

THE KOLBRIN

SECOND VOLUME

THE GOSPEL OF THE KAILEDY

**PREVIOUSLY CALLED “THE BOOK OF THE
ILLUMINATORS HAVING THE AUTHORITY OF THE
NASORINES”**

Chapter 1

Strength and courage be yours, and greetings to my brothers in Doiva, the Koferils at Karimba. Know that I have been cast out with my brothers, but of the places wherein they shelter I have no knowledge. It is a time of heart-searching sorrow, for as the inspirational lights are snuffed out, a dark night of ignorance descends. They who oppose us are strong, not only in weaponry but more so in guile, and they have the support of the dark strangers. Hundreds of wonderful books, the lifework of diligent hands, have been used to heat the fleshpots, and there is a constant searching of all which does not accord with foreign beliefs.

Since there are many versions, though not all in conflict concerning matters we hold to be true, I have taken it upon myself to prepare this one for you from the writings saved in flight. Pitifully few are the books salvaged from the great

conflagration and brought out under our gowns - inadequate undergarments for cold bodies, but not comfortless companions.

Perhaps what I write here in my cold solitude will, in days to come, dance on the tongues of the multitude, gladdening the hearts of those who rest in greater comfort. Be on your guard, my brothers; talk well out of the mouth and eat of the wind, for uncomfortable abodes await those who place the tongue in command.

In order that the truth may be properly displayed, I have united in one narrative the diverse accounts brought to these shores by the Kaledy, in the days of battle glory, when the mantle of Herthew descended upon Inhawk Caradew. Led by wise Elyid, the Noble Commander, they were compatible companions of the brave Britons. I have faithfully copied the accounts of that John whom we call Numa, who knew our earthly father, touching on events of his times according to the books which have been written and left to us. Here is the Book of John the Enlightened of God and the Book of the Nasorines and the Illuminated Ones; but the Book of Indractus and the Book of Sayings by the wise Elyid are with our brother Lewid and his band in Branset.

These bring all who follow and fight for the cause of Truth a message, simple but sublime, meaning one thing only: Man can break free from the fetters of time, to spread wings of the spirit

and fly to eternity, borne upward by an inspirational strengthening outflowing from God.

No man lives and no man dies by himself alone; all must live by the efforts of others, and dying takes something from them. Therefore, when living it is well to give, for giving is not least among the obligations of life. When I lay down my burden, when I am worn out, there will be better men, young and strong, to carry the light of Truth on high. They will climb by the steps I have cut, mounting by the ladder I have made, never knowing the artisan's name. They will perhaps laugh at my clumsy workmanship, but I pray they will not despise it. If they do no more than utilize whatever good they find, then I have served well and go happily to my rest.

It is well to write these things; though, in truth, there is none to lend me an ear, but many who would ply my back with rods. Yet whatever is conveyed into the ears and comes out through the mouths of men, no matter how manifestly true it may be of itself, always tends to assume a form of less worthwhile substance, and it is subject to more misinterpretations and distortions than when it is transmitted through the inarticulate quill. What issues from the mouth is so often unlike that going into the ear, that surely between the two there must be a strange transmuter.

This is no easy burden laid upon me. The light of Truth guides men safely through the most troubled waters, but if that light be deflected or distorted, or if the fuel on which it feeds be impure, it may well become a wrecker's light, leading them to destruction. Light are the hearts attending the food tables, laughing and jesting round the meadhorns, but heavy the heart carrying much responsibility.

I am one who can overcome the distinctions between Jesus and Esures, reconciling the crystal virgin with mystic motherhood. I can place the clear moon-filled chalice beside the golden blood-filled cup. I can combine the star-girt Circles of Eternity with the lowly cross, and the defeated suffering son with the victorious battle-inspiring fighter. I am one who would welcome the day when the floodgates of our knowledge can be opened wide, so no man perishes through lack of refreshing water.

Who knows what our angered assailants with dark ways, harboring concealed mysteries, will spawn from the far ranging Circles? They trail like shackled slaves after the grudged offerings of those who seek only worldly power, disclaiming the knowledge held by their firm-standing brothers. Let us who are homeborn stand as one in all things, and not least in belief; for we are surrounded by dark-bearded men with strange ways. Swordless, we can only appeal for a heavenly power to become the smasher of swords.

In this woeful world, created from the three fountains springing from the Spiritland behind the wall of black mist, we can only play a part which accords with our abilities. The clerk cannot become a swordfighter, or the husbandman a judge - otherwise confusion would reign supreme. The brick has its proper place and cannot replace the lintel; neither can the hearthstone become a door.

So now I speak to you through the mercy of God, Who has brought me to a safe - though cold and desolate - haven. Yet is not its very discomfort compatible to my work? For overmuch comfort and ease are handmaidens of sloth. My preordained purpose is therefore to apply myself diligently to the task in hand, sustaining myself and my quill by the bodies of beasts. I send you therefore my blessing and the true message of God, Aweh and Dewi, the Spiritking and Father of All.

These are wholesome and beneficial writings, a river or words outflowing from the ever-living source of life. They are not unworthy of even the greatest king. He who receives them, safeguarding them from distortion and convenient misinterpretation, absorbing and practicing what they teach, shall not pass into the Circles of Darkness, but enjoy an everlasting upward striving life in the bright Circle of Light. Happy are they who, liberated from earthly life, awaken to a haven in the Circle of Glory.

May the knowledge of the Unseen God and the light of His Truth be with you always. Above all, be strong in the light. It is not sufficient to be a lightbearer, for the light is a fragile thing and needs iron-hearted protectors. Fine words serve well enough, but serve better when supported by strong and resolute arms.

Therefore, not only must you abide by the laws of God, ordained for the benefit of man, you must also keep sharp weapons for their defense. It is well enough to preach great principles to a quietly listening crowd, but the value of those principles are best tested before a hostile demonstration.

May the Strengthening Spirit fill your heart, and the Guiding Spirit turn you away from every form of evil - both protecting you from every assailant. May the Comforting Spirit have compassion on your weakness and tend your wounds when you are smitten by those knowledgeable in worldly wiles. May the doorways of your heart be ever open to admit the light of Truth and knowledge, that the inner chambers of your being be so enlightened you may there perceive your own soul in the fullness of its glory and power.

The differences between right and wrong, light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, are great indeed, but no man spans the gulf between and embraces both within himself. Yet men choose evil as well as good, and this because they find pleasure in it. The king lives in a palace - it is the place to which he

belongs; it is a compatible residence for him. The swine lives in a sty - it is the place to which it belongs; it is compatible, and therein, wallowing in muck, it finds pleasure. The king enjoys beauty; the swine enjoys filth. The king for the palace, the swine for the sty - each enjoys its own place.

There are, as you know, two Spiritplaces to which the souls of men are drawn, to which they have an affinity according to their earthly pleasure. If these are of the light, they go to the fount of light. But if their pleasures are of the darkness, surely they must be drawn towards the seat of darkness.

We who are of the light need not fear the spirits which project out from the light, but what of the dark spirits which are hostile towards the light? These are the unwelcome intruders into this, the Earth circle of life, bringing sickness and corruption to whatever they touch. If we attribute goodness to a source of good, must we not also attribute evil to a source of evil? If goodness intrudes into life, is it not obvious so does evil?

The spawners of evil are not united with the source of light; they have cut themselves off. For even as the tree grub protects itself from the sunlight which would otherwise destroy it, so must the evilswarm protect itself. My brothers, rejoice with me in the light. Love your neighbors, for is not love the greatest light of life?

My strength is not untested in the solitude. Sometimes I am overshadowed by gloom. I think of the ways of life and wonder: what is man? He appears suddenly out of the darkness, entering the light of a well-lit performing arena where, for a brief moment, the role is played. He flashes in an illuminated moment of eternity before vanishing back into the unknown. Briefly, he dances like a shadow cast by flickering candlelight, to merge back with the surrounding darkness when the candle burns no more. It seems presumptuous of mere men to set themselves up as interpreters of their state, so sometimes I ask myself: who really knows what man is and where he goes? Well may so many enquire: who has come back from that mysterious region outside the Circle of Illumination to tell what lies beyond the depths of darkness, to relate this experience and knowledge gained?

Then my heart rises above its conditions, and I see beyond the mean quarters, the privation and the squalor. I know such a return has been made, that the shadow can never lose its affinity with the substance of its creation. Doubt is an earthly condition, imposed on men for their own good, its benefits no less great for not being readily apparent. It seems that knowledge of what lies beyond the enveloping shadows must, by the very nature of things, be withheld from the multitude of men. Certainty and assurance are manifestly not part of this earthly state. It is also in the nature of man that he should too readily meddle in things having an untoward effect on his mission in life.

I mourn yet for our brother Lanvid, companion of my former days, the lightener of my task. Yet I grieve no more than duly, for his spirit has cast off the restrictions of the body and, taking upon itself a form of glory, flies on ghostly wings to the Circle of Radiance. He has left this dull world of heaviness and is now attired in garments of glory. He has departed to a haven free from the sordidness of earthly struggle. He has flown beyond our sight and hearing, yet he is not far distant, dwelling in the free world of compatible spirits.

Often, in my solitude, I say, "Would I were a barren tree, bearing neither blossom nor fruit; for the pangs of fertile generosity are harder to bear than the woes of barrenness." I am often perplexed in my heart, for in worldly matters I am not a knowledgeable man. Yet I cast away these untoward thoughts, for of truth life must be lived to its fullness and cannot be unless it is utilized to make a beneficial contribution to the lives of others.

Let us go forward together, for we are apart only in distance. Let us not be men of yesterday, whose eyes are fixed on the shadows of the past, nor men of tomorrow, preparing for events which never occur, while being unprepared for the unexpected. If we truly claim to have the light, then should we not be in the van and not the rear? Let us therefore go forward and take our rightful place.

Chapter 2

When Elyid, our father in the faith, came in full flight from afar, seeking refuge beyond the confines of his persecutors' dominion, he set his kolistone in Lanavalok. Here, when he spoke to them, the Druthin said, "We have never been without the light of Truth, yet you seek to bring another light, strange to us, which seems less bright than ours."

Then Elyid said, "Let us not argue as to whose light, lit at the fount of Truth, burns brightest; but let us put our two lights together, so they may jointly give more illumination and dispel more darkness."

The Druthin said, "The light of your teachings was always foreshadowed, and He of Whom you bring tidings is not unknown to us. The origin of Truth is immaterial, for it stands alone on its merits and should always be welcomed, being unlike men, who have to be supported by their lineage."

The lights were put together to become one, and we alone are its inheritors. Do others have the three guiding lights of life - Truth, Love and Justice - which all must strive to express in perfection? Or do they know the three things to be uncompromisingly combated - irresponsibility, hypocrisy and self-centeredness? Or the three cornerstones of character - spirituality, integrity and

individuality? My brothers, an awful darkness spreads over the land, and I fear for the safety of our light.

Since the ravens changed their feathers from white to black, love, though esteemed in many forms, is not what it used to be. The love of man and woman has become a thing for lewd jest or righteous disgust. In the days of freedom, love dwelt graciously in a house of beauty, erected by the highest aspirations of men. They paid manly homage outside her door, those granted entry displaying justifiable pride in their achievement. Now, men batter down the door while under the whiplash of lust, polluting the purity within and call it freedom.

Once love stood on a sunlit hilltop, clothed in modesty and decorum, but now the climb is too difficult for spiritually weakened bodies, so she is lured into the shadows below. There she has become a befouled, distorted ghost of her former self. Love and beauty are the reflections of God in the mirror of man; but the image once reflected in radiant loveliness is now distorted to ugliness. Perhaps we have failed, but we are so few!

Is it that love now lacks the nourishment of sincerity, without which it declines and dies? Maybe, since we no longer control our destinies at war, men are less ready to strive for the laurels of love, while women bestow the jewel of their bodies with wanton indifference to the needful sacrifices required to sustain it. A new, unhallowed love walks the land, unclean harlots and

those in whom purity becomes the shroud of love joining forces against the wonder once glorifying life. Love, for which noble-hearted men and pure women would once gladly die, now is so frail it withers at the first breath of adversity, or departs at the luring call of lust. Now true love can be found only where cats have horns. What has happened to the harp-praised glory of the past?

In the dark night descending, my heart is heavy with desolation and loneliness. My only consolation is that I can still follow the path of duty, knowing the bud of duty grows into the rose of sacrifice, which falls to bear fruits of the spirit. Duty is not the least of our lights, but in this land, among our people, it is the child of a barren woman.

My brothers, with this I send the book concerning Jesus Iduin - son of Joseph the carpenter and Mary - who, through His sacrifice to love and duty, became our own Esures. His teachings were brought to us by those who lived within the circle of His light and safeguarded by our earthly father in the faith, he being not least among the articulate ones who knew Jesus, and a person of no mean estate, both in the distant land from whence he came and in this no less virile land.

Jesus was a fountain of goodness, fed by the bountiful spirit of eternity - a pure stream of wisdom refreshing the longing spirits of men. He responded to their yearning desires as a bee is drawn

to the scent of roses. He came to fulfill the desires and longings of men, expressed in certain Holy Books but, more so, living unspoken in many unlettered hearts. For such is the nature of things that the tree springing from the yearnings of men shall not fail to bear fruit, Holy Books being likened to an egg containing the embryonic hopes and aspirations of men.

In the Holy Books of the Jews, it is said that the Son of Man is the Shepherd of Men; and we here know how a shepherd tends his flocks. But Jesus came, not as a shepherd to drive, but as one bearing a guiding lantern to light the way through darkness. It was also said, "The Son of Man is the Deliverer of Men"; and while we know truly from what we have to be delivered, those in His own land misunderstood the meaning.

Chapter 3

These are the things written in his book concerning John of the Wilderness, which was brought to these shores by Aristolas and is no longer with us. The father of John was Zukaris, son of Bakaris; and he was a priest at the Temple, married to Elizabeth from the stock of Aaron.

They were both strong in the faith of their God, obeying the laws revealed to His prophets, but childless and well advanced in years. Elizabeth had resorted to many shrines, praying for a child, but hitherto her pleas had gone unanswered.

In the fifth month of the year, when fire was burnt before Gabriel in the court within the outer walls of the Temple enclosure - called the Court of the Gentiles - Zukaris was a priest at the altar of incense. Then a strange thing happened while he was alone inside, the people being outside praying. A spirit messenger appeared on the right side of the altar, and a voice said, "Have no fear of me, for I come to say your prayers have not gone unheeded and your wife will bear a son.

"He will become a great teacher, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit; but you must bring him up in the ways of the Nasorines. He will herald the coming of an Enlightener who will turn men from wrongful ways, making them upright and strong in spirit."

Zukaris listened, too frightened to speak, but thought, “How can this be when we are both weighed down with years?”

The spirit messenger said, “He will save many from the effects of ignorance, leading men back to the fold of God, Whom he will serve with the spirit and power which was once Elijah’s. He will turn the hearts of fathers towards the welfare of their children, and those who have fallen away from the teachings of their fathers towards the wisdom of the law. He will go before the people like a brazier bearer before a caravan, like a prophet of old, to make ready a people purified and dedicated to the Most High God.”

When Elizabeth knew she was with child, she went to the Temple and gave thanks to the God Who had caused her to conceive, dedicating the child to Him, according to the custom. Thus it had been with Samuel, who was given back to his Father for service in the sanctuary.

Now when her time came, the wife of Zukaris gave birth to a son. And there was no midwife to bring him into the world, neither was a birthbell made for him. Though all others wished him to be called after the kindred of his father, Elizabeth said he should be called after hers, and he was named John.

At the time of circumcision, when many people were standing about, Zukaris became filled with the power of inflowing spirit and, under its influence, spoke as follows: "Blessed be the God of our people, Who has given them the means of their redemption. He has brought forth a spring of salvation for us, fulfilling the words spoken by the mouths of His inspired prophets which have been since the beginning, that we should be delivered from the hands of our enemies and saved from those who hate us.

"The child of my body shall go before the people, proclaiming the way of God and giving knowledge of salvation for His people, with the remission of their misdeeds through repentance and reparation. Like the sun source on high, he has descended to give light to those who sit in darkness. He will console them in the shadow of death and guide the feet of men into the ways of peace.

"As it is written in the books of the Temple, 'Hear the voices crying out of Levi and Juda, never turning away, for from their loins shall come the chastening rod of the Highest God. He will raise up from Levi a Priest above all other priests, and from Juda Someone greater than a king Who will deliver my people.'"

The people, hearing these and many other things, were amazed and stored them up in their hearts, saying one to the other, "This is no ordinary child, and surely he will grow up to be an unusual

man; therefore let us watch and wait for some interesting developments.”

Among those who heard was one with an unbridled tongue who spread the word of these things abroad. And between the ears and mouths of many people, the events became magnified in such a way as to cause concern in high places.

When the Herod who was king heard these things, he deliberated with the Council; for all awaited the coming of a Chosen One anointed by God, but the learned priests said this could not be He Whom they awaited. For, said they, it was not possible that one with his blood could be either the Chosen One or the Deliverer; such would be an abomination.

Then Herod said, “That may be, but let us bring the child into our own fold; for if perchance he be the Chosen One, it is well for him to be raised among us. But if it be otherwise, no harm is done. And in days such as these, it is well to be prudent.”

Now, word of these intentions was sped out by a maidservant, passing through the ears of slaves to the kindred of Elizabeth, who hastened to warn her. They said, “This is a day of woe, for men come from Herod to take away your child and offer him up as a sacrifice.”

So Elizabeth, in fear for her child, gathered him up, saying to a manservant, "Take all that can be carried and meet us at such a place," and then she went to Zukaris.

Elizabeth found him at his place in the Temple and said, "Come, my husband, let us flee quickly with the babe, for here he is in danger. Tarry for nothing; unless we make haste, our little one will be lost to us, he who is the treasure of our life and the hope of our people."

Zukaris said, "How can I leave my post in the Temple to go into a strange land where perchance people will have no knowledge of God?"

Then Elizabeth said, "O my husband, if you will not come, tell me what I must do to save my baby. I cannot waste time here when men come to put him to death."

He answered her, "Flee to the wilderness of Shaba where, by the will of God, you will both survive. If they come seeking to find him here, or expect to find him through me, then my blood will be shed instead of his; for it is blood they want."

Then Zukaris took the babe into a place beside the altar and kissed and blessed him, saying, "My son, treasure of my latter years, who gladdened my heart and made light the burden of days, now my cup of sorrow overflows. I am to be cut off from

the pleasure of holding you; no longer may I feel my heart leap with gladness when I see your face. You are too young for my words to reach your understanding, and it is not my hand which will guide your feet, but go out strong in your dedication to God." To Elizabeth he said, "May our God and the God of our fathers protect you."

Elizabeth said, "Dedicated priest and husband, pray for us both, that we may not be taken, and I shall be given strength to overcome the difficulties of the wilderness."

Zukaris said, "He who gave us a child in our old age will not take it away from you; neither will the child perish. May the protective power of God overshadow your journey."

Now the men sent out by Herod were of his guard, and when they came to Zukaris and asked concerning the child, he did not lie, but said, "His mother has taken him and fled in fear into the wilderness."

So they who had come returned to Herod and said, "The child has been taken into the wilderness by its mother. No food or water is there, but many wild beasts; and the woman, being old, surely both must perish."

Then those who had the ear of Herod said, "Surely there is something more to all this. Is it likely the woman would have

fled friendless? Let us send other men, not of the guard, who will act differently.”

So Herod, being troubled in his heart, agreed. And three men with knives came to Zukaris before sunrise, saying, “Herod has commanded us, ‘Tell Zukaris his life is in my hand, and I order him to speak truly concerning the whereabouts of his son.’”

Zukaris answered, “I am a dedicated servant of God and obliged to continually attend His Temple; therefore, my son’s whereabouts are not within my knowledge.”

They said, “Our knives will open your mouth.”

But Zukaris was unafraid and replied, “If my blood be shed, God Himself will bear witness to the deed, and innocent blood never cries out to Him in vain.”

When Zukaris saw he spoke in vain and no words would turn their intentions, he took refuge at the sanctuary behind the altar, his hands on the horns. But they stabbed him with knives so he died, for they were strangers in ignorance of the law.

When the morning hour of salutation came and the priests went out, it was seen that Zukaris failed to pay the accustomed homage, and they asked among themselves why he tarried. Then one went from them into the sanctuary of Zukaris and saw his body lying bloodied beside the altar.

A voice was heard saying, "Zukaris is dead and lies in his blood, but the stain shall not be removed until the coming of One Who will avenge the deed. Woe to those who shed innocent blood. Woe to those who let it remain unavenged. Woe, for One comes Who will destroy the Temple rites."

On hearing this, the priests ran out, crying, "Zukaris is dead, and an avenging spirit has taken up residence in his place." But the others went in and saw the cloths about the altar were torn and the carved woodwork broken. So report of these things was made to the people, who mourned three days and nights, after which another priest was appointed. The body of Zukaris was shrouded in linen and placed in a tomb beside his father.

Elizabeth was alone with the child. She was old and found life difficult to sustain in the wilderness, the manservant having departed with her goods. She discovered a cave where there was a seepage of water and lived there until John was eight years of age. Then she died, and the child did not understand; neither did he know what to do or how to bury her. But the ever-present God intervened in His manner, and some people who lived apart from others were directed to him, and he was raised in their ways. He remained with them until the day he went forth to herald the coming of the Deliverer.

The people among whom John was raised did not marry, but adopted outcasts and orphans while they were young. They were godly people in their own way, but did not concern themselves with others. John rebelled against their exclusiveness, desiring to carry tidings concerning the coming Instructor in Goodness to the common people.

In those days, there was much confusion among men regarding One Who Would Come, and He was given many names and attributes. Therefore, none really knew what He would be like, and many sought only for enlightenment on this matter.

Chapter 4

When John had grown to manhood, he reappeared in the wilderness of Bethimra, proclaiming, “Change your ways, for you have fallen into error and ignorance. Return to the teachings of the law, interpreting them without guile, and turn your eyes towards the new light of the coming day. For One comes Who will be the promised Instructor in Goodness, to establish the Government of God.”

Then the people said among themselves, “Surely this is he of whom it is written, ‘The voice of a herald will cry out from the wilderness, ‘Make a highway for God, let the swift rivers be bridged, the high mountains passed, and the rough places made smooth; for the impassable places will be crossed, and the wilderness made to flourish.’”

Some came to John from the place of his upbringing, who said, “Withdraw from the people, for they are no concern of yours. In good time, preach purification of the spirit and suppression of passion; but meanwhile you are too inexperienced.”

John said, “Worthy teachers, you dress in white, proclaiming your purity, yet fear to put this to the test. Is your flesh so weak that it must be kept continually under restraint? Is the imprisoned malefactor good by his own desire, or by his circumstances? Is not the world a place of temptation so each

may discover his own strength or weakness? Untested you can know neither and must always remain in a state of doubt.

“The fire hidden in wood gives warmth only when released. It also provides light and is useful. But while hidden away it is of little value. A tree left growing uncut falls and rots, serving no man. So too is it with knowledge and wisdom, for only when utilized can they have any value. Goodness is not assessed only by the things done, for the things left undone are not overlooked.”

John appeared strange in the eyes of those who saw him, for he was wild-haired and large, clothed in a garment of hair as were the prophets of old and bound about with a leather girdle, like Elijah. His food was locusts and bread dipped in wild honey, for he was of the Zofim who watched for the Coming of the Kingdom. He came to bear witness to the light which should shine in the hearts of all men. But the Jews would not heed him, for he used cleansing waters, which they did not. This, he said, signified the washing away of the causes of illusion and the impurities of life. He was a cleanser of minds and hearts.

There were mockers, but they were afraid to come near John. Yet many listened to the message and were cleansed in the River of Life, providing they were wholehearted in a desire to change their ways. John knew some were hypocrites, and he held them long under the water, for he said they required a lot of purifying.

Few men argued with John, though it is in the nature of Jews to argue.

This is how John testified when priests and learned men were sent to question him, saying, "Who are you?"

He said, "I am not the One you anticipate, Whose coming is at hand. Is it not written, 'I will send a forerunner to prepare the way'? I am that herald. Soon the One you seek will hasten to acquire His kingdom. He will be like a refining fire, preparing you for participation.

"I am one who verifies the prophets of old who said, 'Take heed, for the day comes which shall burn like a fire, when the self-satisfied and wrongdoers shall burn like stubble, so neither branch nor root of their wickedness shall be left.'"

Then some who enquired of John said, "If you are not the Expected One, why do you baptize?"

He replied, "I teach cleansing in water as a sign of repentance for the past and rebirth into another way of life. I herald the coming of Someone much greater Who is now born among you. He is One Whose sandal bands I am unworthy to unlace. I use water, but He will immerse men in spiritpower and cleanse them with disciplinary fire. He is the bearer of a winnowing fan and will

thoroughly cleanse the threshing floor, gathering the wheat into the granary and burning the useless chaff.”

Then one said, “No good thing ever came out of the wilderness.”

But John, overhearing him, said, “Recall the days of our forefathers, when the wandering in the wilderness was over, and they came to a land where there was an abundance of milk, butter and cheese, where the sheep grew fat and corn grew plentifully, where the vine flourished and all good things for the nurture and comfort of man were found. Then the people became weak in body, slothful, their minds turning to unclean things. They forsook the ways of God and had little respect for the teachings of the law. From which did they derive the most benefit - from the wilderness or from the land overflowing with good things? Pity me not for my days in the wilderness, but pity yourselves who have been denied man-making experiences.”

John said, “Woe to you who have taken to the keeping of many slaves, for you, having robbed the man with a small plot of ground of his livelihood, are worse than thieves. You roll your eyes upward, saying, ‘Never would I steal a loaf of bread,’ and condemn one who steals because of his emptiness. Your stomachs are full, but your hearts are empty of goodness. Take heed of my words, for surely if any man act so he bring another to wrongdoing; even though the other be in a far distant land, he shall not be blameless in the sight of God.

“Hypocrites, you cast a piece of silver at the feet of a beggar sitting beside the Temple and say, ‘I have done good,’ but how small the goodness compared with the wickedness done to those unseen! What of the disinherited ones, victims of your avarice? They have been driven from their homes and lie shivering in the coldness of the night, no roof protecting them from the night dampness. They huddle uncomfortably under rocks for shelter, aching stomachs denying them sleep. They rake the hard, hot ground with bony fingers and gnaw coarse roots with teeth loosened in their gums. Their mouths are dry, and sour and bitter unsatisfying leaves become an acceptable diet.

“When they crave for the relief of bread, driven desperate by mouthwatering smells carried on the air, and steal some small thing, they are harried by well-fed tyrants such as the slave owners among you. Take heed of this, for it is the law: If a hungry man steal because of the emptiness within his stomach, the crime is not with him, but with those whose hands hold the power.”

Those to whom John spoke said, “Tell us not of these things, for we have rulers. We give to the poor outside the Temple, but if we gave to the multitude of the poor, we would only be added to their number. Tell us about the Deliverer.”

John said, "From what do you expect the Deliverer to save you?"
They said, "It is written, 'He will deliver us from the hands of our enemies.'"

John said, "He will perform no mean task, but will save you from the greatest of enemies. Tell me, which presents the most danger - those who lay siege to a fortress from outside, or those within its gates, cunningly biding their time with concealed weapons? Surely it is the enemy within who is most to be feared. Therefore, I declare to you, the Deliverer comes not to fight against the enemy clamoring outside, for the silent unseen foe within is most to be feared."

Many shook their heads and said quietly, "This man is mad."

Then one among those who listened said, "If he tells of the ways of God, surely those ways are strange."

John, overhearing this, said, "The ant cannot understand the ways of an eagle, nor an eagle the ways of a man. How much less can man understand the ways of God!"

One standing close to John said, "If a man is ruled by two kings, which should he obey - the one who is close, or the one who is far distant?"

John said, "If I answered you straightly, would you follow my advice?" The man replied, "Surely, for I am perplexed and would hear your words."

John said, "Obey the rule of the king closest to you, he who reigns in your heart."

Now, John testified concerning Jesus in this manner. "These are the things written in the Holy Books about He Who will come. 'Then shall God raise up a new High Priest like no other before Him, and He will reveal God in a new light to the understanding of men. He will set the feet of men on the path of rightful judgment.

"He shall shine forth as the sun over the Earth, removing all darkness from it, and will arm men with the sword which brings everlasting peace. His star will shine above like that of a king, its light kindling the lamp of knowledge, enlightening men as the sun lightens the day.

"He will proclaim the kingdom wherein the sword will be drawn against the wrongdoers, and the injustices of the poor will be redressed. There shall arise a Chosen One from among you Who will deliver you from your enemies.'"

John also said, "Already the ax is laid at the root of the vines; for was it not prophesied that every tree bearing sour fruit will be

hewn down and burned? Therefore, do not be fuel for the fire, but produce the good fruits of repentance wherein lie the seeds of your salvation. The day is not far distant when each shall be called to an accounting, some enjoying the fruits of their labor and rising into glory, while others go down into darkness and shame.”

There was a time when many Temple worshippers came to gain rebirth through the cleansing waters, and John said to some self-righteous ones among them, “Children of the viper’s brood, what has caused you to seek escape from the fate in store for you? Produce deeds consistent with repentance and console yourselves no longer by saying, ‘We are of the seed of Abraham.’ I say, being of the seed of Abraham serves you no better than being one of those stones.”

When the people said, “Tell us what we should do,” John replied, “No man wears two coats, so let the man who has two share with the man who has none. Whoever has a store of food beyond his needs, let him do likewise.”

A tax gatherer asked him, “What shall I do?”

John answered, “Exact nothing above the amount fixed for collection, and never exploit the defenseless and unlearned.”

Some soldiers asked him what they should do. John said, "Never be unnecessarily cruel or threaten to bring false charges, and make sure you always live within your earnings as soldiers."

Then a captain said, "What shall I do, who must enforce commands?"

John replied, "Make sure the commands are just, and do not extend beyond the need of the circumstances."

A man of priestly rank said to John, "Why do you not offer incense and sacrifice?"

John answered, "Such things are not fitting for the Most High God, Who is already full with all things and lacks nothing. Therefore, honor Him by giving thanks for His benefits, and let your only sacrifice be dedication to His service."

A priest among the crowd said to John, "Do you say the God of our fathers is not a Great God?"

John replied, "You know His requirements and whether these be worthy of a great or small God."

Then some cried out, "Pity him, for he is only a waif of the wilderness, having neither father nor mother."

John answered, "Have I not said, 'Pity me not, for the wilderness was a goodly father, making me strong and hardy'? Can I not outrun the gazelle and lift a great stone? No sickness eats my body, and I can bite through a halter line.

"What of these people fattened at the tables of their fathers, like geese prepared for the banquet? They say, 'We are the light of the land,' but I tell you, they are an unprofitable burden. They say, 'Give us white water to quench the fire in our stomachs,' when every day they kindle the fire anew through their mouths. For things that pass pleasantly through the mouth often stir up strife in the belly."

John was the light of the Light, the herald of the Deliverer, coming to purge the world of wrongdoing by enlightening men, showing what was right and what was wrong. For though men had the light of the law, many saw it only dimly or with distortion, while many interpreted the law to make it accord with their convenience. The true Deliverer was One Who would deliver men from themselves, exposing their weaknesses, failings and hypocrisies only that they might benefit, the purpose and intent being wholly good.

Glory to the Supreme God reigning in the sphere above all. May peace and plenty fill the Earth and goodwill extend to all creation. May suffering, turmoil and disaster quickly serve their

purpose through the cooperation and understanding of man, so they may pass away as things no longer necessary for his upbringing. Blessed be those who preserve these words, and may those who alter them suffer for what they do.

Chapter 5

The world is glorified through men whose lives are governed by dedication and duty, who completely devote themselves to carrying out the purpose ordained by God, using earthly conditions to this end. The desires and longings of the heart - the hopes and aspirations of men - will never go unfulfilled or be ignored by God while men are willing to rise to greatness through selfless sacrifices and devotion to duty. The highest duty to which anyone can be called is service and suffering in the cause of God.

The birth of Jesus the Nasorine, Who became our Master and Interpreter of God and the law, a Worthy Vessel for the greatest manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit seen on Earth, occurred in this manner.

About the time John the Forerunner commenced teaching the Way of the Wilderness beside Jordan, in the year before Herod died, when Augustus Caesar ruled the Roman world, a babe was born. The father was Joseph, son of Heli, a carpenter of Galilee, and the mother Mary, his wife, who had been a virgin pledged to God and the Temple by her father Simon, son of Yorkim, son of Nathan, son of Elazer.

A decree had gone out that all who claimed kinship within the House of David should be gathered for enrollment at the City of

David, called Bethlehem in Galilee. Therefore Joseph, being rightfully born into the stock of David, took the scroll of his parentage and went to Bethlehem so his kinship could be established.

Now Mary, being then heavy with child, longed in her heart to be among her kinfolk, and she prevailed upon Joseph to take her, for Bethlehem was only a day's journey from them. The two, with a servant, came to Bethlehem at eventide, but because so many had gathered, the inns were filled. Then as Mary's time was close upon her after the journey, a man took pity on her and provided a cave used as a stable. There the travelers found shelter and rest.

That night, Mary's labors came upon her, and she suffered the pangs of childbirth and cried out in pain. Nearby, some shepherds were tending sheep, for in the midst of so many strangers these needed protection, and, hearing her cry, went to help. They provided a shepherd's basket which was filled with straw and placed it in the manger, and the Newborn Babe was wrapped in the clothes brought for Him.

After eight days had elapsed, the Child was named Joshua, meaning "One Who Delivers," for a spirit messenger of God had appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "That which lies within Mary, your wife, is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and will respond to the hopes of men."

Later, men called Him Jesus; and because He fulfilled their hopes and was anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit, He became acknowledged as the Christ.

Now, the stable was against a hill, behind an inn where sages from the East were staying - men of Sastera, wise in the Books of Heaven, and of Nimrod, who carried the cross of fire. So Joseph sent for them, requesting they come and foretell the child's future, for such was the custom.

One of the sages said, "It is strange indeed, for this Child is born under no usual star, but under one that is a star in appearance only and not in nature, having a power not in other stars. He is destined for greatness and will motivate events touching the lives of all men."

When word of this was passed around, there was much excitement among those belonging to the House of David. And many, remembering the prophecies of John (for they had passed his way), wondered in their hearts, "Is this not He for Whom we wait, the Consolation of the Jews and Deliverer of Men?" This displeased the people of Bethlehem who awaited another deliverer.

When the sages spoke of the matter at their journey's end in Jerusalem and word came of the excitement among those of the House of David in Bethlehem, there was great consternation

among the priests and learned men. They tried to discover where the Babe was, but the sages answered deviously and also said, "His star points towards the East."

An elder of the House of David, attending the blessing of the Child on the eighth day, lifted up his voice and declared, "Surely This is He Who has been promised to redeem us out of the hands of evil. This is He upon Whom the power of the Holy Spirit will descend, bestowing strength, compassion and wisdom. Surely He will rule in the Kingdom of God."

When the king heard about these things and that a Babe had been born Who, many claimed, was destined to be the Deliverer, he was greatly disturbed and summoned the Council. With the Council were learned scribes and elders who disputed among themselves concerning the Babe.

Some said that while God's Anointed would be born in Bethlehem, the Deliverer would not, for the birth of God's Anointed in that place had been foretold by the prophets. Others said it might not be more than an Enlightener who was expected to be born at that time. However, when many agreed that God's Anointed and the Deliverer might be the same person, the king sent three men to discover the Child.

The dispute before the Council had been long, and Joseph had been forewarned, so when the men sent by Herod came to

Bethlehem, Joseph had departed with his family. They went to the place where the kinfolk of Mary lived. The men who came did not search long for Jesus, for after the Council had been dismissed, Herod slew the son who sat with him on the throne, as he had slain others of his blood. Later, Herod died himself; but after these happenings, the Romans did not bestow the title of king on any Jew, and it was unlawful for any man to claim the title.

In this manner the prophecy was fulfilled which said, “A young woman shall give birth to a Son, naming Him ‘Our Support in God.’ He will be the Bearer of Knowledge, discriminating between good and evil. But before this is given to the people, the land will lose its kings.”

When time had passed, Joseph and Mary came to Jerusalem and stayed at the house of a relative - a man strongly set against wrongdoing and well learned in the law. The forty days having been accomplished for the purification of Mary, she came to the Temple, and Joseph offered the prescribed sacrifice and dedicated the Child.

Hearing from Joseph and Mary the things which the sages had foretold about the Child Jesus, the devout man took the Babe into his arms and praised God in this manner: “Because the things foretold have come about, your servant is prepared to depart in peace. For my eyes have been gladdened by the

Deliverer of my people, a Beacon Light for others and the Glorifier of Your Name. He will teach all men the ways of God and how to walk in His paths; so swords shall be made into plowshares and spears into billhooks, and peace will reign over men.”

Joseph and Mary could not understand the meaning of this and asked what was meant, whereupon the man replied, “I hold a Sapling Which will grow into a Sturdy Tree, under the shade of Which many nations will find peace. Yet He will also test the strength of our people, tearing them apart in dispute. He comes as a Separator, dividing the sheep from the goats, showing each his rightful place. He will place a sword in the hands of the weak and strengthen them, and the ungodly will be smitten.”

After complying with the requirements of the priestly law, Joseph and Mary returned with the Infant to their home in Galilee, a small place in a hollow at the foot of a hillside. There the Child grew up, developing a strong body and keen mind, for He was strangely talented. He was wise beyond His years and deft with His hands, and when old enough, He began learning the craft of plow-making.

His parents, following the custom, went each year to Jerusalem for the Festival of Deliverance. And when Jesus was twelve, they went as usual, but this time taking Him with them. Having remained the seven days of the Festival, Joseph and Mary set off

to return home, but let the Boy linger in Jerusalem; for a kinsman of theirs was also returning, and they thought Jesus was in his company.

Having gone a day's journey and finding Jesus was not with His kinsman, they became perturbed and at first light in the morning returned to Jerusalem. It was some time before they found Jesus in a small outside room of the Temple, sitting before an instructor of the priestly law. His parents were astonished at finding Him accepted among learned men, and the teacher expressed amazement at the Child's love of learning.

But Mary scolded the Boy for His inconsideration, saying, "We have suffered much during the search for You."

Jesus replied, "Why search for Me elsewhere, knowing I must concern Myself with the work of the Spiritfather?"

This saying disturbed the instructor. Neither could His parents understand the meaning of the reply, but they took the Boy away with them. Henceforth He always obeyed His parents, but Mary kept these things in the storehouse of her heart. As Jesus grew up, His intelligence increased, and He was well liked by all, but He was a solitary Child much given to wandering.

Chapter 6

Joseph died when Jesus was a youth, at that time working as a craftsman among the Kenites.

After Jesus had been away a long time, He returned to the house of His brothers. One day, while He worked under the shade of a tree, they came to Him and said, “Out in the wilderness by Jordan there is a man who cleanses people by immersion in water. He claims strange knowledge and calls himself the Forerunner. We are going to see what he teaches.”

Jesus said, “I have heard of these things, and surely as the son of our forefather Jesse prayed to be cleansed of his secret faults and presumptions, the sons of our Father should not stand aloof from cleansing. I will go with you.”

The brothers of Jesus said, “This man is called John. He heralds the coming of an Enlightener Who will be an all-wise Instructor in Goodness. He himself does not bear this new light which will dispel the darkness in men’s minds. He tells of One Who will grant men the privilege of becoming Children of God, awakening to eternal life that part within them not born of earthly desires.”

So Jesus and His brothers went out seeking John, finding him beside the Jordan, at the place of crossing where there was a pool. The hairs on the head of John were already white.

John, seeing Jesus among those gathered about him, said, "Look, all of you; here He is, a Man in whom there is no guile, the true Lamb of God, the One we await. For Sethel, sending me forth to baptize, instructed me thus: 'When you discover a Man worthy to be the Receptacle of the Holy Spirit in abundance, the Same shall you acknowledge as the Enlightener.'"

Hearing these words, Jesus joined with those to be cleansed. But when He stood before the Forerunner in the water, John said, "You have greater powers of cleansing than I, yet You come to me."

Jesus replied, "The power to cleanse and revitalize with the Spirit is not in men but in the Spirit which fills man. It is important each should be allowed to do whatever he is called upon to do."

Jesus asked of John, "What do you know about Me?"

John said, "Years gone by I had a vision of three Heaven lights, and as the sun sank so they rose. A flame of fire went up over Jerusalem, and smoke filled the Temple, and a Star fell down into Juda. The meaning I know, for it was this: The Deliverer is born, and woe unto the house of Herod; woe to you scribes and your interpretations of the law.

“The Star that appeared and stood over Jerusalem was a Child planted into Bethlehem from out of the heavenly heights, as was foretold; and it was prophesied He would be the Deliverer. The fire that burned was the fire of a strange altar.

“I prophesy great things for You. You are destined to become a true Son of God. Soon You will see the glory of Heaven revealed, and the power of the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon You as a stream of pure water. The time has come to proclaim Yourself. Peace, peace on You Whom our God has chosen as His Messenger, for You will proclaim the true gospel.

“Strengthen Your heart, for the road ahead is steep and stony. No man is hated so much as one who tries to point out defects in character and attitudes and seeks to guide men along the path of right and beneficial living.”

Then John took Jesus down to the river and baptized Him, and He was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and became fully filled with its power, so His face glowed. And the people wondered and were bewildered, for they did not understand. Yet the face of their forefather Moses had also glowed after he had been in the presence of the Holy Spirit of God.

John said, “Go and wait upon the mountainside nearby.”

Later, John went to join Jesus and told Him that He was the Anointed One but should not yet make this known to the people.

Then John prayed thus: “We give thanks, Most High God, with souls purified through realization of our misdeeds, and spirits reaching upward to commune with You. It is by Your power alone we have seen the light of Truth manifested and come to know the secret of Your Hidden Name. In humility we call You by the name of Father because You have shown us a father’s compassion and kindness, and because we know You chastise and discipline us after the manner of a father. You have granted us freedom of activity, that we may enjoy the blessings of life. We have been saved by the waters of Your affection. We approach You as the only Good and Great Being, asking only that we be united with You in the waters of the Spirit and never become separated from the source of life.”

This is how John testified concerning these events: “On that day the Spirit outflowing from God came with a great surge of power. I did not know this Man from others, but seeing Him I recalled what I had been told by those who gave me power to cleanse with water. They had said, ‘When you find Someone so filled with the power of the Holy Spirit He can hardly contain it, you will know Him for One who will baptize with the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit.’ I have experienced this power and testify that this Man is a True Son of God, the Enlightener and a Deliverer.”

John left Jesus on the mountainside, where He stayed three days fasting and communicating with the Powers Above. Then He went back to the riverside. John was standing with two of his disciples, Jesus sitting apart, and John said to those with him, "There is the One giving Himself as an offering of God, the Enlightener of the world and the Deliverer of our people."

Then the two disciples went to Jesus and said, "Tell us about Your teachings. Shall we follow Your way or that of John?"

Jesus said, "There is the Way of the Wilderness and there is My Way, alike in teaching, but calling to different men. What John teaches accords with the law even as My teaching; obey either or both, they are the law."

From that day forth, Jesus had power to heal the sick and to do many things, but He went out into the wilderness bordering Jordan, uncertain about His next move. While there, hungry and thirsty, He fought with Himself, resisting the temptation to go down among the habitations of men and use His powers for selfish ends. The same Spirit of God which overshadowed Jesus overshadowed the creation. It enlightens outer darkness and bestows life and is eternal.

John was one of those who can see the spirits of men, and so he knew the nature of Jesus. These things took place at Batharaba, which means the place of crossing.

Chapter 7

Coming from the wilderness, Jesus still retained the full power of the Holy Spirit. Having it on trusteeship from God, He would not use it unworthily. At night it shone around Him like a pale blue haze; and though many have it, never has another manifested it in such strength.

Two followers of John the Forerunner - one being Andrew the brother of Simon - were sent by him to be with Jesus and accompanied Him to the Galilean Sea of the Gentiles. Early in the morning Andrew sought out his brother and said, "We have found the Deliverer," but at the time Simon thought another was meant.

When Jesus had known Simon for two days, He said, "You are strong, silent and steady, one likely to be ever steadfast in conflict; therefore you shall be called Peter," this meaning "the Rock" in the tongue of the Gentiles. And from that day Simon became a follower of Jesus.

Passing along the shore, they came upon the Tower of Fishermen, and a boat was being unloaded by its owners. One who accompanied Jesus said, "Those are good men known to me."

Then Jesus spoke to them while sharing a meal and later said, "Fishing is a good life, but there is a better one. Follow Me and

you will become fishers of men.” So, placing their boat in the keeping of others, they followed Jesus.

At this time, Jesus spoke with caution, for the people still recalled Judas the Galilean who had smitten the Romans in battle. Jesus was a Man of long silences, and many thought Him strange. But He taught all along the shore of the Galilean Sea and called others to follow Him. They worked wherever they could, for Jesus said, “What we offer is not to be sold like a common chattel, and we will not take anything without giving value in return.”

He healed many, saying, “It is not I but the Power from Above with Me.”

Some of the disciples said, “It is truly He Who heals.”

But He did not cure all, for in some it created a disturbance, while many were not cured because this would have done them more harm than good.

When asked, “How do You heal?” Jesus replied, “By the finger of God.” This is what the prophets had said regarding these things: “These are the words of God: ‘I will restore you to health and heal your wounds. Be strong of heart and courageous, neither afraid nor dismayed, for I am with you always.’”

About this time, the disciples questioned Jesus concerning the World of Spirits wherein lay the Kingdom of Heaven, and He said, "It is like a flight of stairs leading from cellar to roof. They who enter the house are given a place on the stairs and may step downwards and back, but never up, though the stair above is not unknown to them. Those on the top stair are in glorious sunshine, while those at the bottom are in darkness and gloom."

A disciple said, "Many who do not come mock Your words." Jesus replied, "Dogs bite stones, not those who throw them."

Someone asked, "Are You the Hammer of God? For all yearn for God's intervention and when that comes will rejoice, saying, 'This is the day of the One God for which we have long waited.'"

Jesus answered, "There is a time for sowing and a time for reaping, everything to its appointed time."

Jesus gathered His followers around Him and taught as follows: "These days are a night of ignorance when all is dark, but I am the Light which will dispel the darkness. My Light will light your lamps, and you too will become bearers of the Light. I am the Light to point the way, and none can find the way to God except by the Light.

"I come to testify concerning the Father, for those following My way see God in the Light of the Father. Does not a father chastise

in love and punish with affection? Does he not give you tasks only just within your power of accomplishment? Even as with an earthly father, so with the Heavenly Father, Who is infinitely greater. Being flesh, we understand earthly ways, but the ways of God may also be known and understood, for His Spirit resides in all men.

“Be upright in faith yourselves, and teach uprightness and Truth. Fear no man, especially the rich and powerful, for they live in servitude to their possessions and position. You must carry the Light to many, but few will be those who light the lamp of their lives from it.

“Do not covet riches, for though few men possess them, all who do are not free but are themselves possessed by their wealth. Because riches are the possession of a few, all seek them. Even so are my words; were they possessed by all, none would value them.”

One said to Jesus, “Sire, we are not all like John who could surely eat bread made with sand. Is there no easy way?”

Jesus said, “The only easy paths in life lead nowhere, or are cut by others. But the path I point can be cut by none but yourselves.

“A peddler going from place to place is willing to undergo the hardships incurred through his wandering, in order to earn his livelihood. Even so should you be prepared to cheerfully accept the hardships imposed by life, in order to gain glory in the life which follows.

“If a child is not raised with austerity, can it enjoy the pleasures of later life? Only the foolish parent overindulges the child, and if it is done in the name of affection, the parent is either a hypocrite or irresponsible.”

Now, close by there was a well, and the disciples were drawing water for drinking. Jesus called them over and said, “Do you find the water refreshing?” They replied, “Yes, we have drunk our fill and are refreshed.”

Jesus said, “Does any water remain in the well?” They replied, “Sire, this well is inexhaustible and cannot be drunk dry by any number of men.”

Then Jesus said, “It is even so with my teachings. What I have revealed so far is but a small portion of the whole, yet it suffices for the present needs. The people among whom we go are perverse and headstrong and, like a thirsting ass, can be given only sufficient to ease their pressing need. If they say to you, ‘This is beyond our understanding’ or ‘You have told us only in

part,' recall this well and the refreshing water you obtained from it."

One of the disciples asked, "How shall we judge what people do, whether it be good or whether it be bad?"

Jesus said, "If you are unsure whether a person's actions be good or bad, incline in his favor. If anything may be interpreted favorably or otherwise, then interpret favorably.

"Do not seek for wrongdoing, like dogs chasing a foul smell. If a good man does something appearing to be bad, then withhold judgment, wondering whether there be some good motive behind it. Yet do not be easily hoodwinked. If one with a bad reputation does something seemingly good, question his motives, but bear in mind that no man is either wholly good or wholly evil."

Jesus said, "Fortify yourselves with the knowledge of Truth as I have imparted it to you. Rejoice in the knowledge that you stand within its everlasting light."

The disciples said, "Sire, we are grateful for what You give us. We know each of us is a part of the Everlasting Spirit. We have truly found Truth and see it more clearly than others. We are children of the Light and of the Spirit, even as we are children of the Father. None of us can ever repay You, for we have been

given treasure beyond riches. Only the Heavenly Father can provide proper recompense for Your labors among men.”

At this time, Jesus was teaching His disciples at a place apart, for He was still wary of the people, but He and the disciples went among them to earn their bread.

Jesus healed many, but to His disciples He said, “I have not come to strengthen the bodies of men but their spirits. For if man is wholesome in spirit, he is wholesome in body. It is better to treat the man than the malady.”

One day, a disciple returning from his labor said to Jesus, “Sire, we work all day and scarcely sleep at night, yet when we tell of Your teachings we are abused and mocked by the people. Where is the benefit in this? Should we not be treated otherwise?”

Jesus said, “When I was a Boy, the poor would gather about My mother’s door, for she always had an extra loaf in the oven for them. One day, a beggar, having been fed often and now perhaps considering it his entitlement, found fit to scold her, for this day she was not well, and therefore slow. She, not being used to this, began to weep.

“So I say unto you, do not let the talk of thoughtless tongue perturb you, for this is only a foretaste of what is to come. These

things are refining processes of the Spirit, therefore rejoice for the benefit rather than sorrow for the hurt.

“For when my mother cried, I said to her, ‘Dry your eyes and be happy, for now you can perform your charitable acts to perfection. Had those who stood about the door praised you, the deed would have been less worthy, having been done for their praise and therefore not entirely out of charity. Many do good works because it increases their self-esteem, but charity is not giving the bone to a hungry dog, but giving the meat when hungry yourself.’”

Andrew said to Jesus, “If we give all we have to the poor, they will grow fat and slothful, preferring a life of beggary to one of toil.”

Jesus said, “Charity is giving a hand to a blind man, or soothing the wounds of those smitten by the spirit-strengthening sword of life. It is good to help those in distress or those who cannot help themselves, but sometimes giving does more harm than good. Many give because it eases their conscience or raises their self-esteem. Such giving is not goodness. But when giving entails self-sacrifice, then it is better to give than to receive, for the benefit lies in the sacrifice made and not in the thing bestowed.

“A rich man was going away, so he gave a purse of silver to each of his two servants so they could keep themselves while he was

away. One servant spent the money on merchandise which he hawked around the city and, by being thrifty, was able to recover the silver with sufficient over to buy a stall and then a shop. When the master returned, he said to this man, 'Such efforts should not go unrewarded,' and made him a gift of the silver.

"The other servant, having the purse of silver, began to spend it on pleasure and a life of ease, so when the master returned, there was nothing left. This angered the master after seeing how hard the other had toiled, so he demanded repayment of the silver and, when this could not be done, enslaved the man.

"The improvident servant was unable to understand why the other has been given a gift and freedom, while he was enslaved for being unable to repay - why he who had money was given more. Yet I say to you, this is the way of the Father Who gives trusteeship of Earth's bounty to His children. Likewise, they are given talents of spiritual gold which are greater than any earthly silver, but these many choose to bury in the ground. For them the day of accounting must surely come."

Jesus tarried long beside the waters, moving from place to place and teaching His disciples according to their understanding. Some were like strong, well-plastered cisterns holding water without leaking a drop; others could not retain all that was poured into them. Jesus taught each only in accordance with his

capacity, and some carried much more of His teachings than others.

One day, at eventide, Jesus said, “Because you are wearied and your task seems endless, do not despair. What you do may be likened to a man down by the shore whose master has set him the task of carrying water from the sea to fill a hole in the sand. The sea flows no less, neither does the land become flooded. When the master comes, the man says to him, ‘This is a fruitless task to which I can see no end,’ and the master replies, ‘It is one which grows easier with time, and each day you are paid.’

“Two men, finding favor in the eyes of a king, were promised high positions in a distant city, but had to find their own way. They set off together and stayed the first night at an inn where there were many attractions. One man spent the night in drinking and merriment; the other, finding an experienced traveler who knew the road, kept the night in his company. This second man learned that by going a particular way he would avoid a thick forest full of wild beasts; a turning would lead him away from a swamp, and others from a precipice and thorny thickets. He went to bed and awoke early, feeling refreshed, and went his way. The other man, being heavy-headed and sluggish, started late in the day.

“The early starter, heeding all he had been told, came quickly to the city and enjoyed his rewards. The other became lost in the

forest and was wounded by wild beasts. He wandered through swamps and fell down the precipice to die of weariness among the thickets. Now, the thick forest is ignorance, the swamps are delusions, the precipice the carnal desires which lure men to spiritual disaster, and the thorny tickets tribulation and suffering, without which development is impossible. The experienced traveler is a disciple of the Light, and the man who reaches the city one who listens to him.”

The disciples said, “Sire, many people hear our words, but how many take them to heart and benefit? We are trying to bail out the sea with a shell.”

Jesus said, “Then you are learning patience and persistence in a good school. If a cloak is placed around a shivering man, his body becomes warm and is comforted, but if it is placed around a boulder, there is neither effect nor response.

“Though I have told you the days fly as though carried on the wings of swallows, do not act as though the day’s labor is all important and must be completed within the day. Doing this you become less able to perform the task, for he who tries to reach out over the edge of his limitations falls into a pit and achieves nothing.”

James, the disciple, said, “If a man of unlimited wealth says, ‘Come and count silver pieces from sunrise to sunrise, and all

the pieces counted will be yours,' could the man counting be expected to sleep during the night?"

Jesus replied, "A man having much wealth is unlikely to do anything without purpose, and this would be in the counting. Could you count silver pieces from sunrise to sunrise and not make an error?"

Jesus said, "Let none among you take the handgrips of My plow unless he is prepared to grasp them firmly and cut a deep furrow. Let none of you walk behind it unless prepared for weariness and sweat. There is no easy way for the plowman. The field is there, and he must cultivate it furrow by furrow. If he is slovenly, the grain yield will be poor.

"Water drawn from the ground or falling from the sky will produce burning weeds and grass, but to produce bread to eat and wine to drink, water from the brows of men must be added. Yet labor is not without its own reward, for the man who labors all day sleeps contentedly even though his pillow be a stone, while the sluggard sleeps without content even though he lie on a pillow of down."

Chapter 8

Leaving the Sea of Galilee behind them, Jesus took the disciples up into the mountains, and others went also. Here there was a house providing warmth and shelter, so they tarried awhile, it being the time of preparation for sowing.

One cold night, Jesus went out from the room where they sat at food to relieve a man guarding the asses, so he might come in and warm himself. Later, when the man returned to his charges, he found Jesus shivering, for He had placed His cloak around a foal.

The man said, "Sire, why do You do this? But seeing You have done it, why does not our Father provide a mantle for His Son?"

Jesus said, "The little one is helpless in our hands, but we are not helpless in the Father's hand. The foal has no choice but to remain in the stall, while I can choose to go or stay, to keep My covering or give it to another. If God voided the effects of our good deeds, what merit would they have?"

The man said, "I will pray God to make me good even as You."
Jesus said, "Pray that your deeds merit the reward of goodness."

Another night, a journeyman came seeking shelter and warmth and was given hospitality. He said to those who made him welcome, "You are fortunate indeed to live here in warmth and comfort, while I must ride the inhospitable roads for my master."

The following morning, having been well provided with sustenance for the road, he said to Jesus ere he departed, "Sire, I listened well to Your words last night. Since I am a poor man, suffering many hardships, and my life is difficult, am I then assured of better conditions in the life to come?"

Jesus said, "By what standards do you think these things are judged? Using yours, the packhorse accompanying you would be more entitled to this assurance. For while you ate soup and slept in comfort and warmth, this uncomplaining beast whose lot is much harder than yours remained neglected in the cold."

Towards the end of their stay, a learned man came to eat with them, one knowing all the Books of Wisdom and the law. While talking with the disciples he said, "Because of my knowledge I am a man of no mean position, and many men are silent before me when weighty matters are under discussion."

Jesus, overhearing this, said, "Take no credit for yourself concerning your knowledge, but compare yourself to a borrower who has a debt to repay. Does the borrower receive credit for

repaying what he has borrowed? Therefore, take no credit for the wisdom you dispense. And as to the acquisition of knowledge, is this not the end for which you were created?”

When this man had departed, Jesus said to His disciples, “The Books of Wisdom should be the treasure of all men, for they contain the explanations and instructions of God. When men say, ‘Woe, because I am smitten with misfortune; why does God let disaster strike in this manner, or why is my lot in life unlike that of others?’ be sure they have not unlocked the door of their treasurehouse.

“By reading the Books of Wisdom you will be brought to an understanding of the nature and intention of God, and life will then have meaning and purpose. Without them you can be likened to a man at sea in a fair wind but lacking sail and oars. Reading them, but lacking guidance or understanding, you could be likened to a man at sea with sail and oars, but without the ability to utilize them.”

A disciple, one who had been with John, asked, “Sire, tell us which is true. John taught the Way of the Wilderness and said, ‘Be the best of men, and let God take care of His Kingdom, for you are the rulers of Earth.’ Yet at other times he told us to await the coming of One who would deliver us from the evils of this world, and show us the path of righteousness.”

Jesus said, "If you knew a distinguished guest was coming, would you not make fitting preparations, doing all things to ensure an appropriate welcome? If a man has many servants, does he thrash his own grain?"

"The road indicated by John is not My road, but it leads to the same destination. I bring you the Way of the Cross, which is the cross of life. Follow what I teach and you will be with Me at the end. Choose your path, for no man can plow two furrows; neither can the hands of two men hold the reins."

While Jesus was still in the mountains preparing His disciples for the task ahead, two wandering musicians came by, and one was always laughing, and the other always melancholy.

Jesus said to them, "Many men have differing skills, and are you not skilled with the lute and lyre?" They said, "That is so." Jesus said, "Now, when the strings of your instruments are too taut, what happens?" They replied, "Then there is discord." And Jesus said, "Is it not even so if the strings are too slack?" They replied, "It is."

Jesus said, "Sometimes the natures of men need slackening, for they are too taut, while sometimes they are too slack. Be like your instruments, always tuned to the right note, and let there be harmony between you."

One of the disciples said to Jesus, "Sire, You tell us many things, and I cannot retain all Your words. Surely some are better than others. Which should I store in my heart?"

Jesus said, "A king had two castles - one at each end of a wall guarding his kingdom - and he gave each of his two sons command over a castle. When word came that an enemy approached, he ordered his sons to collect all kinds of provender and store it. One son collected everything he could, but the other took only what he considered the best, leaving everything else. The enemy came, and both castles were besieged. The castle of one son fell when its supplies were exhausted, but the other held out by utilizing what the other had rejected. So it is with My words - even those which may seem of least value may one day prove their worth."

The disciple then said, "Tell us where we may find God and Truth." Jesus said, "You have the Holy Books and My words."

Turning to the others, He said, "This man is like a beggar who all his life stood under a fig tree. More than anything else, he desired to be rich, but he remained always poor and dressed in rags. Like all men, he came to his hour, and those who buried him dug his grave at the place where he had spent his life. When the earth under the tree was opened up, it exposed a treasure of great prize: gold and jewels, right under the spot where he had

been begging. How easy it would have been for that man to be rich!”

One of those to whom Jesus spoke said, “Then all we have to do is to read and listen, assimilating the knowledge gained.”

Jesus said, “There is danger even in this. Consider a snake catcher who, going among the rocks, sees a snake well worth catching, but in his haste grabs it by the tail instead of behind the head, so it turns and bites him, causing his death. Did he die because of his calling or because he grabbed the snake wrongly? Was he not wrong in his approach, rather than in what he did? It is even so with those who know the Holy Books from end to end, but handle them wrongly.”

Jesus said, “Be humble in your knowledge and not puffed up; but beware the snare of false humility.”

One said to Him, “Sire, what is false humility?” Jesus said, “A man was once told that if he could learn humility he would become perfect, and, desiring perfection in himself above all else, he diligently studied everything relating to humility. Then there was nothing about it he did not know. However, one day a man said to him, ‘What has your humility gained for you? Where have you benefited?’ To which the supposedly humble man replied, ‘Stupid one, what is the matter with you? For can you not see that, having learned humility, I am now a perfect man?’”

About this time, Jesus came upon two disciples arguing as to which of His teachings should be retained in their hearts. Jesus said, "Your argument can be likened to two wives - one old and one young. The old one kept pulling out the dark hairs on her husband's head, while the young one kept pulling out the white hairs. So he became bald, having no hair at all. Then both women said, 'Behold, we have a baldheaded husband.'"

One day, a disciple who had been to buy provisions returned, saying, "I took down a diligently prepared book of sayings, delightful to the ear, but men took it from me and tore it apart. Surely the wrath of God will strike them."

Hearing this, Jesus called the man to Him and said, "A girl once diligently collected colorful seeds and threaded them into a necklace. But when she put it on, a youth came along and pulled it, scattering the carefully gathered seeds. She ran to her father, expecting him to chase the youth and chastise him, but the father did nothing. Later that evening, he gave her a beautiful necklace of rare gems which he had bought earlier, intending to surprise her. Then she knew why he had not bothered with the youth, or been concerned about the necklace of seeds."

Jesus said to those about Him, "Many things befall you, and life is difficult, but so life is meant to be. Only timber well seasoned is fit for the carver's hand. A carpenter once sent his two sons to

the forest to cut timber, and they came upon a mighty tree - one without branches, going straight up, with sound, well-grained wood. One son said, 'This tree is too big, the task of cutting it too difficult. Let us find another which is easier to deal with.' The other said, 'No, let us take only the best.' But the first one goes further into the forest and comes upon a tree partly rotten and soft. Now, he with the rotten timber returns first, while the other comes two days later.

"If the carpenter be wise, he rejects the timber brought in first and chastises his son, rewarding the other when he returns. But if the carpenter be pleased with the first son's early return, accepting the timber and building with it, placing it as a beam support, so the upright post breaks and the beam falls, killing a man, how shall the blame be apportioned? The easy way is rarely the best."

Jesus said, "Fear not the hostility of men, nor the wiles of the world. Rise above your conditions. Be like the water lily, which rises out of the mud, up through the murky waters, into the sunlight above. Strive always to rise above your circumstances, for in striving you gain strength. The man whose path through life has been easy is never as good as one whose path has been difficult. Life has two purposes only: to test and teach; and for that, Earth is perfect.

“Regard each other as brothers, cherishing in sickness and supporting in trouble. Never praise yourself; and if you have virtues, let others discover them. Be careful with whom you associate, for if a man enter a tannery, though he carry nothing away, a bad smell will accompany him. No man is so important that he is above the need to work. If it becomes necessary to dress hides in the marketplace, then undertake it with a cheerful heart. Even the rich must do something, for idleness is the rust of time.

“Judge no man otherwise than you would wish to be judged. Once, a young woman was carried off and placed in a whorehouse in another country. Her father sent two men to ransom her, and when they came to the whorehouse, one remained outside, while the other went in. When he who went in came out, he said to the other, ‘What do you think I was doing in there?’ The other replied, ‘Why, negotiating the woman’s ransom.’ Even so should you judge with the scales weighed down favorably.”

Jesus taught His disciples thus: “All things a man possesses, his talents and his skills, are gifts bestowed by the grace of God. The inheritance received by anyone should be regarded as something received in trust, and it is true that if they deal with it wrongfully or selfishly, payment will be required. One of the greatest of life’s tests is the challenge of wealth or position, and few are those who successfully meet it. Therefore, do not envy those with wealth and position unless they deal with them

wisely; otherwise, pity them, for they have failed to rise above their test.

“A wayfarer once came to an inn and, finding no one there, went into the eating hall, where he found a table set with all good things - many kinds of food and drink. So he sat down and helped himself, thinking, ‘No one else is here, so all this must be mine; and if mine, I can do with it as I please.’ However, when the innkeeper returned from where he had been, the wayfarer could not escape the accounting.

“The rich are responsible for providing the needs of the poor, whether by work or food. This, above all, is the prime responsibility of wealth. And if a rich man say this he cannot do, then his riches witness against him. For if a poor man have a loaf of bread, he will share it with he who has none; and a beggar at the door of a poor man receives better treatment than he does at the doors of the rich, yet the rich have the most to give. And this is the sin of the wealthy.

“Riches, of themselves, are not sinful; it is what they make of men that brings them into ill repute. If they were properly regarded as something permitting the possessor to study the Books of Wisdom and to redress the wrongs of the poor, then they would serve a good end. Let the rich ask themselves with sincerity, ‘Am I not wealthy because of my lack of charity and

the exploitation of others? Is it not because I love myself more than my neighbors?’

“It is dangerous to be near a man without wisdom. He is like a tree with many fine branches, but few roots; the winds of adversity blow, and he is uprooted. Choose your friends with great care, measuring them against the words of wisdom. The man who is himself a good friend will never lack friends, but those who think they have many friends have none. The loneliest person is one living for himself alone, but it is better to be lonely than to be in bad company.”

Jesus said, “It is not unseemly to glory in your strength, but never become vain, for in strength you are not superior to the beasts. If the standard is to be the ability to bear a heavy burden, an ass can carry more than any of you. An elephant is mightier than a score of men, while a camel has more stamina than any man. Strength and stamina are goodly things, seen in their right perspective, but they can be a heavy handicap on the path of spiritual development - particularly if they lead to arrogance and inconsideration for others. Strength, like riches and knowledge, is a goodly thing of itself if properly utilized; but for most the test is too great.”

Some disciples came to Jesus and asked whether they should not withdraw into the wilderness, where they would dedicate their lives to God.

Jesus said, "Of what use would My teachings be in the wilderness? Are you going to save rocks from sin, or convert camels? Will you enlighten the wind, or give wisdom to mirages? Where is the benefit if what you learn cannot be put into practice? Learning and good conduct must go hand in hand, and the greatest wisdom is that which teaches men to live in harmony. They who seek to escape the tests and trials of life are cowards. Are you going to withdraw from the conflict through lack of courage, standing silently by while the wicked swallow up the good?"

The disciples said, "Sire, are You bringing strife or peace? Do You prepare us for battle? Are we to rally the people?"

Jesus said, "Do you still not understand? I am a Man of peace, and I unsheathe only the sword of the Spirit. This is not the easy way, for it is less difficult to change things with the sword than with soft words; and those who oppose us understand that better. But let only those who would use weapons with courage talk about soft words and peace, otherwise better men will justifiably scorn them as cowards. Cowards talk about peace, and brave men about war. But I tell you that when brave men talk peace and cowards are sent to war, there will be no more strife, and a new day will dawn."

A disciple named Maciah said to Jesus, "Sire, teach us how to love one another without malice or envy, with goodwill and forbearance."

Jesus said, "The first step is to love yourself less, and by doing this you will find more love to give. If any say, 'I like being loved,' that person is wrong, for rather you should say, 'I like loving.' Do not seek to take love, but to give it; for have I not said it is better to give than to receive?"

Another disciple who had believed in bodily resurrection said, "Sire, what proof can be given that there is a life beyond the grave?"

Jesus answered, "There is proof to those worthy of it. But if it were a manifest certainty as a reward for a good life, how would the hypocrites and those who would do nothing without payment be discovered? If uncertainty and doubt were removed from life, then it would be of less value for its purpose. Things are as they are because so they must be. If you want proof, become worthy of it; you will not be denied it even here. But you must seek diligently. Nothing comes easily, and this least of all."

Before they departed from that place, a disciple said to Jesus, "Sire, now that we go to take up our burdens, tell us how to avoid wrongdoing."

Jesus said, "Were you able to avoid all wrongdoing and sins, such is the known frailty of men that I fear you would fall into another one - that of false pride. Look at the falsely pious ones who glory in their righteousness, and this is not the least of sins."

Having taught in this manner and said these and many other things, Jesus departed from that place on the mountainside and went down to carry the tidings concerning the coming Rule of God to the people.

Chapter 9

Jesus went with His disciples into Juda and taught there. At this time, John of the Wilderness, who heralded the coming of Jesus, was baptizing at Ainum, not far from Salim, because there was a plentiful supply of water in that place. A great number of people came to be cleansed in the waters, for John was still free.

At this time, there was much disturbance in Samaria, and many soldiers were coming and going, for a false deliverer had arisen and proclaimed himself as God's Anointed. The people were restless, and there were many rumors, but John had no dealings with any of these things. Yet some said the false deliverer was a follower of John, but this was untrue.

The disciples of John came to him and said, "Respected teacher, some time ago you testified concerning a Man Who came to you on the other side of the river. Now He has started to baptize, and His teachings gather many men to Him."

John said, "No man can speak with authority concerning God without His sanction, but this Man I know to be a True Messenger and a Worthy Son."

They said, "He also heals." John replied, "No man can heal, except through the power of the Holy Spirit; and this Man has that power."

“I have said I am not the Chosen One; neither am I any other whom men seek; I am the forerunner sent to herald His coming. The bride belongs to the bridegroom, but he who stands at the bridegroom’s right hand to support him is pleased when he hears the words spoken by the bridegroom. That pleasure is now mine, but not for long; for as my star declines, so His waxes brighter.”

John feared no man and condemned hypocrisy and indifference to the law wherever he found it. He was the rod of the poor and unlearned, and a staff to the weak and oppressed. He was incorruptible and spoke forthrightly, never hiding anything within his heart, and condemned wrongdoing wherever it occurred.

Now, John baptized with water, and because of this the priests were against him; but on this matter they could do nothing. However, John had condemned the actions of Herod, who had sinned against his blood and the law. And because of this, the people murmured against Herod. Therefore, as these were restless times, and the people were in a mood for revolt, he had John taken and imprisoned. For had there been a rising against Herod at this time, Rome could not have come to his aid.

John was imprisoned in a fortress, and this pleased Herodius, for she had long borne ill will towards him. Though Herod had no

lawful right to take his brother's wife, the fault was not his alone. Herodias wished with all her heart to rid herself of the condemnations of John, but could not accomplish this because Herod held John in awe. For he was a truly holy man, much beloved by the people. Though John was kept in confinement, Herod often spoke with him and listened to his words. But though they stirred the heart of Herod, he found them difficult to understand.

While in prison, doubt stirred in the heart of John, and he sent disciples to Jesus, enquiring whether He felt He was truly God's Anointed; for at this time there was much confusion on the matters. When the disciples returned, their reply puzzled John, for they reported Jesus as saying, "I am not He Whom you expected, or the Deliverer of these people, but a Deliverer of all men. Nevertheless, if only another will change the hearts of the people, I shall not be found wanting." But John received enlightenment and knew he had not erred.

Now, a certain feast day came, and Herod entertained his officials and the leading men of Galilee. And during the course of the entertainment, his daughter danced for the guests. She so charmed and delighted them that Herod, while under the influence of wine and the urgings of others, being also full of pride at their applause, swore to grant her any boon, whatever it entailed.

The girl withdrew to consult her mother, who told her to request the head of John. Though the request greatly upset Herod and sobered him because he realized the extent of his folly, he himself could not break an oath of this sort made in the presence of his guests.

The oath sworn was a kingly one, but Herod was not a king. Therefore, he put it to one of the guests - a learned man - as to whether anything he wished to do would have force within the law, or whether he could only be bound by an oath made within the law. The man replied that even kings were bound by the law, and though Herod was less than a king, he had sworn a kingly oath which, if broken, would confirm his lack of kingly authority. However, he said that John, being a lawbreaker, could not be protected by the law, and so the oath made by Herod stood. So on the morrow the head of John was struck off and displayed at the gate.

So it was that John was put to death because Herod feared his influence over the people; for he declared the coming of a New Kingdom, and Herod feared the day of deliverance.

John had said, "I have been sent with many powers. I am with you to point out the way of the law. I herald the Deliverer and the Rule of God."

John had taught his disciples to pray in this manner: "Holy be the name of the Most High God in the places He created to serve His will. Let the coming of the New Kingdom under the Rule of

God not be delayed beyond our days, but come in the time which is at hand.”

When the followers of John heard what had happened, they took charge of the body of John and laid it in a tomb by the river. There was a loud outcry from the people, who said, “Why should our prophets be treated in this manner? Where is the Deliverer?”

Later, when Jesus returned to the river, He found two followers of John and took them to a place of safety.

Chapter 10

Before going out among the people to declare Himself, Jesus returned to Genesareth - the town of His upbringing - accompanied by His disciples. He went first to the place where His mother was staying, and though she greeted Him warmly because she loved her Eldest Son, Mary did not fully understand Jesus. She always knew He would grow up to be different and would become a Man of God because, when carrying Him, she dreamed that a bright flaming Star had come down from Heaven and entered her womb.

His own kinfolk had once thought Him mad and sought to take control of Him. But now, His brothers and sisters having grown up, they no longer troubled Him. They had said, "He has lost His father and seeks another. For is it not written, 'I will be His Father, and He will be My Son'?"

When younger, Jesus had been overawed by the prospects of the future, and often fearful that He might not fulfill the promise. But He overcame this, and any fears of His inability. It is in this, and His dedication, that His greatness was revealed.

Though Jesus tapped the Holy Spirit of God, and in Him it was stored up as in a water tank, He still had to overcome the weaknesses of men. For without so doing, His greatness could not be made manifest. Those who say He was something other

than man detract from His greatness, for then the things He had to do would have been easier to accomplish. Perhaps they cannot comprehend the heights to which men can rise when inspired by God, the Father of all men.

Going into the Temple, Jesus stood up to read, as He had often done in holy days. He read out a passage from the scroll of a prophet to the Jews, called Isaiah in the tongue of His fathers and, having done so, returned it to the scrollkeeper and sat down.

After others had performed their duties, Jesus had a chance to speak. And with all eyes upon Him He did so, and the people were astonished. For he said, "Behold, you are witnessing the fulfillment of the Holy Writ, and the accomplishment of God's design. I am chosen to be the tongue of the Father, speaking His words to you, His people. I am a Light shining in the midst of darkness. And even as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so do I come to show how the good are to be separated from the wicked."

Jesus spoke with knowledgeable authority, bringing a new message which gladdened the hearts of those who heard Him. The people marveled and whispered among themselves, "Where has He gained all this knowledge? How has He become so learned? Is this not the son of Joseph, the carpenter who is now dead, and of Mary? And do not His sisters live here still? Yet they

say He has healed the incurable.” But not all received His words in this manner, and many were offended.

Noticing the murmuring among these, Jesus addressed them, saying, “Do you hold it against Me that I left? If a man has two duties, he must make a choice - not following the inclinations of his heart, but the course indicated by higher decree. No doubt you have heard about the things I have done elsewhere and will say, ‘Let us see You do the same here.’ To this I can answer with sincerity: a prophet is unacceptable in his own neighborhood, and a physician is not called to cure those who know him. When I come in friendship and compassion to those who need My help, they say, ‘Physician, heal Yourself first,’ thinking Me mad. Why now should I be called upon to do things Elijah and Elisha could not do? The only ones they cured were Syrians.”

Jesus did not heal many here, and He said, “I heal in accord with the law and not against it.”

After hearing what He said in the Temple, many people were vexed with Him and sought to hustle Him out of town. But others said, “Let Him be, for He grew up here and is only the son of a carpenter; therefore He tries to make Himself important. He has been away and seeks to impress us.”

Being so poorly received in the town where he had been brought up, Jesus went out around the villages. Choosing twelve envoys

from among His disciples, He sent them away in pairs to deal with many things caused by the intrusion of evil.

He said to them, “Carry a staff, but take no food, no money and no change of clothing. When you are invited to a house, stay there until you leave the village; but never tarry where you are not welcome.”

Jesus said, “Many will fail to grasp your meanings, or will interpret your words wrongly. Do not dispute with them, but put things right with patience. Never disregard a questioner or abuse him, lest others think you have no answer. All can only grasp what you say according to their understanding, therefore speak plainly and to their hearts.”

Jesus Himself went about proclaiming the advent of the Rule of God, and He also cured many kinds of sickness. Then people began to say, “This Man is great and good even among those dedicated to the service of God.” And many heeded His teaching and led a new life.

Now, many people believed there would be two kinds of deliverers, and a man named Joseph Baraban had many followers. Jesus met him at a house in Bethgal and said, “Why do you declare things which stir up the people?” To which the other replied, “What concern is it of Yours?”

Jesus answered him after this manner: "Several men were sitting in a boat, and one began boring a hole beneath his seat. Seeing this, his companions said, 'What are you doing here?' He answered, 'What concern is it of yours what I do beneath my own seat?' And they replied, 'Surely it is our affair when what you do will swamp the boat, and we will all be thrown into the water.'"

Jesus moved to another place, and a crowd gathered around Him. And while He was speaking, one of His first followers tried to push through to Him. Now, this man was deformed and ugly, his eyes squinted, and he was ungainly. But he walked in the light of Truth. The crowd jostled him, shouting, "Look at the ugly man; push him back or he will scare the Teacher away."

Then Jesus stepped down from where He stood and, pushing through to the man, put an arm around his shoulders, greeting him affectionately. Jesus said to the people, "Why mock someone in whom the light of goodness shines? What matters the appearance of the body when the spirit within is bright? None among you has a spirit such as this man's, beautifully glowing with goodness.

"This I say to you: the body is of little importance, for it perishes at its hour; but the spirit never dies. Why do you treasure that which you can keep but a short while? For soon it will be cast off like a worn-out tunic. Surely it is better to treasure more lasting things. The shell of a pearl is ugly and rough, but men do not

seek it out for itself, wanting only what it contains; and this becomes the cherished treasure of a beautiful woman. Never heed the external ugliness; seek for the beauty within.”

In the crowd there was a man who employed many others, and he said, “Sire, I am so stirred up by Your words that I will give up everything I have and follow You.”

Jesus said, “How many look to you for food and employment?” The man replied, “My children are numerous, and I have many servants, and there is my father who is old.”

Jesus said, “The lives of no two men are alike, and all require the labors of many to support them. Even the greatest teachings cannot satisfy empty stomachs. Therefore, return to the place of your appointed labors and remain constant in your responsibilities. Give all you make over your modest requirements to God, and study the Holy Books daily.”

Jesus said, “A man without the light places his faith in gold, burying it in the ground so it will support him in adversity. Yet what benefit does it bestow if he never needs it? He worries continually and must be constantly on guard, lest he be robbed. And when he dies, his inheritors spend it. Yet by charitable deeds and self-restraint, a greater treasure which cannot be taken by robbers or dissipated by others can be laid up openly and without fear.”

Someone in the crowd said, “Great Teacher, to some You say, ‘Give up all,’ while others You tell to continue in their ways. I have many responsibilities and a moderate surplus over my requirements. What should I do?”

Jesus said, “Do what is right and just. Study the Books of Wisdom, and live according to their teachings. Exploit no one, and work for the Rule of God.”

A man said to Jesus, “Sire, I know the problems of the rich, for I have sons and many friends. But how can I know whether they love me or my wealth?”

Jesus said, “A rich man owned a large warehouse, but one night this burned down, consuming all his wealth. And though he had given other warehouses to each of his two sons, when he lost his own they would not help him. While poor, he met a beggar boy whom he adopted to fill the empty places in his heart.

And, going to a distant city, by hard work, he established another warehouse, becoming rich again. When the adopted boy grew up, the man gave him a warehouse, but one much smaller than those he had previously given to his sons.

“The two sons heard about their father’s new wealth and sent word that they wanted to combine their warehouses with his, so that by trading together they could all get richer. The man then

sent messengers to all three of those he had helped, saying his business had declined, and he was in the hands of moneylenders and required a hundred pieces of gold to continue. The two sons returned excuses, saying they could not help; but the adopted son sent two hundred pieces of gold, saying he had pledged himself to obtain it. Thus the man found out who loved him and left all his estate to the one he had adopted.”

Speaking to the people about Him, Jesus said, “So long as the great sun never shone upon Earth, there was darkness; and had it not come to shine, there would be darkness still. Without the sun, men would not have known day from night; but when it came, both were made distinguishable. These times are a night of ignorance, wherein wrongdoing and bewilderment prevail; but a light has come to dispel the darkness and make right distinguishable from wrong.”

After these things had been done and said, it was the time of a Jewish festival, and Jesus returned to where there was a place of assembly. On the way, He passed through the market where sheep were sold, beside which was a salt pool having a covered entrance to shelter the sick and maimed.

A man was lying nearby, and Jesus said to him, “How long have you been here?” The man replied, “I have been here a long time, having no one to put me into the water at the proper times.”

Jesus took pity on the man and, taking him by the hand, raised him up, saying, "You are cured; arise, take your bed and depart." This happened on the Sabbath, and when some pious Jews saw the man carrying a burden, they rebuked him. But he answered, "The Healer Who came and cured me said I should take up my bed, so where am I in the wrong?"

The pious Jews enquired regarding the Healer, but the man said he did not know Him, having never seen Him before. Later, when the man who had been cured saw Jesus outside the place of assembly, he learned His name and told the Jews.

Before this, the pious ones who were separated out from the people had ignored Jesus, but now, because He did such things on the Sabbath, they turned against Him. For Jesus said, "If My Father does not rest, why should I?"

They thought He claimed closer kinship with God than ordinary men, but He meant to show that all men are brothers.

The next day, when Jesus commenced speaking to the people, many sought to do Him harm. And He said, "You have the teachings of the law and the prophets. Why do you seek to do Me harm?" Then they shouted back at Him, "Because You are possessed by demons. You tell us we are wrong, but we are content with our ways. Leave us to go our way, and You go Yours."

After this, Jesus went away, because of the hostility towards Him. But when it came close to harvesting time, His brothers sent a messenger, saying, “Come back now. The people are busy at work. Let your followers here see for themselves the things You do, for if Your message is important, the bearer should not remain hidden.”

On His way back, Jesus and the disciples with Him passed through Samaria, where there was a place called Jacob’s well, five furlongs from Sichem. The sun being at its height, they decided to rest there. After refreshing themselves, the disciples went into the town to buy food, leaving Jesus reclining not far from the well.

Now, while Jesus rested there, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. And Jesus, not having a vessel, asked her for a drink. This surprised the woman, for the Jews regarded anything handled by the Samaritans as being defiled. She said, “How can You ask this of me?”

Jesus replied, “If you knew what God gives through Me, you would have requested a draft from the waters of Life.”

The woman said, “What is this water of Life? Surely it cannot bestow greater benefit than this well, the gift of our forefather, which provided water for him, his household and his flocks.”

Jesus said, "This water, originating on Earth, can satisfy only body; and the drinker will thirst again. But the water I can provide, springing from an eternal Source, satisfies any who drink, so they need never thirst again for things not of this world, and it grants everlasting life in glory."

The woman said to Jesus, "Let me have this water You talk about, so I am freed from the necessity for drawing water."

Jesus said, "It would be best if you went and brought your husband, for two may understand better than one."

She answered, "But I have no husband." Jesus said, "In this you have at any rate spoken true, for though married five times, you now live with one who is not your husband."

The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, "Sire, I can see You are One of those special people who know all things. Now tell me, is it true what Your people tell us, that we should worship in the Temple at Jerusalem to reach the ear of God, for He is only there and not on Mount Gerasim?"

Jesus told her, "Be assured, the time is coming when the place of worship is unimportant. For though your people worship without understanding the nature of worship, while the Jews worship with this knowledge, neither know the true nature of worship.

The time is coming when all who understand the nature of worship will do so in spirit and in the light of Truth.

“For God is the greatest of spirits, and His worshippers must therefore bring something of the spirit. This - and labor in His service - is the only acceptable kind of worship. The smoke of flesh and fowl are not acceptable offerings.”

The woman heard without understanding, but one with Jesus stored these things in his heart. The woman said, “Some day an Enlightener will come and explain these things to us.” Jesus replied, “My words may have come from the Enlightener Himself.”

The woman said, “I must go, for You frighten me.” Just as she was preparing to go, the disciples returned and were surprised to find Jesus had been talking to a Samaritan woman in this manner, but they said nothing. Leaving her pitcher, the woman hastened away to spread word around that there was a Man out at Jacob’s well Who could read the past and might be the Enlightener, for the Samaritans did not await the Deliverer as did the Jews.

When the woman had gone, the disciples showed the things they had brought to Jesus. But He was disinclined to eat, saying to them, “Doing the will of God sustains Me, and the inflowing power of His Spirit quenches My thirst.”

One of the disciples said, "It is well to eat now, for the harvest is ripening over there, and the harvesters need strength."

Jesus said, "The reapers cannot expect their pay until the crop is gathered into the storehouse. Let us wait to measure the fruits of our labor before celebrating. Is it not written, 'Where one man sows, another reaps'? You will be reapers in fields sown by others. Many have toiled in the preparation of the ground and have sown good seed. You must be no less diligent in reaping the harvest, gathering it in carefully so not a grain is lost."

The one who had remained with Jesus said, "Sire, I am puzzled. This woman had many husbands; tell us which one will be her husband in Heaven."

Jesus said, "In Heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, for there the promises of marriage are fulfilled. To one she must incline more than towards the others; and if he inclines likewise, there is union of the spirit. But unions of the spirit may be either weak or strong."

Another disciple said, "What of he who is not her husband?"

Jesus answered him, "Marriage is not of the flesh, nor made by the words of men. It is of the spirit, and they who are joined in spirit and flesh in the sight of God let no man seek to lightly put

apart. A marriage wholly of the flesh is fornication, though it be blessed by many priests.

“Yet marriage is the measure of value. A thing possessed by many is of little consequence. The worth of a coin lacking inscription is unestablished, and the possessor carries it without faith, doubting its ability to buy bread. A woman may be reserved for marriage, or give herself freely for love. She knows her own worth best. But if she gives herself to several, then it is not love, but fornication.

“A union is blessed before a priest and sanctified in the eyes of the people. But I tell you, unless the bond is forged on the anvil of adversity and wrought under the hammers of stress and struggle, it is a thing of little spiritual substance.

“Love is not like the thistle seed, blown this way or that according to the prevailing winds of desire and inclination. It is not the offspring of flesh, but the sunchild of the spirit. It can be proven and established only under difficulties and tribulations, and it is because of the known frailties of men under trial and test that marriage has been ordained to enshrine it.”

Now, after these things were said, many Samaritans came and heard the words of Jesus and invited Him to stay among them. And He remained three days.