out unto Bethany with the twelve.'¹ Here was a miserable ending, thought Judas, to such a royal entry! A glorious opportunity missed, such as might never come again! The same thought was in the heart of Judas which Shakespeare, more than fifteen centuries later, put into those oft-quoted words:

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.²

¹ Mark xi. 11.

² *Julius Caesar*, Act iv. sc. 3.

The hopes of Judas were perhaps somewhat revived next morning, when Christ drove out the money-changers and dealers from the temple, and we may be sure he would be an eager helper in the cleansing. But, alas! Jesus spent the day in disputations, and then went quietly back to Bethany again; and Judas's hopes fell lower than ever.

I can well imagine him as cursing the folly or timidity which allowed such splendid chances to go unimproved, and casting about in his mind for some means of repairing his Master's unaccountable mistakes. Then there came to him the terrible idea of betraying that Master into the hands of His foes; for now, thought Judas, cowardice and indecision will no longer be possible, and Jesus will be compelled to exert His marvellous powers to establish His throne.

Accordingly, the very next day—or the day but one—after, we find Judas treating with the chief priests for the betrayal of Jesus into their hands, and how thoroughly he finished his work we know only too well.

There is another explanation of Judas's

conduct which has its advocates, and it is this. Some have supposed that, having completely lost faith in Christ's ability to found a great kingdom, he was filled with rage at what he now believed to be a vast imposture. Finding that his chances of the coveted wealth and greatness grew daily smaller, he determined at last to be revenged upon the Man who, by false promises of a kingdom, had led him to waste three precious years in tramping up and down the country, often without a shelter for his head or a meal to satisfy his hunger.

But I think better things than these of Judas, and believe that he hoped rather to help that Master than to ruin Him. How else can we account for his remorse when he saw Christ condemned to death, or his despairing cry, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood'?¹ These are not the words of a man who has just brought his plans of vengeance to a successful issue.

A third reason for Judas's treachery has

¹ Matt. xxvii. 4.

been suggested, and it is that he was prompted by fear of danger to himself, and by a desire to secure the safety of his own precious skin.¹ What enthusiasm he had once felt for Christ had long since evaporated, and he was therefore able now to watch the signs of the times with more dispassionate eyes than his co-Apostles ; and these signs all pointed to serious danger in the near future. Christ had Himself spoken of suffering and death, from which Judas naturally judged that He also foresaw a tragic ending to His career ; and it would at once occur to a selfish man to ask what would become of himself should Christ be put to death ? Was it not likely that all His followers would be involved in the same fatal doom ?

Here, then, is a motive, and a very natural one, for the conduct of Judas. By betraying Christ to the Jewish authorities he would secure their favour, and an assurance that, whether Christ put forth His divine power and destroyed His enemies, or whether those enemies pre-

¹ Vide *The Training of the Twelve*, by Dr. A. B. Bruce, chap. xxiii.

veiled and Christ were put to death, he, Judas, would be safe from all harm.

This motive is not sufficient by itself to explain the great betrayal; but it is quite likely that some such feeling mingled with those other stormy and selfish thoughts which wrought within the heart of this most detested of all traitors.

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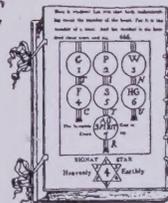
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