

THE CRUCIFIXION

BY
AN EYE-WITNESS

A LETTER, WRITTEN SEVEN
YEARS AFTER THE CRUCI-
FIXION, BY A PERSONAL
FRIEND OF JESUS IN JERU-
SALEM, TO AN ESSEER
BROTHER IN ALEXANDRIA.

SUPPLEMENTAL HARMONIC SERIES
VOLUME II

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JESUS CHRIST.

This picture is the oldest known, found
on a Tomb in the Catacombs.

Addressed
to
Students and Friends of the Great School

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INTRODUCTION

A brief explanation is due the reader before he proceeds to a perusal of the most interesting Letter which follows the Preface to this little volume.

The English translation of the ancient Latin copy of the Letter was made by a German. It is evidenced on every page of his translation that he was not sufficiently acquainted with the English language to make a good English translation.

This suggestion has reference to the literary form of his work as a translator, and not to the substance of the text. There can be no doubt that he has preserved the meaning of the original manuscript with remarkable fidelity.

But in many places he has made use of English expressions which are crude and quite out of keeping with our present understanding of cultured literary form.

For this reason I have deemed it advisable to revise his rendition of the text in such manner as somewhat to remove the rough corners of his work, and present to the reader the exact substance of the Ancient Letter in a little better English form.

In no sense have I changed its meaning, and in many places have refrained from substituting my own method of expression where his rendition is more or less crude and lacking in elegance of diction. My revision of his translation, therefore, is not as complete as it might have been made had his method of expression been discarded entirely.

My purpose has been to place the exact substance of the Ancient Letter before the reader in such language as to make it entirely intelligible, and at the same time preserve as much of the translator's own form of expression as possible. I believe I have succeeded.

No changes whatsoever have been made in the "Closing Remarks of the German

Translator," nor in "Part II." My revision, therefore, is confined entirely to the "Letter" of the Esseer in which he tells his brethren in Alexandria the true story of the Crucifixion, and gives them the facts and incidents connected therewith, as he witnessed them.

The following additional facts concerning the German translation may be of interest to the reader in this connection:

It was published in this country in 1873. For reasons which the intelligent reader will doubtless understand as he proceeds, the book was withdrawn from publication at once upon its appearance. The plates were destroyed, and it was supposed that all the published copies of the book were likewise disposed of.

Fortunately, however, one copy found its way into the possession of a prominent Mason in the state of Massachusetts. There it remained securely until accidentally discovered by his daughter some time during the early summer of the present year (1907).

This lady, knowing my interest in things Masonic, kindly sent me the copy for examination. I at once recognized its remarkable nature and supreme value and importance.

Immediately was started an inquiry through a number of the most prominent book houses and publishing concerns, to ascertain if other copies of the little book could be found. At the same time inquiry was made to ascertain if the official copies of the book were still on file in the Congressional Library.

To my surprise, not another copy of the book can be found, after some four months of diligent search.

The most remarkable phase of the matter seems to be, that the official copies which were deposited with the Librarian of Congress, in compliance with the Law of Copyrights, have also disappeared. At any rate, in reply to inquiry, the report comes back that no such book is to be found in the Congressional Library.

If this be true, it would then appear that the copy from which the following revision was made is, without doubt, the only copy in existence.

To be sure, the Latin MS., from which the translation into English was made, is still in existence, and is in the hands of the Masonic Fraternity in Germany, where, no doubt, it will remain securely guarded from Anti-Masonic vandalism.

The vital nature of the document cannot fail to impress itself upon the intelligent reader and student of religious history. And it is sincerely to be hoped that it will not suffer another eclipse.

TK, Author of "The Great Work."

Chicago, November, 1907.

PREFACE

A member of the Abyssinian Mercantile Company discovered in Alexandria an ancient house, formerly occupied by Grecian friars, in whose library—to oblivion abandoned—was found an old parchment. A French literate, accidentally present, at once commenced deciphering it; but a missionary, in the ardor of fanatical orthodoxy, tried by all means to destroy the antique document. But the efforts of the Jesuit missionary do not seem to have been successful, as a copy of the Latin original was written, which copy, through the Freemasons, found its way into Germany.

It has been proved from the archeological discoveries made on the spot, that the house where the parchment was found was owned and occupied by the Order of "Esseens." Further, that the document found was the only remains of literature

from the once well-filled library of this scientific and religious Order or Brotherhood.

The French literate, who first conceived the importance and historical worth of the manuscript, tried hard to enrich the French Academy with the original, but, owing to the intrigues of the Jesuit mission in Egypt (bent on destroying a document so detrimental to their doctrine), he was not successful; although it was preserved principally through the interference of influential Abyssinian merchants and Pythagorical Societies, from whom the copy above spoken of came into the possession of the modern institution of Freemasons, and a society in Germany now possesses, without doubt, the only copy in existence.

As regards the discovered antique document, it consisted of a letter which the so-called "Terapeut" (the elder), the highest esteemed member of the Brotherhood, had written to his brethren in Alexandria, in the name of the Brotherhood in Jeru-

salem. This letter was written by him only a few years after the death of Jesus, giving a full description of the life, doctrine and death of Jesus, who the letter proves to have belonged to and been a member of their Brotherhood.

Rumors of his miracles, and finally of his martyrdom, had also reached Alexandria, and as the brethren there had a conviction that he was their brother, preached their doctrines, used their sign of recognition, and lived in accordance with their rules, they manifested a desire to be informed on the subject, as to the real truth of the matter.

To obtain this information, their leader, or "Terapeut," had written a letter to his colleague in Jerusalem, who in reply wrote the letter from which we obtain a clear and truthful account of this important and interesting subject. It is a fact, which never has been doubted by those familiar with ancient history, that the Esseers always spoke and wrote the strictest truth; and

this, added to their moral and scientific lives, puts an end to any doubt as to the correctness and genuineness of the information given in the ancient discovered letter.

Although not at first organized among the Jews, this Order existed already in the days of the "Maccabai"; and with them it assumed more of a national outward form, at the same time maintaining most of the ancient pythagoraical doctrines. Most of the members were agriculturists and gardeners, and assembled together to promote virtue and wisdom among themselves. Furthermore, they devoted themselves, especially in the higher degrees, to the art of healing, induced thereto through their studies of nature and art, and were well acquainted with the effects of most then known plants and minerals for recruiting the human system. This knowledge they made useful by healing and comforting the sick.

They were true communists, and all put

their gains into the common treasury. Before sunrise they never spoke to each other of earthly matters, but met in prayer at break of day. Having taken their morning meal and put on a peculiar kind of working clothes, they proceeded to their place of work. At noon they again came together, and, having washed their hands and feet and dressed themselves in clean white robes, they ate their dinner together.

According to their moral standing and ability, they were divided into four classes or degrees. In the first degree were especially adopted children (the "Esseens" hardly ever married), but in case an adult wished to be admitted into their Order, it was necessary to go through a very severe moral trial for the term of three years.

It was strictly prohibited for a member of high degree to divulge any of the secrets of his degree to any of lower rank.

The punishment for such a trespass was expulsion from the Brotherhood. Nothing but a strictly moral life, wisdom, godliness,

and excellency in science, entitled to the higher degrees. In their domestic life they exercised hospitality and benevolence, kept the rules of the Order strictly, and never took any interest or part in politics or revolutions. Thus they showed a thoroughly peaceable disposition.

Their greeting and sign of recognition was, "Peace be with you." At their meals they broke the bread and passed the cup, and worshipped "Jehovah"; but never made any sacrifice in the temple, but performed their ceremonies in their homes. They knew no higher virtue than to suffer and die for their belief. Accordingly, death did not terrify them, as they believed the spirit a prisoner in the body, to be released through death, then to return to the celestial glory. Deceit and profanity were considered grave sins (as well as quarreling and vengeance), and looked upon with abhorrence.

This Order, of which the present Freemasonry is the modern issue, was at the

time of Jesus widely diffused through Palestine and Egypt, and had their colonies scattered all over the country. They always kept up a congenial fraternal feeling in their meetings, and gave each other information about the affairs of the Brotherhood. They counted among their members men of all professions and stations in society, and although comprising a great many learned men and rich persons (who sometimes found it in their interest to keep this secret), they never excluded the poor nor persons in moderate circumstances.

Thus we have all reasons to credit this letter, dictated by the love of truth, and written by a man who had been an eye-witness to most of the important transactions in the life and death of Jesus, who, as a member of their Order, was embraced by them with all the fraternal devotion of the Order.

THE TRANSLATOR.

DESCRIPTION OF JESUS

NONESENSE.

BY HIS CONTEMPORARY, PUBLIUS LENTULUS,
WHO WAS THE PREDECESSOR OF PONTIUS
PILATE AS GOVERNOR OF JUDEA

A man of noble stature and of very beautiful countenance, in which such majesty resides that those who look on him are forced to admire him.

His hair is of the color of a fully ripe chestnut, and from his ear down his shoulders it is of the color of the earth, but shining. It is parted in the middle of his forehead, after the manner of the Nazarenes.

His forehead is smooth and very serene, his face free from wrinkle and spot, and with a slight color.

The nostrils and lips cannot reasonably be found fault with.

The beard is thick, and, like the hair, not very long, and divided in the middle.

There is a look of terror in his grave eyes. The eyes are like the rays of the sun, and it is impossible to look him steadily in the face on account of their brilliancy.

When he reproveth, he terrifies; when he admonishes, he weeps. He makes himself loved, and is gravely cheerful. It is said that he was never seen to laugh, but he was seen to weep.

His hands and arms are very beautiful.

In conversation he is charming, but he seldom engages in it; and when he does converse, he is very modest of countenance.

In presence he is the most beautiful man that could be seen or imagined; just like his mother, who is the most beautiful young person that was ever beheld in these parts.

In learning he is an object of wonder to the entire city of Jerusalem. He never studied at all, and yet he knows all sciences.

He wears sandals, and goes bareheaded. Many laugh at seeing him; but in his presence, and when speaking to him, they fear and tremble.

It is said that such a man was never seen or heard in these parts. In truth, as the Hebrews tell me, there never were heard such advices, such sublime doctrine as this Christ teaches; and many of the Jews hold him for divine, and they believe in him, while many others accuse him to me as being contrary to thy majesty.

It is acknowledged that he has never done harm to any one, but good. All that know him and have had dealings with him, say that they have received from him benefits and health.

The foregoing description is condensed from a letter written by Publius Lentulus, then Governor of Judea, to Tiberius Cæsar, Emperor of the Romans.

DEATH-WARRANT OF JESUS

SENTENCE RENDERED BY PONTIUS PILATE,
ACTING GOVERNOR OF LOWER GALILEE,
STATING THAT JESUS OF NAZARETH
SHALL SUFFER DEATH ON THE
CROSS

In the year seventeen of the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar, and the 27th day of March, in the city of the holy Jerusalem—Annas and Caiaphas being priests, sacrificators of the people of God—Pontius Pilate, Governor of Lower Galilee, sitting in the presidential chair of the prætory, condemns Jesus of Nazareth to die on the Cross between two thieves, the great and notorious evidence of the people saying:

1. Jesus is a seducer.
2. He is seditious.
3. He is the enemy of the law.

4. He calls himself falsely the Son of God.

5. He calls himself falsely king of Israel.

6. He entered into the Temple followed by a multitude bearing palm-branches in their hands.

Orders the first Centurion, Quilius Cornelius, to lead him to the place of execution.

Forbids any person whomsoever, either poor or rich, to oppose the death of Jesus Christ.

The witnesses who signed the condemnation of Jesus are:

1. Daniel Robani, a Pharisee.

2. Joannus Robani.

3. Raphael Robani.

4. Capet, a citizen.

Jesus shall go out of the city of Jerusalem by the gate of Struenus.

The foregoing is engraved on a copper plate, on the reverse side of which is written: "A similar plate is sent to each tribe."

It was found in an antique marble vase,

while excavating in the ancient city of Aquila in the kingdom of Naples, in the year 1810, and was discovered by the Commissioners of Arts of the French Army.

At the expedition of Naples, it was enclosed in a box of ebony and preserved in the sacristy of the Chartem (Certosa).

The French translation was made by the Commissioners of Arts.

The original is in the Hebrew language.

PART I
LETTER

FROM AN "ESSEER" IN JERUSALEM TO
HIS BRETHREN IN ALEXANDRIA

PEACE be with you dear brethren!
You have heard of the things that have happened in Jerusalem and Palestine in general. You were right to believe Jesus to be our Brother and a member of our Order, of whom his friends among the Romans and Jewish people relate, that he taught and wrought great wonders, and finally suffered the death of martyrs in Jerusalem.

He was born in Nazareth, by the entrance to the beautiful valley into which the river "Kisson" rushes down the steep declivities of the Mount Tabor. He was put under the protection of the Order by a member of our Brotherhood, by whom his father and mother found a refuge on their flight to Egypt. There are, as you know, many of our brethren living on the borders of Egypt.

In fine, Jesus was admitted into the

Order at the same time with John in their years of early manhood. He lived then in Galilee and had just returned from a visit to Jerusalem, where he was watched by our Brotherhood. Jutha was the place of his initiation, close by the grand castle of Mas-seda, where the mountains raise their lofty peaks above the surrounding country.

My dear Brethren, you may all have been convinced that he has been a member of our Order, as well by the doctrines he has taught the people, and his signs of recognition, especially the baptism and the breaking of the bread and passing of the wine, as well as by his being baptized by one of our brethren, John, in Jordan, near the shore of the Dead Sea, in a westerly direction—for baptism, as you know, has been, since time immemorial, a sacred institution in our Order.

You wonder that the belief in the supernatural and miracles should gain foothold in our midst, when you know that we all have to bear the responsibility for the actions of one of our members.

Therefore, you ought to know that the rumor is like a wind. When it commences it drives the pure air far ahead, but in its progress it receives all vapors and mist from the earth, and when it has traveled some distance it creates darkness instead of the clear pure air of which it was at first composed, and at last consists solely of the particles it has received during its progress.

It is even so with the rumors concerning Jesus and his fate.

Furthermore, remember that the inspired men, who have written and spoken of him, were often carried away by the spirit of enthusiasm, and in their devotion and simplicity they believed all the things told them about him by the multitudes who were even more simple-minded and superstitious than they.

Bear ever in mind also that, in accordance with our rules, the secrets of our holy Brotherhood at all times remained unknown to these writers, and that only our

higher members had any knowledge about the secret assistance and protection Jesus received from us.

And, finally, do not forget that our rigid laws prohibited us from interfering or taking any active part in the councils or plans of the rulers of the land.

Therefore we have acted quietly and secretly, and have suffered the law to run its course; at the same time we secretly aided and assisted our friend in ways which did not infringe the law and our rules.

Know then that Jesus was and is our "Brother," and himself vowed, when he at Jutha was made an initiate of our Order, that our Brotherhood thenceforth should be to him as father and mother; and truly we have proved us so in the spirit and the letter of our law.

I write this to you, my Brethren, in the truth and knowledge of our Brotherhood, that you may know and understand the truth concerning what has come to pass. I tell you only of the things I know, and I

have seen it all with mine own eyes and have taken a deep interest and an active part in all these transactions.

Now, at the time that I write this to you, the Jews have seven times eaten of the lamb of the passover since our Brother was crucified, our Brother whom we all loved and in whom God was glorified. Nevertheless I have forgotten none of the things I have lived to see come to pass. Indeed, as true as are the words that pass from my lips, and the thoughts that I write, as verily do I believe from the depths of my soul, that Jesus was chosen of God and begotten by the Eternal Spirit. He called himself the son of God, and he proved himself to us by teaching in the name of God. He also lived a holy life, and was deeply learned in the secrets of all the kingdoms of nature. In all these things we of the secret Brotherhood acknowledge God; and the man among us who can say: "Behold, I am of God," verily he is so; for he that is not cannot say it, not having the word in

his heart, and not having learned it from the spirit.

I will now tell you of the parentage of this man, who loved all men, and for whom we feel the highest esteem, that you may have full knowledge of him.

He was from his infancy brought up for our Brotherhood. Indeed, he was predicted by an "Esseer" whom the woman thought to be an angel. This woman was given to many imaginings, delving into the supernatural and into the mysteries of life, and she found deep interest and pleasure in the things she could not explain.

Our Brother, the "Esseer," has acknowledged to us his part in these things, and has persuaded the Brotherhood secretly to search for and protect the child.

And Joseph, who was a man of great experience in life, and deep devotion to the immortal truth, through a messenger of our Order was influenced not to leave the woman nor to disturb her faith in the sacredness of her experience, and to be a

father to the child until our Brotherhood should admit him as a novice.

Thus, during their flight to Egypt, Joseph was secretly protected and guided by our Order and conducted as a guest to the congregated Brotherhood by the Mount "Cassius," at the slope of the mount, on which the Romans have built a temple dedicated to Jupiter. The "Esseers" who lived there were commissioned to introduce Joseph, his wife and the child into their congregation, that they might see our way of worshiping and praising God, "the Creator of all," and learn the ceremony of eating the consecrated bread and drinking the holy wine.

At our request they informed our Brotherhood in Jerusalem how it all had been done. Joseph was placed among the half-circle of men on the right hand, and Mary, his wife, among the women on the left hand. There they, with our Brethren, ate the bread and drank the wine, and all together sang the holy hymns.

Further, Joseph here vowed before the elder of our Brotherhood, that he renounced forever any claim on the child who was thenceforth to belong to the Order. He was then made acquainted with the salutation and sign of the holy Brotherhood, which would enable him during his travels to make himself known to these. They also directed him which route to take to arrive in safety.

This route was through a part of the country where there lived many enlightened and learned Jews who were well versed in the Scriptures, and devoted to study. Among these our Order has many members. These were ordered to protect Joseph and be hospitable to him, even before he arrived among them. This was in the beautiful country of Heliopolis with its splendid forests, and near unto the temple of Jehovah, erected by Onias.

When the peril in Galilee was over and the Roman "Warus" was pillaging in Judea, making that country unsafe, Joseph

went to Nazareth, which is situate near by the steep mount of Tabor.

But soon Archelaus brought new terror over Galilee, and Joseph was persuaded by our brethren to go to Jerusalem—on his way passing “Luhem”—and there seek protection by our Brotherhood. This was duly accomplished, and at passover they arrived at “Nisan.”

Here I myself spoke with them. I was then in the lower degree of the Order, and in obedience to the command of the elder carried a message to Joseph. I found him to be a man of candor and wide experience who spoke with great judgment and wisdom. Indeed, he exhorted Mary to describe distinctly the differences between reality and dreamy imagination, things as different as the day is from the night, and instructed her how to quiet her mind through prayer and devotion.

Her mind was filled with fiery imaginings that often lifted her thoughts to heavenly things and made her indifferent to

the things of the earth. In consequence she strongly influenced the mind of her son to the study and contemplation of immortal truths.

Joseph commended her for her good influence over the child. He also instructed Jesus in knowledge and wisdom, and protected his pure mind against the power of overstrained imagination.

And when the child Jesus spoke with the scribes concerning holy things his doctrines gave deep offense to the Pharisees in Jerusalem, in that they considered them dangerous and incredible.

Inasmuch as the Pharisees held rigidly to the traditions and details of the law of Moses, they were deeply aggrieved against every one who did not believe with them, and who did not keep in outward form to the ceremonials of their temple service.

They gave alms in the sight of the multitudes. They taught of "*the kingdom of the dead,*" of the influence of good angels and evil spirits, and of the future grand eternal

destiny of the Jewish people. Although they had many friends among the common people, and exercised great power and influence with them; nevertheless, the Spirit of God dwelt neither in their houses nor on their tongues.

But Joseph had come to be of our doctrines, and without figures or mysteries he fixed them in the mind of the growing child. Indeed, the child thus early was touched by the miseries of the people, and they were enraptured to hear him teach the word of God. The Scribes knew him to be from Galilee, and they despised him as they despised the whole people of Galilee.

But some of our brethren went to the temple, and without betraying themselves through our holy salutation, kept him in their midst, that they might thus protect him.

When the divine child had spoken publicly, in the temple, then were our brothers apprehensive of the dangers that threatened him; for they knew that the Pharisees

and the Rabbis were in private council fully determined to banish him from Galilee because of his doctrines. They therefore lured him to the synagogue of Sopherim by manifesting to him an assumed interest in the law, for they perceived that in all his ardor and enthusiasm he was influenced by nothing else.

Thus it came to pass that he was lost from his father and mother in the large city which then contained many people from the whole country, because of the passover.

Our friends, the Esseers, were informed of these things, and they saw that it was not safe nor wise for the child to remain longer among the Pharisees, as much more as a Rabbi, who had become a true friend and teacher to the child, no more could be present to moderate his zeal and ardor, contending as he was with the immoral hypocrites, as the Rabbi had gone on a journey to Jericho.

Therefore we informed Joseph and his

wife, whom we found in double grief inasmuch as they at the time also had been informed that the husband of Elizabeth, Mary's friend, had died. Thus, for three days Mary had been searching for her son, in deep sorrow, and at the same time she felt a strong desire to go and see her friend. At last, on the fourth day, she found her son at Sopherim, according to the information given her by our Brethren.

And Nabbin, the Rabbi who had taken such deep interest in the child, was a secret member of our Order, and had received instructions to protect him.

Thus it came to pass that Mary, her husband and her son returned to Jutha.

Here she found her friend Elizabeth in great grief, with her son, whose name was John.

Here the two youths were much together, and together they talked much about the sacred and the divine. Oft they wandered into the wildest parts of the mountain regions. They grew to be devoted friends,

and their attachment ripened into intimate acquaintance with each other in their search for truth.

John, who was the son of Zacharias, had already received the doctrines of the Nazarenes as regards reservedness, and he knew perfectly the Scriptures and traditions, but comprehended not the beautiful and the exalted in this world, nor the laws of nature, as well as Jesus. He felt great dislike for the customs of the heathens, and despised and hated all tyrants.

And the time had come when Jesus should be admitted into the first degree of our Order. And in the valley our Order had a Brotherhood, situate near the mountain where the castle Masseda stands, and the elder of our Brotherhood met them there, and listened to their conversation.

He taught them that wisdom and virtue are strengthened by fraternity; whereupon Jesus, in a transport of great joy, asked that he might be prepared at once for admittance into our holy Order. The exam-

ple set by Jesus was followed by John, and the elder offered up a prayer which made Jesus a devotee of God.

According to the rules of our Order, the elder now said: "You shall be my brethren as soon as you, by the next new moon, shall see the glare of the fire on the mountain where the temple is built, and where you then will appear. He that is initiated into our Order must at the same time dedicate his life to the service of others. Tell your father Joseph that the time is now come for him to fulfil the vow he made at Mount Cassius."

The Esseer then departed. But when the child had returned to his home Joseph was already remembered of his vow and of his duties to our brethren.

Joseph then, for the first time, made known to Jesus that he was not his father.

Together they kept secret the admission of Jesus into our Brotherhood, for fear of the Gaulanites.

At the appointed time they saw, in the

evening, the fire signal ascend from the mountain, whereupon they immediately set forth to journey thither. When they were arrived at the temple they were met by the white-robed messengers sent by the Brotherhood.

According to our rules, Jesus was initiated into our holy Order, after the following manner :

Both were instructed and shown the way to enter into the assemblage, where the brethren were seated in four separated groups, according to the four degrees. Over the scene the crescent shed its lurid glare. The two were placed before the brethren. There they made their vow, the brethren in their white robes placing their right hands upon their breasts, with the left hanging down at the side. And this was done as a token that none but the pure in heart shall see that which is sacred and holy.

And the two vowed indifference to the treasures of earth, to worldly power or

name, and by the brotherly kiss they vowed obedience and secrecy.

And, in obedience to our custom, when these two had made their vow they were conducted into the lonely cavern where, for three days and nights, they were subject to self-examination and trial.

In the evening of the third day they were again brought before the assembled brethren to answer the questions put to them, and then to pray.

Having received the brotherly kiss, they were clothed in white robes, emblems of sacred purity, and the trowel, emblematic of the labors of our Brotherhood, was put into their hands.

Having sung the sacred hymns and partaken of the feast of love by themselves, according to the custom of our Order none of the brethren participating, they were dismissed. After this they were instructed concerning the trials and the disciplines through which they must pass—living in the loneliness of solitude, separate from

the world of mankind, for the period of one year, at a point near the elder of the Order from whom they should receive instructions fitting them for advancement in the higher degrees of our Order.

Both grew rapidly in divine knowledge. Jesus was frank and hearty of disposition, but John shrouded himself in stern seriousness and solitude.

When the year of trial and self-examination was passed, they were again, under the new moon, admitted into the Order, this time as real members, and initiated into the higher science.

When they had given a full account of their conduct during the preceding year, and acted in obedience to all the rules of the Order, and performed the ceremonies of singing and prayer and partaking of the feast of love, they were conducted to the secret chamber of worship, and there they were instructed and admonished to search the Scriptures.

Inasmuch as the rules of our Order per-

mit the admitted member either to remain with the Brotherhood in secret labor and fellowship, or go out into the world to teach or heal, according to his election, so Jesus chose to go forth teaching, while John chose to become a "Terapeut," or elder.

Jesus felt himself called by the spirit of God, and longed to preach the doctrines of our Order to the people.

Thus it came to pass that John returned to Jutha, to live in solitude in the wilderness, and Jesus returned to Nazareth.

Here he proved gloriously his virtue, and fulfilled his vow to the Order. His friend Lazarus had a sister Mary, who loved Jesus; and he, in his heart, returned her love.

But, according to the rules of our Order, an Esseer is not allowed to take unto himself a wife, after his own desire, lest the sacred work be thereby retarded.

And so it was that Jesus overcame his love for this woman by his dutiful devotion

to unselfish service of the Brotherhood. But the struggle was hard, and at the hour of their parting both Jesus and Mary wept bitterly.

I have informed you of all these things, my Brethren, that you shall indeed know that Jesus was our Brother, and belonged to our Holy Order.

Thus all doubts and uncertainties on this matter must be ended. Jesus, our Brother, willingly suffered death that he might thereby glorify the doctrines of our Order; and the greatest reward of our virtue is that we may, in like manner, be allowed to sacrifice ourselves for it.

You have heard the accounts which the Jews and his disciples have given concerning him; that they have seen him in the mountains and on the road after they believed him to be dead.

The divine providence has given us a minute knowledge of these events that is hidden from the people, and it is our duty to inform you of the facts in reply to your questions relative thereto.

Even as I write this, my eyes overflow with tears, and I seem to see our Brother in the midst of his torture and in the anguish of death; and my afflicted mind is anew wounded by the recollection of his majestic courage and self-sacrifice.

He was sent of God, chosen by the Almighty, beloved of us all, and inspired both in teaching and in the knowledge of nature and its elements.

Hear then, my Brethren, what occurred in Jerusalem seven passovers ago. I have seen it all with my own eyes, and with my lips I have kept it a secret, that the world should not know it; for the Jews and the heathen believe only in the things they have seen with their eyes. And so they have no faith in God beyond that which they can conceive with their senses.

Therefore, my dear Brethren, you should give praise to God that it has thus come to pass. We have kept these things a secret from the people, lest their belief in providence should be diminished. For

you know there are many pious and excellent men who have recorded and remembered the life and death of Jesus, but have them only from rumors, augmented and corrupted by superstition; and from reverence and piety they believe what they hear of a beloved Master.

It was even so with those, chosen from among the people, who were called disciples of Jesus. Most of them have heard the story of his life and death only through tradition, as it has been told from man to man; although there were others who were present; but these have given no information concerning these important events.

In secrecy I will now inform you of what I and our Brotherhood in Jerusalem have seen and witnessed; and you know that an Esseer never permits aught to pass his lips save the strictest truth. Every man who has the gift of speech should magnify God, and give manifestation of him, even as God has given unto him a tongue in his mouth.

We might indeed have saved our beloved

Brother from the vengeance of his enemies, if everytling had not come to pass so quickly, and if our laws had not prohibited us from interfering in public matters.

Nevertheless, we have saved him in secret, as he fulfilled his divine mission in the sight of all the universe. Indeed, that a man die for his faith does not increase the glory of God; but that he, full of devotion and divine confidence, suffer himself to be subjected to martyrdom for his faith; and this resolution, firmly fixed in mind, constitutes the fulfilment of our work in the sight of the world.

Therefore, pay good heed to what I now tell you, that you may judge for yourselves of the rumors that have reached you hence and from Rome.

[Here is a large vacant place in the document, caused by the destroying influence of time, the deciphering of which is not possible from the still existing remains.]

The procession in which was the doomed Jesus and the two thieves, wound its way out of the entrance to the valley that leads from Jerusalem to Golgotha, the place of execution.

The women cried loudly when they beheld Jesus almost sinking down under the weight of the cross, and his wounds, from the scourging he had undergone, bleeding profusely.

Having arrived at the barren mountain ridge "Gileon," where nothing grows, and which lay on the north side, through which the lonely valley of death winds its way, they halted, and Jesus fell to the ground, his tortured body losing all its strength.

Meanwhile the Roman soldiers were selecting places for erecting the crosses. This done, they desired to prove their sympathy with the sufferers by giving to them a drink that made them unconscious, according to the custom before crucifixion. This drink was made from sour wine mixed with wormwood, and was called "Toska."

But Jesus did not wish to die for his faith and the truth as a drunkard, wherefore he refused to drink of it, having knowledge, from our Order, of the qualities of the mixture, which he knew by testing it.

And the crosses being erected, the time was now come when the punishment was to be inflicted on Jesus. The first ceremony was to tear his clothes from his body. But in order that this might be done it was necessary to divest him of the soldier's mantle that he wore after the scourging, and put on him his own clothes, which latter were then torn off his body as the law requires.

At the request of the servants of Sanhedrim, the cross designed for Jesus was placed in the middle, between those for the two thieves, thereby denoting that his was the greatest crime. They had even distinguished his cross from the others, for although they commonly were constructed in such a manner that the perpendicular beam did not reach above the cross-beam,

his was of different form, the perpendicular beam reaching far above the cross-beam.

They then laid hold of Jesus, and, lifting him up, placed him on the short stake which is always put in front of each cross, that the body of the criminal may rest there while being tied. They tied the arms as usual with strong cords, and so tightly that all the blood went back to the heart, and breathing was thereby made difficult.

In the same manner they tied his feet, and wound half way up his legs strong cords which also drove the circulating blood back to the heart.

After this they drove through his hands thick iron nails, but none through his feet, for this was not customary. I note this particularly, my dear Brethren, inasmuch as it has been rumored that he was nailed through both his hands and his feet.

Thus the just hung, exposed to untold sufferings, in the heat of the sun, which on that day was extreme and fatiguing,

while the soldiers took possession of his clothes, according to the custom. The cloak they cut into four parts; but the tunic was woven, and could not be torn asunder, wherefore they cast lots for it.

After the noonday, when the sun had turned, there came throngs of people from the city, drawn thither by curiosity; and there were several priests present, gloating over their sinful vengeance. They derided him, bowed down as he was with grief and pain, and exhorted the people to mock him.

Jesus suffered quietly, directing his gaze to the sky. He heard not the women of his tribe from Galilee, who were standing some distance away wringing their hands and lamenting his, as they thought, untimely death.

These sounds of anguish and lamentation were drowned by the noise of horsemen advancing to the scene. This was the high-priest "Caiaphas" with a large escort of servants, who came to mock and deride the crucified son of God. And even one of

the crucified thieves joined with them in deriding him, for he had secretly hoped that Jesus would have delivered both himself and them through a miracle.

Now the Romans, in derision of the Jews, had fixed a tablet or plate on the cross, over his head, whereon in four different languages they designated him "*King of the Jews.*" This deeply angered the priests, but, inasmuch as they feared Pilate, they exhausted their wrath by mocking Jesus.

Darkness descended over the earth, and the people returned to Jerusalem. But Jesus' disciples, his friends and the elders of our holy Order remained on Golgotha, our Order having near by a colony for worship and for partaking of our feast of love.

And Jesus recognized his mother among the weeping women from Galilee, standing close by the silent John (the Evangelist). Jesus called out loudly, in the anguish of his pain, citing the twenty-second Psalm, praying God thereby to deliver him from his sufferings.

There were still a few Pharisees remaining on the mountain, who intended mocking him, because they had expected and hoped that Jesus would descend from the cross, "the worldly savior of the people"; and as this had not come to pass, they felt themselves deceived and were therefore angry.

The heat grew steadily more intense, more unendurable, and a fire was forming in the earth and air, such as is essential to the purification of the elements. The Esseer brethren, through their knowledge of nature and its elements, knew that an earthquake was coming, as had formerly occurred in the days of our forefathers.

As the night approached the earth began a terrible shaking, and the Roman Centurion became so terrified that he prayed to his heathen gods. He believed that Jesus was beloved by the gods. Most of the frightened people hastily departed from the place and returned to Jerusalem; and the Centurion, who was a noble man of

compassionate nature, permitted John to conduct the mother of Jesus close to the cross.

Jesus was consumed with thirst. His lips were parched and dry, and the pain was burning in his limbs. A soldier put a sponge dipped in vinegar on a long cane of hyssop, and from this Jesus quenched his thirst.

As he recommended his mother to the care of John, it was growing darker, although the full moon should have been shining in the heavens. From the Dead Sea was observed to rise a thick, reddish fog. The mountain ridges round about Jerusalem shook violently, and the head of Jesus sank down upon his breast.

When he uttered his last groan of anguish and pain, and passed away, a hissing sound was heard in the air; and they of the Jews that still remained were seized by a great fear, for they believed that the evil spirits who dwell between heaven and earth were proceeding to punish the people.

It was that strange and unusual sound in the air that precedes an earthquake.

Soon the mountain began to shake, the surrounding country and the city commenced to rock, and the thick walls of the temple gave way until the veil in the temple parted and fell from its place. Even the rocks burst asunder, and the hewn sepulchres in the rock were destroyed, as were also many of the corpses kept therein.

And as the Jews regarded all this as extremely supernatural, so the Roman Centurion believed now in the divinity and innocence of Christ, and comforted his mother.

Although our brethren did not dare to tell the people, as it is a secret with us, nevertheless they well knew the cause of this phenomenon of nature, and believed in their Brother without ascribing to him supernatural powers.

Dear Brethren, you have reproached us, in that we did not save our Friend from the cross by secret means. But I need only to

remind you that the sacred law of our Order prohibits us from proceeding publicly, and from interfering in matters of state. Moreover, two of our Brethren, influential and experienced, did use all their influence with Pilate and the Jewish council in behalf of Jesus, but their efforts were frustrated in that Jesus himself requested that he might be permitted to suffer death for his faith, and thus fulfil the law; for, as you know, to die for truth and virtue is the greatest sacrifice a Brother can make.

There was a certain Joseph, from Arimathea. He was rich, and being a member of the council, he was much esteemed by the people. He was a prudent man, and whilst he did not appear to belong to any party, he was secretly a member of our sacred Order and lived in accordance with our laws. His friend Nicodemus was a most learned man, and belonged to the highest degree of our Order. He knew the secrets of the "Terapeuts," and was often together with us.

Now it so happened that after the earthquake, and many of the people had gone away, Joseph and Nicodemus arrived at the cross. They were informed of the death of the crucified, in the garden of our Brethren, not far from Calvary.

Although they loudly lamented his fate, it nevertheless appeared strange to them that Jesus, having hung less than seven hours, should already be dead. They could not believe it, and hastily went up to the place. There they found John alone, he having determined to see what became of the beloved body.

Joseph and Nicodemus examined the body of Jesus, and Nicodemus, greatly moved, drew Joseph aside and said to him: "As sure as is my knowledge of life and nature, so sure is it possible to save him."

But Joseph did not understand him, and he admonished us that we should not tell John of what we had heard. Indeed, it was a secret which was to save our Brother from death.

Nicodemus shouted: "We must immediately have the body with its bones unbroken, because he may still be saved"; then, realizing his want of caution, he continued in a whisper, "saved from being infamously buried."

He persuaded Joseph to disregard his own interest, that he might save their Friend by going immediately to Pilatus, and prevailing upon him to permit them to take Jesus' body from the cross that very night and put it in the sepulchre, hewn in the rock close by, and which belonged to Joseph.

I, understanding what he meant, remained with John to watch the cross and prevent the soldiers from breaking the bones of Jesus.

No corpse is allowed to remain on the cross over night, and the next day being Sunday, they would now take him down and bury him early.

The Jewish council had already demanded of Pilate an order to the soldiers to

break the bones of the crucified, that they might be buried.

Soon after Joseph and Nicodemus had departed, each one on his sacred mission, a messenger arrived bringing the order to the Centurion to take down the corpses and bury them. I myself was greatly agitated by this information, for I knew if he were not handled with great care he could not be saved, and still less if his bones were to be broken.

Even John was dismayed, though not from fear of the plans being frustrated, for of these he did not know; but he was deeply grieved at the thought of seeing the body of his friend mutilated. For John believed that Jesus was dead.

As the messenger arrived I hastened to him, thinking and hoping that Joseph already might have seen Pilate, a thing of which there in reality was no possibility.

“Does Pilate send you?” I asked of him.

And he answered, “I come not from Pilate, but from his Secretary, who acts for

the governor in such unimportant matters.’’

The Centurion, observing my anxiety, looked at me, and in the manner of a friend I said to him: “You have seen that this man that is crucified is an uncommon man. Do not maltreat him, for a rich man among the people is now with Pilate to offer him money for the corpse, that he may give it decent burial.”

My dear Brethren, I must here inform you that Pilate often did sell the bodies of the crucified to their friends, that they might thus bury them.

And the Centurion was friendly to me, inasmuch as he had conceived from the events that Jesus was an innocent man. And therefore, when the two thieves were beaten by the soldiers with heavy clubs and their bones broken, the Centurion went past the cross of Jesus, saying to the soldiers: “Do not break his bones, for he is dead.”

And a man was seen rapidly approach-

ing along the road from the castle of Antonia to Calvary. He advanced to the Centurion and brought to him the order that he should quickly come to Pilate.

The Centurion then questioned the messenger to learn what Pilate wanted of him at so late an hour of the night. The messenger answered, that Pilate desired to know if Jesus was indeed dead.

“So he is,” said the Centurion; “therefore we have not broken his bones.”

To be the more sure of it, one of the soldiers stuck his spear into the body in such manner that it passed over the hip and into the side. The body showed no convulsions, and this was taken by the Centurion as a sure sign that he actually was dead; and he hurriedly went away to make his report.

But from the insignificant wound flowed blood and water, at which John wondered, and my own hope revived. For even John knew, from the knowledge of our Brotherhood, that from a wound in a dead body flows nothing but a few drops of thickened

blood; but now there flowed both water and blood.

I was deeply anxious that Joseph and Nicodemus should return. At last some Galilean women were seen approaching on their return from Bethania, whither they had brought Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the care of the Esseer friends.

And among the women was also Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who had loved Jesus, and she wept loudly. But before she could pour out her grief, and while John was gazing intently at the wound in Jesus' side, heeding naught else, Joseph and Nicodemus returned in great haste. Joseph through his dignity had moved Pilate, and Pilate, having received information as to the death of the crucified, gave the body to Joseph, and without taking pay therefor.

For Pilate had a great reverence for Joseph, and secretly repented of the execution. When Nicodemus saw the wound, flowing with water and blood, his eyes were animated with new hope, and he spoke en-

couragingly, foreseeing what was to happen.

He drew Joseph aside to where I stood, some distance from John, and spoke in a low, hurried tone: "Dear friends, be of good cheer, and let us to work. Jesus is not dead. He seems so only because his strength is gone."

"While Joseph was with Pilate I hurried over to our colony and fetched the herbs that are useful in such cases. But I admonish you that you tell not John that we hope to reanimate the body of Jesus, lest he could not conceal his great joy. And dangerous indeed would it be if the people should come to know it, for our enemies would then put us all to death with him."

After this they hurried to the cross, and, according to the prescriptions of the medical art, they slowly untied his bonds, drew the spikes out from his hands, and with great care laid him on the ground.

Thereupon, Nicodemus spread strong

spices and healing salves on long pieces of "byssus" which he had brought, and whose use was known only in our Order.

These he wound about Jesus' body, pretending that he did so to keep the body from decaying until after the feast, when he would then embalm it.

These spices and salves had great healing powers, and were used by our Esseer Brethren who knew the rules of medical science for the restoration to consciousness of those in a state of death-like fainting. And even as Joseph and Nicodemus were bending over his face and their tears fell upon him, they blew into him their own breath, and warmed his temples.

Still Joseph was doubtful of his recovery to life, but Nicodemus encouraged him to increase their efforts. Nicodemus spread balsam in both the nail-pierced hands, but he believed that it was not best to close up the wound in Jesus' side, because he considered the flow of blood and water therefrom helpful to respiration and beneficial in the renewing of life.

In the midst of his grief and sorrow, John did not believe that life would return to the body of his friend, and he did not hope to see him again until they should meet in "Scheol."

The body was then laid in the sepulchre made in the rocks, which belonged to Joseph. They then smoked the grotto with aloe and other strengthening herbs, and while the body lay upon the bed of moss, still stiff and inanimate, they placed a large stone in front of the entrance, that the vapors might better fill the grotto.

This done, John, with some others, went to Bethania, to comfort his grief-stricken mother.

But Caiaphas, although it was the Sabbath day, had sent out his secret spies. He was anxious to know who were the secret friends of Jesus. His suspicions had fallen upon Pilate because of his having given Joseph of Arimathea the body without any pay, he being rich, a Rabbi and member of the high council, who never had appeared to take any interest in the case of

Jesus previously, but who now had given his own place of burial for the crucified.

And so it was that Caiaphas anticipated secret plans between the rich Joseph and the Galileans, and knowing that they intended to embalm the body, he hoped there to catch them, as the idea had occurred to him that Joseph and Pilate were plotting against the Jews.

Fear of this caused him great anxiety, and for this reason he hoped to discover some secret means of accusing Joseph and having him thrown into prison. He betrayed this fact himself by sending late in the night a number of his armed servants to an obscure valley close by the grotto in which lay the body of Jesus. Some distance from them was stationed a detachment of the temple guard, to assist the servants of the high-priest, if necessary.

But the rumor has told you that this guard were Roman soldiers, which was not the case. The high-priest even distrusted Pilate.

Meanwhile Nicodemus had hastened with me to our brethren, and the oldest and wisest came to confer as to the best means of restoring Jesus to life. And the brethren agreed immediately to send a guard to the grove. Joseph and Nicodemus hurried to the city, there to fulfil their further mission.

After midnight, and towards morning, the earth again commenced to shake, and the air became very oppressive. The rocks shook and cracked. Red flames burst forth from the crevices, illuminating the red mists of the morning.

This was, indeed, a dreadful night. Beasts, horrified by the earthquake, ran howling and crying in every direction. Through the narrow opening the little lamp in the grotto threw trembling shadows into the horrible night, and the servants of the high-priest were full of fear, listening to the hissing in the air and the roaring and rumbling in the earth.

One of our brethren went to the grave,

in obedience to the order of the Brotherhood, dressed in the white robe of the fourth degree. He went by way of a secret path which ran through the mountain to the grave, and which was known only to the Order.

When the timid servants of the high-priest saw the white-robed Brother on the mountain slowly approaching, and partially obscured by the morning mist, they were seized with a great fear, and they thought that an angel was descending from the mountain.

When this Brother arrived at the grave which he was to guard, he rested on the stone which he had pulled from the entrance according to his orders; whereupon the soldiers fled and spread the report that an angel had driven them away.

When the Esseer youth had set himself down upon the stone, there came a new earth-shock, and a draft of air passing down the grotto blew out the lamp and gave place for the morning light.

Thirty hours had now passed since the assumed death of Jesus. And when the Brother, having heard a slight noise within the grotto, went in to observe what had happened, he smelled a strange odor in the air, such as often occurs when the earth is about to vomit forth fire.

And the youth observed with inexpressible joy that the lips of the body moved, and that it breathed. He at once hastened to Jesus to assist him, and heard slight sounds rising from his breast. The face assumed a living appearance, and the eyes opened and in astonishment gazed at the novice of our Order.

This occurred just as I was leaving with the brethren of the first degree, from the council, with Joseph, who had come to consult how to bring help.

Nicodemus, who was an experienced physician, said, on the way, that the peculiar condition of the atmosphere caused by the revolution of the elements was beneficial to Jesus, and that he never had believed that

Jesus really was dead. And he further said that the blood and water which flowed from the wound was a sure sign that life was not extinct.

Conversing thus, we arrived at the grotto, Joseph and Nicodemus going before. We were in all twenty-four brethren of the first degree.

Entering, we perceived the white-robed novice kneeling upon the moss-strewn floor of the grotto, supporting the head of the revived Jesus on his breast.

And as Jesus recognized his Esseer friends, his eyes sparkled with joy; his cheeks were tinted with a faint red, and he sat up, asking: "Where am I?"

Then Joseph embraced him, folded him in his arms, told him how it all had come to pass, and how he was saved from actual death by a profound fainting fit, which the soldiers on Calvary had thought was death.

And Jesus wondered, and felt on himself; and, praising God, he wept on the breast of Joseph. Then Nicodemus urged

his friend to take some refreshments, and he ate some dates and some bread dipped in honey. And Nicodemus gave wine to drink, after which Jesus was greatly refreshed, so that he raised himself up.

Then it was that he became conscious of the wounds in his hands and in his side. But the balsam which Nicodemus had spread upon them had a soothing effect, and they had already commenced to heal.

After the "byssus" wrappings had been taken off and the muckender was removed from his head, Joseph spoke and said: "This is not a place in which to remain longer, for here the enemies might easily discover our secret, and betray us."

But Jesus was not yet strong enough to walk far, wherefore he was conducted to the house belonging to our Order, that is close by Calvary, in the garden, which also belongs to our brethren.

Another young Brother of our Order was dispatched at once to assist the novice who had been watching by the grave of

Jesus, to annihilate every trace of the byssus wrappings and the medicines and drugs used.

When Jesus arrived at the house of our brethren he was faint and weak. His wounds had begun to cause him pain. He was much moved, in that he considered it all as a miracle.

“God has let me rise,” he said, “that he may prove in me that which I have taught, and I will show my disciples that I do live.”

And after a little while the two young men who had gone to put the grave in order, came hurriedly back and brought the message that the friends of Jesus soon would come to seek him.

And they related how they had heard a noise, when at work in the grotto, as of many people coming to the fence that surrounds the garden. When they had retired yet further into the grotto, there came a woman on the road from Jerusalem, and when she saw that the stone had been rolled away from the grave she manifested

great fear. She thought that something had happened to the body, and hurried away to Bethlehem.

But soon thereafter other women came from Jerusalem, and approached the grave. Wondering greatly, they had entered the grave, and one of them, on looking for the body in the place where it had lain, beheld our Brother, and in terror pointed him out to her companions. When the other Brother also came in view, the women fell upon their faces, and thought they had beheld angels.

And the brethren spoke to them as they had been ordered by those of the first degree, and one of them said to the women: "Jesus is risen. Do not look for him here. Say to his disciples that they will find him in Galilee." And the other told them to gather the disciples and conduct them to Galilee.

This was devised by the wisdom of Joseph, for he would not that they should look for Jesus at Jerusalem, for his safe-

ty's sake. And the brethren went out of the cavern by the rear entrance, and observed that some of the women hastened on the road to Bethania, whereupon the young Brothers hurried to us in the house to tell us of what had come to pass.

Thus the Esseer friends pleaded with Jesus to remain in concealment, for his safety's sake, and to recover his strength. But Jesus was moved by a great desire to prove to his friends that he still lived. Impelled by this desire, and feeling himself refreshed and strengthened, he asked for clothes, that he might go forth among his friends. He was immediately clothed in the Esseer working-garb, such as our brethren wear when at work. In this dress he appeared as a gardener.

In the meantime the two young Brothers had gone again to the grave, as their work there was not yet completed. While there they saw the same woman return who came first to the grave, as John and Peter meanwhile had made known among the disciples what had come to pass.

This woman, thus returning to the grave, thought the two novices were angels guarding the empty grave, and she wept.

One of the novices, of kindly disposition, in a gentle and soothing voice spoke to the woman and asked her why she wept. This woman was Mary, whom Jesus had loved and had been obliged to leave in accordance with the laws of our holy Brotherhood.

And as she was lamenting that Jesus did not lie where he had been placed before the Sabbath, Jesus stood behind her, dressed in the garb of a gardener.

Animated by the desire to see again those he loved, and to proclaim to them that he still lived, he had disregarded the advice of the brethren that he remain in concealment, and, leaving the house, he had taken the path through the garden to the rock where the grave was hewn.

When Mary saw him she thought him to be the gardener. But Jesus knew her, and rejoicing in her love he spoke to her. Still, in his weak and suffering condition, she did

not know him. But when he exclaimed, "O Mary!" she knew him and longed to kiss his feet and thereafter embrace him.

But Jesus, feeling the pain in his hands and side, feared to embrace her lest he might thereby injure his wounds. He therefore moved back from her as she approached, and said:

"Touch me not. Though I still live, yet soon shall I go to my Father in heaven; for my body is become feeble and soon shall be dissolved, that my death may be fulfilled."

As the woman knelt down, and with great excitement fixed her eyes upon him, Jesus heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and, careful for his safety, hastened back, placing himself behind the garden wall not far from the garden of our friends.

And the two youths who were charged to guard the grave, and who had been instructed to thwart the enemies' spies who were seeking to find Jesus, had seen and heard all this.

Meanwhile Joseph, Nicodemus and the

other brethren had come from the house into the garden to look after Jesus and take due care that he was not in peril because of his great weakness. This Nicodemus feared inasmuch as he had seen that the wounds were more inflamed and the flesh where the strong cords had been was now dark of color.

When we had arrived at the entrance of the garden we beheld Jesus standing behind the wall and resting against it as if he could go no further.

It was about this time that John hastened from the city, and looking into the grotto had found it vacant. For the two youths had made their way to our garden through the secret entrance to the grotto.

Peter also arrived, and both together searched throughout the grotto for signs of the body. Entering the inner part of the grotto they found the muckender where the novices had thrown it, whence they had fled at the arrival of these two strange persons.

In earnest conversation the two disciples hurried back into the city.

And Jesus had slowly walked along the wall until he had reached the little gate that opens to the valley of Mount "Gihon." There he listened to the conversation of some women outside the wall. When he came forth and the women had beheld him they believed that they had seen an apparition. But Jesus spoke to them in order that they might know that it was indeed himself.

And inasmuch as the youth in the grove had said to the women that in Galilee they should see him, one of them remembered this and said to him: "Lord, shall we obey the word of the angel, and see thee again in Galilee?"

This question astonished Jesus, for he did not know that the brethren had instructed the novice to mention that part of the country. But after consideration he answered her and said: "Yes, inform my friends and tell them that I go to Galilee and there you shall see me."

His weakness being increased, he desired

to be left alone, and the women departed. And then it was that we, his secret protectors, went to him and conducted him back to the house that he might there rest and be refreshed.

Nicodemus again tied up his wounds, gave him a medical draught and admonished him to rest himself in quiet. But Jesus feared not death, and was buoyant of spirit. Nevertheless his strength was gone, and he soon fell into a profound sleep, whereupon Joseph, Nicodemus and the brethren counseled together as to how they might care for his safety. For this purpose they sent some of the brethren into the city that they might learn the rumors of Jesus among the people.

And strangely the rumors had told of many miracles in the city. The fleeing guards having tried to conceal their cowardly fear, had circulated reports of terrible events that had come to pass, and of spirits that had burst open the grave.

And the high-priest had been told of

these things, and he knew not what to think. He feared lest the miracle would excite the people, for the women, and even the men, had been too excited thereby to keep it a secret, and the people already were busy discussing the subject.

Therefore, Caiaphas gave the guard money, that they should report that his friends had stolen the corpse, that they (the disciples) might say he was risen, and thus delude the people.

And all day Jesus remained in his profound slumber, and was thereby filled with renewed life. It was evening when he awakened. His wounds were now less painful, inasmuch as the balsam which Nicodemus applied had produced a soothing effect. He was in good spirit, and with thankful heart he saw that his friends watched over him. Without assistance he rose from his couch, and, being hungry, asked that he might have food.

Having refreshed himself, he said: "Now that I am strong again it behooves

me that I no longer remain in concealment. For a teacher should be among his people, and a son embrace his mother.”

Joseph answered him and said: “The Brotherhood is father and mother to thee now, according to its promise to thee, and it is therefore the duty of the Brotherhood to protect thee as its beloved child.”

And Jesus said: “I fear not death, for I have fulfilled it, and the enemies shall acknowledge that God has saved me, and wills not that I die eternally.”

Then one of the elders of the Brotherhood said: “Thou art not safe in this country, for they will search after thee. Do not, therefore, go any more among the people to teach, for what thou hast taught will live among thy friends forever, and thy disciples will publish it to the world. Remain, I pray thee, dead to the world. The Brotherhood has brought thee back to life through its secrets, therefore live henceforth for our holy Order to which thou art bound. Live in the seclusion of

wisdom and virtue, unknown to the world. We will secretly teach and assist the disciples among the people, and they shall receive encouragement and help from the holy Brotherhood. And if the time shall come when thou shouldst again go out among the people, we will send for thee and inform thee.”

But Jesus, in the ardor of his sacred enthusiasm, said: “The voice of God is more powerful within me than is the fear of death. I will see my disciples once more, and will go to Galilee.”

Then the elder said: “Be it so, as God has called you; but it behooves men that they be wise and cautious in good things. Therefore, some of our brethren shall go with thee, and protect thee through the power of our connections in Galilee.”

But Nicodemus did not approve of this journey, for he knew that the body of Jesus was weakened, though his soul was strong in its courage. And the faithful physician therefore entreated him not to

go lest he thereby make impossible his recovery.

But Jesus answered: "Be it fulfilled that is to be." And Joseph wondered greatly at the spirit of Jesus, and more than ever believed in his great promises.

When evening had come Jesus started on his journey, and he wished to go alone. It being cold, the brethren gave him a warm mantle in which he wrapped himself that the officers of the city might not recognize him.

And the brethren admonished him to stop only with the Esseer friends, and because of the feast not to travel on the highway. Therefore Jesus was persuaded to go by the way of Bethania and the Ephraimitical mountain, where Samaria borders on upper Galilee to the north.

Jesus went forth upon his journey, and when he was gone the brethren blessed his undertaking; but, advised by Joseph, they sent a novice to follow him and on the way secretly inform the Esseer friends.

Of all that has come to pass our friends have kept us fully informed.

While Jesus was journeying on the road to Emmaus, a few hours' travel hence, his soul was filled with inspirations over the new life, and he spoke in a loud voice, so that our messenger could hear that it was of the prophecies of Daniel he was speaking.

Two men were traveling the same road from Jerusalem, and as they walked more rapidly than Jesus, they soon overtook him.

Jesus said to them: "Peace be with you." At first he believed them to be Es-seer friends, but soon thereafter he recognized them as two of his own friends from among the people, who often had heard him teach. They gave no heed to the quiet traveler. But he heard them speak of his death, and of the deep despair of his disciples. And from their words he conceived that his doctrine and his teachings were in danger of being destroyed and lost, by reason of the despair

of his friends, who were without a leader to keep them from being scattered.

When one of these travelers lamented that the prophecy had not been fulfilled and that Jesus had not risen from the dead, Jesus spoke with ardor, and the two disciples were greatly interested in what he said, for it appeared to them that they had heard the same teachings before.

At the place in their journey where the two disciples stopped they detained Jesus when he desired to go farther on alone and in the night time. And at the common feast of love, in the house where they had stopped, the two disciples recognized Jesus; but he did not wish to be known in this place. He therefore, unobserved, passed out through the door and went to the house of the Esseer friend to whom he had been recommended.

Meanwhile the two disciples retraced their steps to Jerusalem to carry to their friends there the news of the risen one. Here they found Peter, and with him John.

But the Esseer friends met together and counseled what they were further to do. There was with them also the youth that our Order had sent to follow Jesus.

And Jesus conceived that he immediately must return to Jerusalem to reanimate the hope of his friends and correct the report given out by the two disciples who so hurriedly had returned to Jerusalem.

The Esseer friend gave him a beast of burden that he might mount and thus travel the more easily, and the novice whom we had sent accompanied him and walked by the side of the animal.

And thus it came to pass that, soon after the arrival of the disciples, Jesus came to the well-known home where our friends used to meet together. Jesus gave the sign by which the bar fell from the door by the hand of the doorkeeper, for the disciples were then in secret council.

When Jesus heard how his followers spoke of his resurrection, and were considering if it were possible, he came forward

among them, and as they did not know him at first, they were alarmed, not knowing that the door had been opened.

But Jesus spoke to them, comforted them, and proved to them that he was really flesh and bones. Thereupon they joyously surrounded him, touched his hands, and Jesus leaned upon the breast of John, being faint from the fatigue of the journey.

After he had rested Jesus still more fully proved to his friends that he lived as do other people, by asking for food. Inasmuch as the friends had already eaten, there was left some bread, honey and fish, of which he ate and refreshed himself.

Thereupon he admonished them that they fulfil the work he had undertaken and not give up but be of good cheer. And he blessed them and said to them that he could not disclose to them where he should go, and that he should go alone, but that when they should want him he would come to them, for he yet had much to say to them.

Outside the door the novice was waiting with the animal, and when Jesus came forth he directed the novice to conduct him to the quiet dwelling of the Esseers. But another Esseer youth had come to seek information of him in Jerusalem, and the two now carried Jesus between them, as he was still weak and faint from the fatigue he had endured on his journey.

After much effort and many difficulties they brought him in the night time to the Brotherhood, to the house of the elder, which is located a few stadis from Jerusalem and close by Olive Mountain.

Here Jesus was placed on a soft bed of moss, where he soon fell into a profound slumber. And the Esseer youths hastened to Joseph, Nicodemus and the other Esseer friends to inform them of what had occurred.

Before the dawning of day a council was held that they might further protect Jesus, he having returned to Jerusalem so openly, for the sake of the holy Spirit, that he

might strengthen his followers in their work. And with one accord they determined that no time should be lost, the priests in the city having their secret spies who were trying even to entrap his disciples.

It was in council agreed that he immediately must depart hence, that he might not be discovered, and that he should return to the quiet valley not far distant from Jutha and the castle of Masseda, where there is a wild and mountainous country. Here Jesus had lived before, together with John the physician, with whom he was admitted to the holy Order of our Brethren. This was considered also a safe place in that many Esseers lived there.

While they yet were in council considering, Jesus awoke from his refreshing slumbers, and wondered greatly to see that he was surrounded by his brethren. But Joseph and Nicodemus beseeched him that he save himself and not again permit himself to fall into the power of the priests.

Joseph even told him that it had come to him that Caiaphas had fixed his suspicions upon him, that he, with the Galileans, formed a secret plot to overthrow the present condition of things, and that Caiaphas would demand of him an explanation why he had laid Jesus in his own tomb.

He had suspicion even on Pilate that he had secretly contrived with me, because that he had given the supposed corpse to me without receiving pay therefor.

And as Joseph persuaded Jesus, with much ardor, to comply with his wishes, and as all the elders supported him, Jesus answered:

“Be it so; but I conjure you to encourage my disciples. Help and protect them and tell them that they shall have no doubts, for I am with them still in body and spirit.”

And Joseph entreated him that he take further rest, as Nicodemus had expressed fear lest the excitement and enthusiasm of Jesus would endanger and not help his

martyred body. For even if the wounds in his hands were beginning to heal, and the wound in his side emitted no more humor, his body was still weak and easily affected by the excitement of his mind. But, having slept, he for the immediate present felt himself refreshed.

After further consideration Jesus said: "If my disciples are not convinced that I really live, and if I do not go forth among them, they will think me an apparition and a delusion of their imagination."

Joseph answered him and said: "Let us advance John to the higher degrees of our Order, that he may be convinced of thy living, and may execute thy directions and inform the other disciples concerning thee."

But the elders of the brethren were not willing that John should be admitted into all the secrets, inasmuch as he was yet only in the lowest degree, and they feared that in his ardor he might inform others that Jesus was here.

While they were yet in council considering, a novice of our Order arrived, who had been sent to the city. He reported that John, with his friends, had hastened to Bethania to comfort the women in Lazarus' house, and inform them that Jesus was yet alive and had rested upon his bosom.

And John had wondered that Jesus had not directed him to go to Galilee, as he had ordered the women to do. He did not think, therefore, that it was the intention of his Master, and that the disciples ought to wait for coming events.

And Jesus remained all that day with the Esseer friends; but when night came on we all departed by the secret road—Joseph, Nicodemus and the elders of the Order—and having passed the valley of Rephaim, we arrived at Masseda at the breaking of day; and following a narrow path known only to the Esseers, we came at last to the brethren in that wild valley.

Here the elder provided for Jesus. And when Joseph and we others were about to

depart Jesus gave us his word that he would remain there until the Father should call him to fulfil his mission.

And each day the brethren sent a messenger to us to inform us of the health of our dearly beloved Brother. And we were told that Jesus had rested a number of days, but that his heart was sad and sorely afflicted with melancholy thoughts.

This was the same valley where he had wandered with John, his beloved companion, and with whom he had been initiated into our holy Order.

And Jesus meditated on that John who, as a physician, had founded a school and had baptized, had been slain by the enemies, while he had been saved by the hand of God, wherein he saw the command of God that he should not rest, in that his body had been restored to him for some purpose.

By this thought his mind was oppressed and overwrought, and as he came to the place where he and John had solemnly

vowed that they would die for truth and virtue, he felt that he was called to follow the mission in the cause of which his friend had died.

And Jesus went every day to this blessed spot, and refreshed his body, viewing the splendors of nature. And he selected a place whence he could see the high tower of Masseda toward the west, shielded from the morning and the noonday sun by lofty mountains, whilst on the other side the view was unobstructed and he could see far away over an open country toward the sea and the valley of Sittim.

But the elder of the Brotherhood left him not alone, inasmuch as he had observed that Jesus often would lie in profound revery, and that the longing to be among his disciples would overcome all care for his own safety.

About this time it came to pass that our brethren of the Brotherhood in Jerusalem remembered the promise they had made to Jesus to protect his disciples and strength-

en them in their belief in the resurrection of their Master. It had come to them that not all of the disciples were convinced of the resurrection of their Master. And one of them that doubted was Thomas, a deep thinker, who had received his education from the Esseer brethren. Because of this, he possessed profound knowledge in the secret powers and processes of nature. According to nature's laws he explained all the things that had come to pass, and he believed that there was no miracle; for, as an Esseer, he was raised above superstition.

Jesus confided in him and told him his mission, and Thomas believed in him and saw that his mission was one of great importance. This Jesus did in that Thomas was a man of clear vision and strong reason, excitement and passion being unknown to him; and with patience and great perseverance he tried all things before his mind would be convinced.

And when the disciples were together

in their secret place of meeting Thomas was with them, and he reasoned with them, not believing that a man can rise from the grave.

But John had himself seen and felt Jesus and held him on his breast. Nevertheless, Thomas would not be convinced, even though he believed in the prophecies of the prophets and that they would surely be fulfilled.

For, dear Brethren, the Jews hoped to see the Messiah come in the manner Elias had proclaimed.

And as our Brotherhood had promised to report all, especially as the disciples themselves did not agree, it was to be feared that their ardor in the good cause would diminish. We therefore sent two youths to the valley at Masseda to inform the brethren that they might counsel with Jesus.

When Jesus heard these things his heart was filled with a great desire to leave the solitude and show himself once more to his disciples.

And as the messenger had reported that Thomas would not believe that Jesus was still alive, except he could feel his hands and the wound in his side, Jesus no longer could restrain his desire, and even the elder counseled him to go and convince them.

This came to pass on the seventh day that Jesus had been in concealment.

And thus it happened that our brethren went with Jesus. And on the eighth day, when the disciples were together in Jerusalem, Jesus went forth among them, and Thomas was convinced.

Having accomplished this, Jesus spoke to his disciples and admonished them, for his own sake, that they were not safe. He also exhorted them to faith and to be of one accord. But he could not tell them when or where to meet him in Galilee, inasmuch as he had first to consider thereon.

After this he departed from them in the evening, and John went with him. And outside the house there was an Esseer youth who desired to commit himself to

the service of Jesus. And Jesus sent him to report that he was in Bethania.

Thereupon Jesus crossed Kidron with John as his companion. The night was beautiful and clear, and the moon shed a dim radiance over the scene.

At Gethsemane Jesus rested by the wall and spoke with John of his martyrdom and sufferings. Having received information of his disciples, he sent John forward to the house of Lazarus in Bethania, that he might announce his coming and learn if he there would be safe.

Immediately thereafter Jesus went into the house to see his mother and his friends.

After having thanked God that they were permitted once more to see each other, they ate and refreshed themselves together. On the following day he remained with them, comforting them and exhorting them that they believe in the truth. He warned them of their false expectations, in that they had come to think that he would forever remain with them.

He told them that it now was time that he should go, as the night was at hand. He said to them that he would hasten to Galilee, there to strengthen his disciples that they persevere in the good work.

But even while Jesus was in Bethania dangers were threatening him. Caiaphas, the high-priest, had been informed that Jesus had been seen in Jerusalem. And he had spread the rumor that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, and had invented a miraculous story.

But there were many among the people in the city who believed that Jesus had risen by the hand of God, and these commenced to complain of the injustice done to him, and to believe in his doctrines.

And the high-priest feared a revolution among the people, and believed that the Galileans were intending to overthrow the government and set up a new ruler. He was therefore suspicious and watchful.

In the evening of the same day came Nicodemus to our Brotherhood and brought

to us the information that Joseph of Arimathea had been arrested, and that they falsely attributed to him criminal purposes, in that he had been in secret association with Jesus. Whereupon great anxiety arose among our brethren, for we feared that also Jesus had been arrested, inasmuch as he had not been seen by any of us since the evening when he convinced Thomas.

Our elders thereupon met in council, wherein it was agreed that we should search for Jesus, and use all efforts to liberate Joseph.

Two of our brethren were commissioned to array themselves in their white holiday-garb and search for Jesus in Bethania, as Jesus had informed the Esseer youth that he would go thither.

And as they came to Bethania in the evening, and in the moonlight saw the house of Lazarus not far distant, they met with a man on the secret road who carefully scanned the road. But the Esseers

knew him, and they asked of him if Jesus was at his house. For this was Lazarus, and having recognized our brethren, he acknowledged that it was even so, and that Jesus intended that very night to go to Bethania, and therefore he had examined the secret road to see if it were safe.

The brethren were conducted into the house. Here, in a small secluded room, they spoke with Jesus. And when the brethren had told Jesus of the arrest and danger of Joseph, Jesus recommended him to the protection of the Order, prayed to God, and thereafter sent John to Jerusalem that he might warn his disciples of their danger.

Having taken leave of the women, we were accompanied by Lazarus as far as Gilgad. Thence he went further on alone in the night, and in the early morning he had come to the river Jordan, in the place where through John he was baptized by the Order.

Our holy Brotherhood in Jerusalem was

now planning how to liberate Joseph, whereto we were in possession of many secret means.

And John had warned his friends, the disciples, as he had been ordered. And the next morning they went in great numbers to the border of Galilee. Arriving there, they asked, one from another: "Whither shall we go? Our Master has fixed no time nor place."

And they thought of their homes from which they had so long been separated, and as they were considering whether they would search for Jesus in Nazareth or in Capernaum, Peter said: "Let us provide for sustenance, and not be idle; but let us work till the Master shall call us to a higher labor."

After hearing what Peter had said, they resolved to resume their former trades, and Peter repaired to Bethsaida, where some of the others also arrived before many days, to assist him and receive his counsel.

And Peter was a skillful fisherman, and he invited the others to go with him to sea in the evening.

Jesus traveled each day but a short distance, and on the way stopped only with the Esseer friends who lived in the valleys. And these brethren were well informed by the Brotherhood in Jerusalem of all that happened to us, and from these Jesus learned that Joseph had been liberated from prison and was on the way to meet him.

And when Jesus declared that he would go forth in Galilee into the places where he had been known before, the Esseer friends entreated him that he should not do this, and explained the many dangers that were about him.

And Jesus heeded them, and reflected as to the place where he would meet with his disciples. And he selected a safe and lonely place where he was not known and where there was opportunity for his disciples to dwell.

But the Esseer friends had been advised by the elder of the Brotherhood in Jerusalem to choose for a place of meeting the lonely valley at the foot of Mount Karmel, for the country is beautiful, and there live many Esseers. The valleys abound in powerful herbs, and the odors they give forth are healthful to the wanderer.

From this place our Brotherhood receives the herbs its physicians use in medicines. The clear water runs sparkling from the rocks. These rocks contain many caverns in which dwell they who seek the solitude.

And when the Esseer brethren advised Jesus to go to this country, he remembered how the prophets of old were said to have lived in the same places, Elias as well as Elisha.

And so it was that his mind was made up to go thither, for there he could teach his disciples without fear that his enemies would find his dwelling place, for in this country lived only members of our Order, our brethren.

But Jesus desired that none of the brethren should accompany him, and so he journeyed alone the road to Bethsaida, there to remain with Simon, who was one of his disciples.

Arriving in the early morning at the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he there found a hut which Peter had built for his own convenience in the pursuit of his trade. And he found there Peter, and with him John, and they were fishing. Here Jesus refreshed himself, partaking with them of the feast of love. Here he learned that all the disciples had agreed to come together in Bethsaida that they might there counsel together what to do.

But Jesus called them to Mount Karmel, as he had promised the Esseers. And on the evening of the next day Jesus again pursued his journey.

Having rested and refreshed himself some days at the foot of Mount Karmel, Jesus was prepared to teach again. Here his disciples came, bringing with them

many of his followers; for here in this lonely valley they were safe from danger, and the account of the resurrection of Jesus had created great excitement in Galilee.

But many of those who came were moved only by the spirit of wonder. They had come, therefore, to see Jesus do wonders and perform miracles. Others hoped for the coming of the new kingdom of Messias, and the deliverance of the Jews from the Romans.

Jesus was sorely grieved in his heart by these interpretations of his mission, for often had he spoken of these things, saying to his disciples that it was not meet that the Son of God should be clothed with worldly power and splendor.

But the Esseer brethren understood and did not share in these errors, for they well knew that according to the laws of the Order which he had vowed to keep, our brethren can take no part in matters of state, nor aspire to worldly power.

And the people, desiring much to see Je-

sus, were informed by the disciples that the meeting would take place early in the morning.

Jesus descended from the summit of the mountain, where the fog assumed a reddish color from the sun. And because he wore the white robe of the Esseer Order, the people believed him to be a supernatural being, and they threw themselves down, with their faces to the ground. And many of the people were terrified, and drew aside out of his way.

And Jesus spoke with a loud voice, saying that he had not come to found a school, but the kingdom of God on earth, through wisdom and virtue.

And he instituted baptism, and disclosed to his disciples the knowledge he had learned from the elders, how to heal the sick, determine the virtues of minerals and herbs as medicines, make harmless the savage beasts, counteract the destroying effects of poison, and many other things.

And the disciples and the people that

had come with them, remained many days in the valley, and Jesus taught them how they should live and preach the doctrine in his name.

But the Esseer brethren were informed by the elder of the Brotherhood in Jerusalem that the secret messengers of the priests and the grand council had been told of the excitement in Galilee, and that many people had repaired to the valley of Mount Karmel.

And the brethren warned Jesus of his danger, that he might avoid his enemies and thus fulfil his mission. For they had been secretly informed that Caiaphas intended quietly to arrest and assassinate Jesus, in that he believed him to be a deceiver.

Jesus thereupon sent away his hearers and told them that if they would speak with him thereafter they must go thence to Bethabara, where he would await them.

Having spoken much to the people and taught them, he was weary and in need of rest.

And the time came when the Esseers partake of their feast of love. And all the brethren in the valley assembled in the house where Jesus dwelt. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and we the elders of the Brotherhood in Jerusalem departed to be together with him.

But Jesus was yet weak from his suffering, and his great joy at seeing again his beloved friends, Joseph and Nicodemus, caused him great excitement. And he spoke much concerning his death.

“Do not misapprehend me if I have not in everything lived according to the rules of our Brotherhood. For if I had labored in secret, as you have done, the truth would not now be known to the multitudes.

“Even in public can the wise practice wisdom, the chosen virtue.”

And Jesus exhorted the brethren to lay aside their secrecy and go forth among the people, and unite with his disciples to teach together with them.

And the words he spoke took root in the

hearts of many of the brethren, and therefore I now find many of them witness for Jesus, and have left their solitude.

And Joseph spoke to Jesus, saying:

“Knowest thou that the people who do not altogether understand your doctrine, are meditating to proclaim you a worldly king, to overthrow the Romans? But thou must not disturb the kingdom of God through war and revolution. Therefore choose the solitude. Live with the Esseer friends and be in safety, that your doctrine may be proclaimed by your disciples.”

But the elders of the Brotherhood were reflecting that it would cause great excitement among the people if Jesus were thus to disappear like the sun in the evening, and not reappear.

But Jesus feared that the words of Joseph might prove true, and he would not suffer that blood should flow for his sake, nor that revolution should cause destruction.

Therefore he consented that he would go into solitude, his body being very weak. And with Joseph and Nicodemus he went to Bethania. On the way they conversed together concerning the secrets of the Brotherhood; and Jesus desired to take leave of his friends in Bethania, and return to the lonely country near the Dead Sea.

In Bethania he comforted his mother, also the other friends of Lazarus, and explained to them that according to his doctrine he always was with them and remained with them.

But the knowledge that Jesus was in the vicinity of Jerusalem soon came to all his followers, and many came together and were directed to repair to a secret place at a fixed time. Thither now went Jesus.

And here many hundred people had come together, and as they made manifest their belief that Jesus would establish a worldly kingdom and liberate the land of his people from the yoke of the Romans, he instructed them and taught them that this would not come to pass.

But Jesus perceived that it was expedient that he should go away again into the solitude, that the people should no more believe that his kingdom was of this world, but that they should believe in his words and his doctrines as the word of God.

That day it came to pass that Jesus went to Jerusalem, and his trusted disciples went with him.

But the high council already had sent out many secret messengers to circulate false rumors, and make Jesus a captive. But Jesus was warned and protected by the Esseer brethren. He was now both faint and weak. His wounds again began to pain him, and his face was pale.

When Jesus entered the city with Peter and John, his friends conducted him into a solitary house. Here he called to him the elders of the Esseer Order.

He said to them that his time for rest was near at hand, and instructed them to wait for him at the "Olive Mount," and thence accompany him to the place of solitude.

Thereupon he gathered together his disciples, and went through the city and out of the gate that leads to the valley of Josaphat.

And his soul was greatly moved, and his heart was filled with sadness, for he knew that this would be his last walk.

Arriving at Kedron, he tarried for a little while and wept over Jerusalem. Thence he went forward in silence, and his disciples followed him.

And Jesus led them to the place most dear to him, near the summit of Mount Olivet, where can be seen almost the whole of the land of Palestine; for Jesus longed once more to look upon the country where he had lived and worked.

To the east was seen Jordan, the Dead Sea and the Arabian Mountains; and to the west shone the fires from the Temple Rock; but on the other side of the mountain was Bethania.

And the chosen disciples believed that Jesus would lead them to Bethania. But

the elders of the Brotherhood had silently come together on the other side of the mountain, ready to travel, waiting with Jesus, as had been agreed upon.

And he exhorted his disciples to be of good cheer, and firm in their faith. As he spoke his voice grew more and more melancholy, and his mind was absorbed in solemn transport.

He prayed for the friends he was about to leave, and lifting his arms he blessed them. And the mist rose around the mountain, tinted by the descending sun.

Then the elders of the Esseer Brotherhood sent word to Jesus that they were waiting, and that it was then already late.

As the disciples knelt down, their faces bent toward the ground, Jesus rose and hastily went away through the gathering mist. When the disciples rose there stood before them two of our brethren in the white garb of our Brotherhood, and they instructed them not to wait for Jesus, as he was gone, whereupon they hastened away down the mountain.

But the disappearance of Jesus filled his disciples with new hope and confidence, for now they knew that they themselves were to proclaim the word of Jesus, as he, their beloved, would return no more.

Therefore faithfully they kept together and daily went to the temple and to the places where he had taught them, and the enemies dared not molest them.

But in the city there arose a rumor that Jesus was taken up in a cloud, and had gone to heaven. This was invented by the people who had not been present when Jesus departed. The disciples did not contradict this rumor, inasmuch as it served to strengthen their doctrine, and influenced the people who wanted a miracle in order to believe in him.

John, who was present, knew all of these things, but he had not spoken nor written anything about it. Likewise Matthew. There are others who have gathered the rumors thereof into an illustration, which they believed themselves, as they were moved by the spirit to glorify Jesus.

Thus, one of them named Marcus wrote to a congregation in Rome and gave an account of this event, but inasmuch as he had not been present, his source of information was only the rumors among the people.

Even thus is it with Lucas, who tried to do the same.

But the disciples were advised by the Esseer brethren to assume the customs and manners of the Esseens for the sake of unanimity. Therefore they formed a society wherein even the women took an officious part, especially Mary and her friends from Galilee.

But Jesus was accompanied on his way by the elders of the Brotherhood, likewise by Joseph and Nicodemus; and in the night time they procured a beast of burden for Jesus, who grew more faint. His mind was greatly moved at leaving his friends, and he felt that his death would soon come.

When, at the end of their journey, they had come to the Esseer brethren by the

Dead Sea, Jesus was in deep suffering, so that only the physicians could care for him. Joseph and Nicodemus remained with him, and having heard his wishes in lengthy conversations, they took leave of him, promising to inform him minutely concerning the affairs of the congregation in Jerusalem.

But in Jerusalem none save John and Matthew knew that Jesus had returned to the solitude of the Order, that the people might not proclaim him their worldly king.

But Joseph and Nicodemus had three times been with him in his place of concealment. And on their return they informed us of him. But his body was not vigorous enough to overcome the sufferings he had endured for want of rest.

His soul longed for his disciples, and he was anxious that nothing should be neglected. His restless mind found no consolation in the solitude, and anxiety consumed his vital powers.

But Joseph and Nicodemus had been with him the last time when the sixth full

moon was waning, and they came to our Brotherhood as we were preparing to partake of the feast of love, and revealed the secret to the elder of the Order.

And their hearts were sorely grieved, for the chosen one was taken up into the heavenly dwellings of the Father.

The Eternal Spirit had gently burst the clay, and tranquil as his life was his death.

And he was buried by the physician close by the Dead Sea, as bids the regulations of our Brotherhood.

But Nicodemus enjoined silence concerning the death of his friend, to all who did not belong to the highest degree.

Here, my dear brethren, you have the only true account of our friend, whom God had called to teach wisdom and virtue to the people through parables and noble deeds.

It is now a long time since then, and the Jews have seven times eaten the passover when I now write this for your information. And thus you may judge of the truth

of the tradition as it is told by the people.

For I know that many of his new disciples tell of miracles, even as they themselves have wished it might be. And the thoughtful do not contradict them, for the people are not yet wise enough to receive the truth without adding to it that which is supernatural.

As you yourself have conceived, there are many rumors come from Rome that I need not contradict, for you know yourself what a Brother of our Order has to do and not to do.

But not only the Jews tell of superhuman things concerning him that they believe, but also the Romans; for the pagans believe in gods, and these are identified with the miracles told by the Jews.

And I give you the authority to inform the elders of our Brotherhood in your country, what I have written to you, but not the novices nor those of the other degrees. For his is the glory, the Son of God, whom we all worship more than the others who are removed to heaven.

And what Jesus has taught while he lived we ought to promote with good-will. For he has explained the doctrine minutely to everyone. He has revealed the secret, therefore receive everyone friendly who is called by his name; for his disciples will go to all countries, and you will know them by their greeting, which is the same as that of our Order. And you ought to help them as our Brotherhood in Jerusalem and the whole country has served the Son of the heavenly Father.

This is what I have to say. And as it is written, thus it has passed. For the elders of our Brotherhood have witnessed these things themselves, and my own eyes have seen him, and my ears heard him, and I am a friend of Joseph who sits in the grand council.

And forward to the brethren the greeting: Peace be with you.

CLOSING REMARKS

OF THE GERMAN TRANSLATOR

FOR an enlightened Christian it will be wholly indifferent whether the life of Jesus, as recorded by the gospel, has an historical foundation or not. It remains a scientific problem whether Jesus really died on the cross, or was taken down only apparently dead, and not a religious one; for in the moral world the very determination to die for truth and virtue ought to be considered as highly as the physical death.

The intelligent man, that has made the thought clear through science and study, and overcome the superstition of tradition, may be a true defender of the Christian spirit if he even doubts everything in the gospel that appears to him in any way mythical or inexplicable.

But there are men to whom only that

is holy that they cannot explain or comprehend themselves; and others, again, who will try to lull their own minds into tranquil faith on undoubted scriptural authority; men that consider the outward events for the aim of Jesus' life, and keep their minds chained down to a dead literal faith; further, there are persons who, through their simplicity of mind and education, do not ponder on the subject at all, who consider sinful every examination into the ideas prevailing in past centuries.

There are also persons who keep others in ignorance that they may not examine into the account of the miracles.

All such persons are not true defenders of the Christian spirit, and the therein contained moral liberty of thought. Such persons will never take a step toward the improvement of the Christian spirit in the external life, and it is just therein Christianity ought to appear, not therein that men absorb themselves in their own selfish conceits, expecting the spirit without doing

anything themselves. No, the Christian spirit ought to be introduced into the actual ever changing life, to be modified to the wants of the every-day life.

These reflections did the translator ponder upon when he tried to understand how orthodox and superstitious people could imagine every thread in the garb of the Saviour a product of Divinity, or how they in individual impotence or spiritual bondage, with eager hands, grasp for a pillar in superstition and bigotry, this class of persons coming across the old Esseer letter, would necessarily charge it with profanity, and above all with non-genuineness.

Although it cannot be proven by living witnesses that the original, from which the Latin copy is translated, was a genuine document of the time of which it informs, yet this letter contains so many interesting events, singularly corresponding with the account of the gospel, and recorded without any apparent motive of the author, in a pious, simple and in no way excited manner.

Just through the simplicity of the author will many inexplicable events and mythological accidents in the life of Jesus appear clear that were leading threads, and there is much that may be explained by the external life of Jesus and his spiritual mission.

And when we minutely examine into the account given by the Esseers, raised as they were above the common superstition of their time and well informed in the secrets of nature, we find effects and consequences rationally explained and many things made clear that the gospel surrounds with mystery.

It is to be regretted that there are in our day people who consider the Christian life profaned by the rational and reasonable explanation and account of the miracles, even when it has the stamp of testamental accuracy, and is placed on a natural foundation, although any man possessed of common understanding remains convinced of the non-existence of miracles; while the

superstitious, in miracle believing, often is brought in situations where he is given to hypocrisy and conceit for to be able to believe.

It is just this hypocrisy that so often fills the mind of the rational thinker with disgust. And in the present, as well as to all times, the religious people have been divided in the same three directions into which it already was directed at the time of Christ. Even the present time has its "Esseers," its "Sadducees" and its "Pharisees."

Both then and now the number of the Esseer defenders of the faith are few. It comprises of the free scientific thinkers, of they that search for truth, of they that exercise virtue in every idea of life, of they that can understand and explain the acquired wisdom and make it useful. To these, as the old recovered document proves, Jesus belonged; and this is as much more probable, as the gospel never reports Jesus to have spoken against the Esseer,

although in many ways he combated against the doctrines of the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

Even the present time has its Sadducees, the same class of infidels as now, raised above tradition, gormandizing, worldly rich men, who, unconcerned about eternity, wished to enjoy themselves in this life.

But to all times the Pharisees have been numerous. From time immemorial has hypocrisy been the handmaiden to embrace every tradition that has characterized them. With them have good and bad angels exercised their undefined influence. The miracles have spurred them to outward piety, outward hypocritical gestures and public benevolent acts, which have served as a cloak for the corrupted soul.

The translator of the old recovered pergamment views the matter from the Esseen standard, and feels satisfied to know that this view of the matter has got to be a necessity for every free-minded, scientific, unprejudiced and really intelligent man.

Several efforts have been made already in past times to explain the myths of the gospel rationally, and, indeed, penetrating minds have succeeded to give them the character of probability, but they could not be proved through any historical event, as the canonical dictators defined, what was authentical, only that which was serviceable to their canonical reign, and declared all such traditions to be apocryphical that will say not useful, which in reality were built on historical foundation, or were not written according to the desire of a holy seer for miracles.

Even the Esseen letter that we have recorded above would by them have been considered apocryphical writing.

If we examine the Esseen letter, that is written to a brother of the Order in Alexandria to inform him and the other brethren of the highest degree of the Brotherhood concerning the wonderful events that transpired in Jerusalem, and which through rumors were made known all over

Asia, we will find many points of great interest, that invite to a closer reflection.

In the first place, it is to be noted that the Esseen brethren in Alexandria doubted the reports of miracles that the rumor had brought them, and that they, to obtain information, wrote to the Brotherhood in Jerusalem to hear their opinion. Thus there were already many people there that were raised above the superstitions of the common people.

From the letter we also see that Jesus himself, brought up in the school of the Essees, did not believe in miracles, although his mother, with her excitable mind and full belief in the Jewish traditions of miracles, had a powerful influence on him in his childhood and youth.

But the letter also describes that Joseph, his foster-father, had a great influence on the mind of Jesus, as it is said about him that he was a man of great experience.

The Esseers protected the child in its life until it was old enough to be received into

the Order as a member. According to the letter, this took place in the country near Jutha, where lived then an Esseen Brotherhood. Here it was that he was met by the elder of the Brotherhood, probably calculated by the Essees to prepare him for his reception into the Order.

It is also told that here he was received into the Order contemporary with his friend John, and further on in the letter is recorded that John, who after his becoming a member perfected himself for a physician, was killed by the enemies. No doubt hereby is meant John the Baptist, who thus also has been an Esseer.

It may appear remarkable that Jesus, as a member of the Esseen Order and knowing all the secrets and duties of the Brotherhood, did not live in the solitude and join some particular Brotherhood. But Jesus felt called to preach to the people, and could not satisfy his active mind by passing his time in the solitude, and not teach the special doctrines abroad that he felt it his mission to proclaim.

We even see that the elders of his brethren always were desiring him to withdraw into the solitude, and not endanger his life among the people. We also are informed that towards the end of his life Jesus explained to his brethren his motive of not staying more with them than he did, and at last he took their advice and retired into the solitude.

But of particular importance is the minute record of the sufferings of Jesus, and the way in which he conducted himself on the cross. The gospel records that Jesus really died on the cross, and thereby it stamps his recovery as a miracle, which the intelligent man considers a myth, and from which he extracts the allegorical meaning. But in this letter we are informed of events in their simple representation that contains so much that is probable, and with the circumstances corresponding, that it actually will be a necessity to believe on it.

The fact that Jesus only apparently died

on the cross does not in the least diminish the sacredness of his mission, for his death for the divine truth was fulfilled thereby, that he, full of resignation, suffered the pain of death till his physical life was exhausted.

In the old letter is recorded that he did not die on the cross, but passed into unconsciousness. Even the way in which Jesus appeared to die on the cross makes the probability of apparent death possible. First, he lost consciousness very early, so that even Pilate doubted his death, and before he allowed him taken down from the cross he ordered the Roman Centurio to convince himself thereof. Secondly, by the then existing mode of crucifixion, was it not uncommon that the crucified could be brought to life.

We are also informed by the historians of that date that it was not an uncommon thing that crucified criminals were brought back to life after being taken down from the cross. It is also proved that these un-

fortunates, among nations that did not have the Jewish custom of not allowing the crucified to hang on the cross over night, often would hang on the cross eight or nine days before death at last put an end to their dreadful sufferings.

When we examine into the methods of the crucifixion as it was executed on Jesus, we will be convinced that it could not be impossible for life to remain for a long time. Not any of the appliances used were mortal, and first got to be so when they acted for such a long time that the vital power was not able of reaction. Arms and feet were bound with thick and hard cords so tight that not only these limbs became numb, but even the circulation of the blood was almost stopped thereby.

That this actually was the case is proved by the description of the old historians, that the piercing of the hands with thick spikes produced no great expression of pain, and only for a while caused bleeding. But the physiological consequence of thus

tightly lacing the limbs would be the forcible pushing back of the blood to the brain and heart, whereby would be produced fits of apoplexy and deep swoonings.

Both the thieves that were crucified with Jesus still lived when he was taken down and showed outward signs of life. Otherwise their bones would not have been crushed, as was the custom, and which was not done to Jesus, as they thought him dead. As he was exhausted already from the scourging, it is easily explained how he so soon passed into a state of unconsciousness and apparent death. Even the gospel records that he was very weak—that he sank down under the weight of the cross.

In the Esseen letter a particular weight is laid on the wound in the side, and the physiological knowledge of Nicodemus, who in this letter is ascribed great secret knowledge of nature, and especially in the Esseen science of curing, is indeed to be admired; for it is recorded that Nicodemus, from the

condition of the wound, received new hope that Jesus was not actually dead, and his hope was realized.

If Jesus really had been dead the wound could not bleed for such a long time, and especially not emit water and blood. An actual dead corpse will not bleed from an external wound that does not sever any arteries, because at the discontinuation of the circulation the blood very shortly will congeal.

Thus Nicodemus conceived that the circulation of the blood in Jesus' body had not ceased, and therefore, having sent the influential Joseph to Pilate, he hurried away to procure the proper drugs, pretending that he wanted to embalm the body.

The Esseen letter speaks repeatedly of the wound above the hip. Thus this wound was lower down than what is generally believed and represented.

If we now take in consideration that the wound with the spear was not made to give Jesus the finishing stroke, but very care-

fully, to see if the corpse would show any convulsions or signs of life, and thereby prove that he actually was dead—if we further consider that the thrust took effect close above the hip, and from the soldiers standing below would have to be made in an inclined manner in an almost parallel direction with Jesus' side, it is evident that no vital organ could have been severed, and the spear may only have pierced the skin.

In the letter this wound is not considered dangerous, and more attention is paid to the wounds in the hands after the spikes. Thus it appears that these were considered more dangerous. It is positively recorded that his feet were not pierced, as this was not the custom at crucifixions.

Even if the apparent death of Jesus in the old letter was not maintained as a fact, still the existing historical circumstances make it more than probable.

When we further pursue the letter and compare it with the gospel reports, we will

in neither of them find contradiction as regards facts. The only difference is that in the gospel all is transformed into a miraculous Oriental tradition, when the Esseer letter, on the other hand, pays no attention to any supernatural, undefined and imaginative illustration, but records the facts as they are.

A dead corpse cannot walk about, for as long as the world has existed God never did contradict himself by overthrowing eternal laws of nature. Even if a single law of nature was set aside, the whole endless chain of cause and effects, where every law keeps the other in balance, they would fall together in a chaos.

If Jesus really as a messenger could go about, speak, eat and drink, even other men could do the same. But as the laws of nature do not permit of it, it has not been possible even in the case of Jesus. When ignorant and unintelligent men say, "for God is everything possible," it only shows their ignorance of the Divine nature; for

no more than God can suffer the east rising sun to rise henceforth in the west, no more can he produce anything else in contrast to his eternal laws of nature.

The Esseen letter in its representation of these events has therefore the important advantage that it treats with things possible in nature. The recovery of Jesus is, according to this letter, supported by many circumstances that even now can easily be explained.

Jesus was not, as his companions in suffering, beaten with heavy clubs, and the letter even indicates the fear of Joseph and Nicodemus that this would be done. If it had been done no recovery had been possible, and it would have been foolish to attempt it.

But nature assisted the Essees in their efforts.

The fact that they carefully took him down from the cross, bound around him leaves that were saturated with salves and liquids that were prepared from the aro-

matic herbs of the Orient, and filled with powerful fragrant qualities, the proximity of the grotto, where the body was laid on soft moss, where the spices might evaporate, and, together with the smoke of the aloe, necessarily must exercise an animating influence on the benumbed nerves.

Further, the bleeding of the wound in the side, that was a sure sign of the still existing circulation of the blood, must necessarily assist the slumbering life to assume its functions by leading away the blood that during the crucifixion had been forced back to the heart, brain and lungs, and thereby benumbed these organs, so that the circulation of the blood could take place.

The earthquake exercised a magnetic, electric, animating influence on the nerves, and when at last the shaking of the ground in the direction of the grotto filled the grave with electric gases at the same time that the body shook, it could not but cause him to awake from his slumber of death.

All these circumstances are powerful means of calling back the slumbering to life, especially in the Orient.

Furthermore, Nicodemus, the experienced physician, and Joseph, the tender-hearted friend of Jesus, hoping the best from the operation of the drugs, went together in the night to receive more minute information of the recovered but still weak Jesus. That the Esseen youths in their white flowing garb of the Order could be considered supernatural beings—angels—is easily explained by the excited state of mind of the concerned persons, and the imaginative mind of the Orientals.

In the old letter is plainly showed that Jesus was brought back to life only through the exertions of the Essees, and this is easily explained by he vowing that the Order should be unto him as father and mother, and they in their turn fulfilled all their motherly duties.

The circumstance that Jesus never appeared in two places at the same time also

speaks against the miraculous representation of his life. But indeed he was subjected to time and place like other mortal beings.

Another miraculous representation is the ascension of Jesus. Men that can believe in the body rising from actual death can also unconditionally believe in the possibility of a bodily ascension to heaven.

But the intelligent man, who from scientific and rational reasons considers it impossible for an actual dead body to return to life, will see in the ascension another Jewish tradition — one of the apotheoses that were usual in olden times, not alone among the Jewish people, to glorify the memory of distinguished persons. With the Jewish people had the religious tradition formed, the firm belief that all prophets ought to ascend to heaven, and the tradition of Elias and his chariot of fire is a side-piece to the one of Jesus' ascension.

It is not doubted of such that possess a

scientific knowledge of death and its natural course, that Jesus did not bodily ascend to heaven as Marcus and Lucas report (two men who were not present, and formed their account only from the rumors). Indeed, this representation stands in opposition to the Christian thought that Paul has expressed so gloriously. Paul says in the first letter to the Corinthians, chap. xv., v. 50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

Even if it were a secret, what happened on Mount Olive, the two disciples that were present, Matthew and John, in their writings, do not inform us a single word about the ascension. Even then the Esseen letter's account would be a very interesting one—that Jesus on the Mount only took a usual departure and afterwards fulfilled the duties of the Esseen Order by living a secluded life.

When we are informed that Jesus retired

into solitude, and even from his vow to the Order, that he promised that when his disciples wanted him he would manifest himself unto them, it is evident that he did not leave the earth. But even with Jesus the traditions of the Jewish people and the old prophecy appear to have had some influence, and instinctively guided many of his actions and parables, for even he was a child of his time and brought up in the traditions of his nation.

The Esseen letter records that Jesus died in solitude six months afterwards, as a result of his sufferings, that had prostrated and broken his constitution and his excited mind. It were to be wished that even the place was recorded where he died and was buried. The old Esseen does not give any account of the place, probably on account of being recommended silence on that subject by the Order.

PART II.

THE
ORDER OF ESSEES

AMONG

THE JEWISH PEOPLE

A MANUSCRIPT FOR FREEMASONS

ORDER OF ESSEES

“And ye shall be unto me a priestly kingdom, and a holy people.”

—2 M. B., chap. 14, v. 6.

BY THE time when the greatest teacher of the Word, the great mediator, Jesus Christ, stepped forth among the Jewish people, proclaiming his doctrines of light and heavenly truths, that these his doctrines might spread light and warmth over the earth, and peace in the weary heart of men, had the above spoken of people in general very much deviated from the path of the Lord, from the knowledge of him, and from the doctrines of divinity given to Abraham and handed down to Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, and afterwards further interpreted and explained by the man of God, Moses.

The interpreters of the Scriptures in the different ages of the Old Testament, or

the Scribes, had contrived to attribute to the holy Scriptures the meaning and explanation that was most convenient to their material advantage, estimation among the people, or their own wishes. Indeed, we find in the Scriptures of the Old Testament that holy men of the school of the prophets often stepped forth as the champions of truth and defenders of light, who severely reproached the people for their sins and vices, and severely warned the false teachers who led the people astray and misinterpreted the laws of the Lord. But the people seldom heeded them, and many of them fell victims and martyrs for the vengeance of the priests, the scribes, and the fury of the people.

By the time that Jesus Christ and his great predecessor, John, stepped forth among the people, the Jewish people was separated into several religious sects, that each had different views on religion. But even from the day that Moses, according to the command of God, consecrated the peo-

ple to "A covenant people to the Lord."
2 M. B. 19 Chapt.

There was always among them a certain class by whom the name of the Lord Jehovah was worshipped in truth and purity. Already in the time of the first Judges appeared this class as a distinct Order or Brotherhood, named "Nazirees," "Nazarees," or "Nazarenes," and in the time of the Kings we find this Brotherhood under the name of the so-called "School of the Prophets."

The members of this holy union had the design, "To love and worship God in purity of heart, and to the best of their ability work on their own ennobling and perfection; and of all their might to further the happiness and peace of their fellow men."

In time of the Maccabai, this interesting Brotherhood appears under the name of "Hasidees," eller "Assidees," that is, "the holy," "the pious"; and afterwards, in the time of St. John the Baptist and the great Master, under the name of

“Esseers,” or “Essenes,” that is, the “children of peace.”

It is not to be wondered at, that the scriptures of the New Testament do not directly mention this important and significant Brotherhood, as they lived separated from the world, as a defined Order, and admitted nobody that had not undergone a term of trial for three years and sworn not to disclose for any outsiders what took place in their meetings. This Order had a material influence on the culture and enlightening of the age and the ages that were to come.

In the New Testament there are many expressions and references that directly appear to the thinker and the unprejudiced interpreter of the Bible, that indirectly speak of this Brotherhood; and just by these may be explained many undefined and dark quotations in the Scriptures, and rationally conceived, that otherwise would appear inexplicable and obscure. We will afterwards represent instances of this nature.

But before we proceed to a more minute illustration of this most remarkable Brotherhood, we will first pay attention to the, in Jesus' time, most important and differing sects of religion among the Jewish people.

These, first, the Pharisees, a sect full of hypocrisy and egotism. They distinguished themselves by rigidly observing all the outward forms of the Mosaic law, assumed holiness, haughtiness and ambition in unison with greedy aim after earthly winnings, but did care little for the real purifying of the heart or true humanity; and combined with these peculiarities great desire for dignity and worldly esteem. At public meetings they always endeavored to be the principal ones and aspired generally for the esteem and favor of the people.

The Master Jesus often severely reproached them therefor, and warned and exhorted the people to shun their false doctrines in the sayings:

“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

Math. Evang. Chap. 16, and in the same gospel, Chap. 23, where he four times cries "Wo" unto them, he says "Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."

It is evident from this and several other quotations of the same kind, where Jesus reprimands them severely and rebukes them, that he considered the Pharisees the most vicious, cunning and dangerous of all Jews.

Next we have, second, the Sadducees. These were a kind of philosophers who denied the immortality of the soul and a life after this, and they taught that they deceived themselves who lived a pious and devoted life and exercised virtue, hoping therefor to get their reward after death.

Such a reward after death there was not, but it always was a necessary duty that men should fulfil to themselves, by living a virtuous and good life, as they then, more

contented in their mind, could proceed on their way through life, and in consequence thereof would the burden of life be easier to carry.

This was their peculiar interpretation of the moral meaning of the commandments, but yet it preserved them from the hypocrisy and the dissembling of the Pharisees.

The Sadducees showed themselves openly to the world such as they in reality were, in a life intermixed with virtues, faults and vices. Toward the Master, Jesus, they never showed such an animosity as the Pharisees. On the contrary, they often with great attention and admiration seemed to listen to his doctrines of wisdom.

They were more energetic and active than the Pharisees, and as they, like the former, had a great desire for acquiring wealth and worldly possessions, they were generally rich and considered the wealthiest class among the Jews. The king, "Herod," belonged to the sect of the Sadducees and acknowledged their doctrines.

The third sect comprised the Publicans. They are not to be considered as a distinct religious sect, but it is evident that they widely differed from the above named sects, and the so-called "proper Jews," in their religious belief; and this is even shown by the contempt in which they were held by the common people.

But we have reasons to believe that this contempt often was unmerited, as they were often kindly received by the Master, Jesus, and he friendly communed with many of them. He speaks thus of himself in unison with them in Math. Chap. xi, v. 19: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, behold a man gluttonous, and a wine bibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners." But even the life of these he reproached on several occasions. In Math. 5 Chap., v. 46, he says: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye; do not even the Publicans the same?"

Every Jew who had knowledge of the

Scriptures of the Old Testament, shortly everybody that examined into things and claimed to possess the culture of his time, generally belonged to either the Pharisees, Sadducees, or the Essees.

We know with certainty, and the writings of the Evangelists do not deny it, but to the contrary strengthen this fact, that the Master's great predecessor, John, from his infancy was adopted and brought up in the School of the Esseen Order, and there acquired his knowledge and wisdom.

We cannot here give any information on this subject, of what the higher degrees of the Order did know about it, as this description of the old Essees is written for the benefit of the brethren of all degrees, we will therefore confine ourselves to examining the gospel and other New Testamental Scriptures for testimony to prove the same.

It is evident from the gospel that John neither belonged to the sect of the Pharisees nor to that of the Sadducees. He re-

buked them both severely for their lives,—as his great successor,—and when many of both the Pharisees and Sadducees came to him at Salem on the bank of the Jordan to be baptized by him, he said to them: “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.” Math. 3 Chap., 7 and 8 v.

Herod adhered, as above mentioned, to the doctrine of the Sadducees, and it was this Herod, whom John so severely rebuked on several occasions for Herodias his brother Philip’s wife, and “for all the evils which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.” Luco, iii. Chap. 19-25.

Lucas the Evangelist relates to us in his iii. chap., 12 and 13 v.: “Then came also Publicans to be baptized and said unto him, ‘Master, what shall we do?’ And he said unto them, ‘Exact no more than that which is appointed to you.’”

John says about himself in the gospel of

John, 1 Chap. 23 v.: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness"; and the Evangelists add that this answer did he give to "they which were sent were of the Pharisees."

Marcus says of John in his 1 Chap., 4 to 6 vs.: "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair and with a girdle of a skin about his loins, and he did eat locusts and wild honey"; and in about the same words and sense does Matthew speak of John in his third chapter.

We might cite more instances of the same kind, but these ought to be sufficient to show that the Scriptures of the New Testament give a positive proof for the contended point that John did not belong to either the school of the Pharisees or that of the Sadducees. At the same time it gives more than a negative proof for the conclusion that he belonged to the holy order of the Esseers; and the more we

study the writings of the Evangelists and interpreters of the Bible, and consider who were the friends of John, and the doctrine he preached to the people, the more are we convinced that he belonged to the Essees.

By comparing all the above named with the manner of life, ceremonies and fundamental belief of the Essees, we are thereby convinced that this champion of truth was the messenger of the Brotherhood to prepare the way for Jesus and to promote his mission, who indeed had sent him.

We will proceed to a truthful illustration of this Brotherhood, as we find it related of authentic authors from the commencement of the New Testament time, and let these speak for themselves.

Of all the Gentile authors, none give more authentic and minute information on the subject than the Jewish historian, Josephus, in his work, *De Bello Judaico*, 8 Chap., 2-13 vs.; and especially in his *Historia Antiqua Judaica*, 3 Book, 5 Chap.

He lived both before and after the de-

struction of Jerusalem by Titus, and as he himself belonged to the Esseen order, and had undergone the ordered term of trial for three years, his accounts merit our belief of its authenticity. Of his admission into this Order he writes as follows:

“When I had reached my sixteenth year did I undertake to examine into our different religious sects and their doctrines, that having come to know them I might choose the one that to me appeared the best. I have already mentioned that there were three sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essees.

“Having resolved this, did I at once begin to prepare myself in different ways that I might be found worthy to be admitted into the Order of Essees. In order to accomplish this, I turned to a man called Banus, of whom was told that he belonged to the Brotherhood of Essees, and lived in the wilderness, made his clothes out of the bark and leaves of the trees, fed upon wild fruits, plants and herbs, and from holiness

bathed several times night and day in cold water.

“In this man’s company I spent three entire years, undergoing all kinds of trials, temptations and privations, and then returned to the city (Jerusalem.) When I had filled my nineteenth year did I commence to shape my life and habits according to the doctrines of the Pharisees, and this sect is very similar to the Grecian Stoics.”

Of these, Josephus’ own words, we are informed that he actually had undergone the, according to the Esseen law, ordered term of trial; and although he afterwards returned to Jerusalem, and in the future obeyed the doctrines of the Pharisees, yet did he continue to remain a member of the Esseen Brotherhood, and was admitted into their meetings as long as he did not transgress the duties of the Order, or in any way did break the oath that he had taken at his initiation.

It was not before the Jewish kingdom

was destroyed by Titus, Jerusalem and most of the other cities of the country laid in ashes, and the members of the Esseen Orders widely dispersed, that Josephus in his writings committed to the world what we here will communicate.

Josephus was of high-priest by descendancy, and as it was in the tribe of Aaron that Phariseeism most flourished and had its foundation among the priests, it is not to be wondered that the nineteen-year-old Josephus soon tired of the rigid habits of the Essees, their toilsome work and frugal living, and that when he had gone through his term of trial found more pleasure in the jolly life of the Pharisees, as much more as these by hypocrisy and assumed piety could take part in many worldly amusements without thereby losing their esteem among the people.

What we now will lay before the reader is written by himself and ought to be sufficient to show that he always harbored a high degree of esteem and admiration for the Brotherhood.

“The doctrine of the Essees,” says he, “tends to learn all men that they confidently may trust their fate in the hands of God, as nothing happens without his will. They say that the soul is immortal, and they aspire to lead a righteous and honest life.

Indeed, they send their offerings to the temple, but this they do, not because they consider it in any way meritable, but because they consider it their duty to give their share of the offerings, that the other people shall not for their sake be oppressed and encumbered.

“They are the most honest people in the world, and always as good as their word, very industrious and enterprising, and show great skill and concern in agriculture.

“But most of all are those venerated, esteemed and admired who live in the wilderness, on account of the sense of justice that they ever show and the courage and intrepidity that they manifest in ever defending truth and innocence. And this

trait is not found in such a high degree neither with the Grecian nor any other people, but it has always characterized the Essees from time immemorial.

“They exercise justice and equality in their dealings with all people, have all their property common, so that the rich does not consume more of his riches than the poor of his small means. In this way four thousand people pass their life.

“They never marry, and keep no servants. They consider that marriage would only create discord and rupture among the brethren, and do not think it right that one should be the slave or servant of the other, as all men are brethren and God their Father.

“Therefore do they live entirely separate from women and serve and assist each other.

“For accountants for the profits of their agricultural labor and handiwork they choose the most virtuous, honest and pious of their brethren. These also perform the

service of priests and provide for all the wants, as food and clothing. They all live the same simple, industrious and frugal life, and may be compared with the 'Palistas' of the 'Dacies'."

In his work, *De Bello Judaico*, 8 Chap. 2-13 vs., Josephus further writes:

"The third class of philosophers among the Jews, and the class that is most esteemed for their just and moral life, is the so-called Essees or Esseens, that although they certainly descended from the Jewish people, yet show more amity and love for each other than the other Jews, and live a more moral life.

"They shun and despise sensuality as a great sin, but consider a moral and temperate life a great virtue, and pride highly the strength of mind and the power to overcome the passions and desires of their nature.

"Therefore they subdue the sensual instinct, but willingly adopt the children of other people, and especially while these are

very young, as they then are most susceptible to teaching and impressions.

“They show great kindness to such children, hold them dear, and teach them all kinds of knowledge and science, morals and religion.

“They do not reject wedlock, but, to the contrary, consider it necessary for the propagation of mankind; but themselves they want no intercourse with women, as they fear of their unchastity and levity, because they consider that no woman gives her affections to her husband alone.

“They despise riches and worldly gain, and the equality of property among them must be admired; therefore none of them are seen to live in abundance nor in need.

“The laws of the Order regulate that every one that enters into the Brotherhood gives up to this all his property and wealth, and therefore among them are neither seen haughtiness nor slavish subjection; but all live together as brethren, sharing good and evil.

“The ‘Ointment with oil,’ which the other Jews praise so highly, they consider to be without any sacred power or use, and do not therefore use it, but to the contrary cleanse themselves from it if any one of their body should be touched thereby by an accident.

“For the administration and account of the common property, they elect inspectors and directors, but in every other respect they assist each other.

“They do not live in any particular town, but in every town the Order has its respective ‘house’ where the members take their abode when they on their travels arrive, and they are there supplied with all they want. Everything is here to their disposition, as if in their own houses, and here they are received as the best friends and near relations by persons they never before saw.

“In every town there is an inspector, who has in his care clothes and other necessary things that he graciously distributes to them who need such.

“The Essees use their clothes until they are worn out and can't be used any longer. They neither buy nor sell among themselves, but every member willingly gives his brother what he needs of his, and is again supplied by others with the needful; and even if he thinks he never can repay it, he may without bashfulness receive it, as this is a rule with them.

“The Esseen worship of God is grand, sacred and majestic; and before the sun rises and greets the earth with its beams, they do not speak on earthly matters, but read and send forth their sacred, humble prayers that they have learned from their fathers. The prayer over, the inspector points out the work in which each one is the most skilled.

“Having thus worked for five hours, do they again gather, bathe themselves in cold water, and don a white linen garb. Having washed themselves, they proceed to the special halls of the Order, where no one dare come who does not belong to their Order.

“Having gone through the ceremonies that the law prescribes, they proceed, perfectly cleansed, to their eating rooms with the same reverence as if they entered the holy temple.

“Everybody having taken his place in supreme silence and stillness, the bakers of the Brotherhood enter, distributing a bread to each person after a certain order. The cook sets before each one a plate of vegetables and other eatables, and this being performed, one of the priests steps forth and holds a prayer, for they consider it a grave sin to rest or touch food before praying.

“The meal over, the priest reads another prayer, and then the hymn of praise is sung; and in this way they praise and thank God, the giver of all good, both before and after the meal.

“They then take off their white aprons, that they consider sacred clothes, and return to their work, which they pursue till the twilight spreads over the earth.

“Then they go to their frugal evening meal again, during which they observe the same ceremonies as at their dinner; and if members from foreign parts have arrived, are they put in the chief places at the table.

“The meal is taken with the most solemn silence and stillness, no noise nor dispute disturbing the peace of the house.

“They talk by turns, and in a low tone, which will appear strange to those not used to it. They observe great temperance in their way of living, eat and drink only what is necessary for their want.

“In general do they not act without the knowledge and consent of their inspectors and director; but it is always left to their own free will to exercise benevolence and compassion to all in want, of all classes of society, but it was not allowed them to give any aid to their relatives without informing the inspector. But in other matters it was allowed every member ‘To feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the home-

less, comfort the sick, visit, assist and comfort the prisoner, and comfort, aid and protect the widows and fatherless.'

“They never let themselves to be overcome by anger, hatred, vengeance, or ill-will. Indeed, they are the champions of faith, truth and honesty, and the servants and arbitrators of peace.

“Their ‘Yea’ and ‘No’ was with them as binding as the most sacred oath, and except the oath they take at their admittance into the Order, they never bind themselves through an oath, neither in their public nor private life, for oaths and profanity are with them as much shunned as perjury itself; and they consider that the man loses his esteem among his fellow citizens whose word is not sufficient without swearing.

“They study with perseverance and interest ancient writings, and especially prefer such that are intended to indurate and strengthen the body and ennoble and sanctify the spirit.

“They have profound knowledge of the

art of healing, and study it arduously; examine and are acquainted with the medicinal herbs and plants, that they prepare as medicine for man and beasts. They also know the use and worth of minerals as medicine, and do a great deal of good by applying these for healing the sick.

“Anybody that wishes to belong to the Brotherhood is not at once admitted, but has first to pass a whole year of trial outside the same, and live according to certain rules and regulations. If he during this time has proved himself worthy through a strictly moral and virtuous life, and temperance, is he provided with a spade, an apron, and a white garb; and now he is again subjected to new trials, and, having passed through these, he is sprinkled with water, or ‘baptized,’ as a sign of his spiritual purity and liberation from material things.

“Having thus proved his chastity, and being further tried in his strength of character and other qualities, and found to be

worthy, he is at last admitted an actual member of the Brotherhood. But before he touches any food in the presence of the Brotherhood, does he take this sacred vow: 'Above all things to fear God, of a true and pure heart, exercise justice and honesty to all men; neither of impulse nor influenced by others, harm or hurt any man; during all his life to shun injustice, and ever undaunted, further truth and justice.'

“Further, he vows sacredly ever to obey his worldly rulers, as nobody has the rule without the will of God, and if he become a ruler, does he vow not to misuse power, and to set an example for his subjects by a virtuous life, frugality and plain clothing. He shall always love truth and shun falsehood, preserve his mind from any impure thought or impulse, and never stain his hands with unjust gain.

“For the third, he vows never to interpret or explain anything of the laws of the Order in any other spirit than he himself has received it from the holy fathers and

faithfully hide and take care of the books and archives of the Order and according to special regulation to keep secret the name of the angels with whom the fathers formerly stood in communion.

“This was the vow that every member must take and which they considered so sacred that they would rather suffer the most violent death than to break it. The member who broke his vow, or was caught in the act of any crime or vice, or could be proved to have committed the act, was expelled from the Brotherhood, and his fate was to be pitied; for if the Brotherhood showed him no mercy, nor forgave and received him again, he generally had to starve to death, as the one who once had offered himself up to the service of the Brotherhood and sworn faithfully to sustain and obey its laws and regulations, broke his vow, could not receive any food, aid or assistance of any one, but had generally to live in the deserts and forests and there in the open air seek his support of

herbs, roots and wild fruit till death put an end to his miserable life.

“But often it happened that the leader and brethren of the Brotherhood took mercy upon him and again received him into their meetings in the very moment when this miserable was despairing and near starvation, for they considered that a man who was driven to despair and mortal anxiety was punished enough for his crime.

“In their administration of justice they were indeed severe, but sincere and very just. Nobody could be condemned by a court of less than one hundred persons, but a verdict that a majority of these rendered was unchangeable in all cases.

“Besides Jehovah, the Creator of all, they all also worshipped highly their ‘Lawgiver’ (This their Lawgiver was not Moses, as many have supposed. The Essees often spoke the name of Moses in their conversations with the Gentiles, but in their law it was strictly prohibited to speak the name of their Lawgiver to any

uninitiated), and he whoever contemptuously spoke his name was punished with death.

“They had great esteem and veneration for old age, and even considered it right to agree to and respect the opinion of the majority, as many eyes always see more than two eyes.

They keep the Sabbath more punctually and conscientiously than any other Jews, and do no labor on the Sabbath, for they not only prepare and cook their food beforehand, that they may not be obliged to make a fire on the Sabbath; but they also did not dare touch or move from one place to another the dishes in which was their food and drink. Every time they had performed their natural wants they washed themselves, as if they thereby had become unclean or stained.

“All the members of the Brotherhood are grouped in four separate classes. The youngest brethren are considered so inferior in comparison with the elder, as re-

gards their inward purity, that the latter again have to wash themselves if they happened to come in contact with the former, as if they had been stained by the touch of an unclean or uninitiated.

“Generally these people grew very old, and I myself know several who have arrived to an extraordinary old age; and I presume this fact may be accounted for by their temperate, laborious life, and strict regularity.

“Their courage and uncommon tranquillity cannot be disturbed by the greatest calamities, adversities or troubles, for they can bear suffering and pains with the greatest calmness and strength of mind, and in defense of anything good and just they gladly prefer death for life.

“During the Roman war they have indeed been subjected to great calamities, suffering and excruciations. Many of them have been put to the rack, and, living, crushed by a wheel, burnt alive, or boiled in great kettles, buried alive, crushed with

millstones. Indeed, all conceivable instruments of torture and suffering have been invented and used to make them deny their faith, deride their Lawgiver, or eat such food as was prohibited by their law; but all these efforts have been in vain. Unshaken in their determination, they have suffered these excruciations in silence and with great endurance; and many of them have in the very pain rebuked their enemies with the sharp sword of the word of truth, and have then, to the great amazement of the bystanders, in a calm mind and joyful mien, given up the spirit in the firm belief to see it again—for they have the firm belief and faith that their bodies shall decay and become dust, but that the souls are immortal, and shall live eternally.”

Josephus' words are: “*Opinio autem apud Essenos firmata constitit, corruptibilia quidem esse corpora, animas autem immortales semper remanere.*”

“They say that during the worldly life the spirit is chained to the body like a pris-

oner in his cell, but when these chains burst, by wear and decay, then the spirit is freed from the bodily prison, and, already tasting the heavenly bliss, it soars up to the bright kingdom of joy and peace.

“They agree with the disciples of the Grecian philosophers, that the pious spirits, previous to their admission into the joy of heaven, hover in space over the waters, without being affected by rain, snow, cold or heat.

“They maintain that by the doctrine of the immortality of the soul men are promoted and encouraged to a virtuous life and shun vice. Many of the Essees have often stepped forth among the people as prophets, and informed of things to happen, which has been easier to do for these holy men, as they from their earliest infancy study nature and the doctrine of God; are instructed in goodly books and the writings of the prophets, and grow in wisdom and purity of heart. Their presages often came true, and this in-

creased their esteem with the people as holy men and prophets.

“There was still another class among the Esseens who, although they corresponded with the description of the Brotherhood in general, as doctrines of religion, laws and ceremonies, differed from them in regard to wedlock. These latter consider that everybody who does not marry hereby contracts the propagation and destination of mankind, as men would soon cease to exist if they lived by such rules.

“But ere the members of this class married, they put the one they had chosen for their wife on a term of trial for three years; and if, after this threefold trial and cleansing, the woman was found to be chaste and faithful, and capable of bearing children, they married her. They never had sexual intercourse with the wife in her pregnancy, thereby to show they had not married from lust, but to fulfil the command of Jehovah, ‘Be fruitful, increase and fill the earth.’

“When the women bathe or wash themselves they are clothed in a linen garb, in accordance with the men, who when they bathe, wear an apron or a belt around the waist. In whatever they do they exercise great order and chastity, and rightly do they deserve to be called an example for the life of other people.”

Such is the description that the learned Josephus gives of this interesting Brotherhood, their doctrine, customs, ceremonies and lives, according to what he himself has found of his own observances within the same; he having been admitted as a real member after being tried for three years.

Another learned and authentic author is an old Jewish philosopher called Philo, who lived contemporary with Jesus, and dwelt in Alexandria, who has given to posterity a description of the Order of the Essees, their doctrines, customs and ceremonies. In several of his writings that have been preserved to our day, he speaks of this Brotherhood, and in his work, “*Quod*

omnis vis probus liber sit”—Every truly upright man is free.

He writes specially about the theoretical Essees, or the so-called Therapeut (the word “Therapeut” means a physician), and his description of the Order corresponding with Josephus, and thus we have two authentic authors that correspond perfectly in their description of the doctrine, life, customs and ceremonies of this Order.

According to the account of Philo, “The ‘Therapeuts’ were Essees who, of their own free will, retired into solitude, and who from love of godliness and heavenly things, passed their time in studying religion and nature. They live in several places in Palestine and Egypt, and in this last country their greatest congregation was in the vicinity of the city of Alexandria, in a lovely valley by the Sea of ‘Moria,’ where the air in this country is very mild and healthy.

“Here each one lived in their respective houses, or rather huts, but so close to each

other that in time of danger the brethren could call to each other and hasten to mutual help and assistance.”

Among these Therapeuts there were others who lived in solitude in deserts and caverns, as, for example, Banus, whom Josephus mentions; and to this class belonged most probably, John the Baptist, (Luca Evang. 1 Chap. 63 v., Marc. 1 Chap. 4, and Matt. 3 Chap., 4 v.), for his habits and mode of life correspond according to the gospel with those of the Therapeuts.

Like the general members of the Order of Essees he had disciples, whom he brought up and instructed, but that the New Testament does not directly record John as a member of the Esseen Order nor mention the same Order, this may easily be explained by the circumstances that every member of the Order had to take a sacred oath at their initiation never to divulge any of the secrets of the Order to anybody that did not belong to it and not to manifest himself a member of the

Order in cases where it was not necessary.

That our Lord and Master, Jesus, took John and his disciples into his service, goes to show that he at least prized the noble efforts of the Esseers for truth and justice, and that their profound knowledge in the science of nature and the scriptures of the prophets, was known to him.

The Pharisees generally conceived the scriptures of the prophets liberally, and misunderstood altogether the spiritual meaning thereof, as regards the coming of Messias. But the Essees interpreted and conceived the scriptures and prophecies of the coming of Messias allegorical, viewing the divine secrets earnestly and profoundly.

Therefore Jesus chose for his firm and faithful disciples, the pious and unassuming Essees, among whom John, the son of Zacharias, was one of the most devoted and best versed in the scriptures, who stepped forth to proclaim the coming of Messias in Christ. And with the most sin-

cere love, greatest perseverance, and firm faith, did John seal and confirm this truth through the cleansing by water, through baptism (which with the Essees had the double significance of both bodily and spiritual purifying), and in Christendom considered the first Sacrament.

Before a Neophite was admitted, or allowed to appear before the Brotherhood, having gone through the first trials, he had to pass three days and nights in a lonely grotto, in religious and solemn meditation. For his sustenance he found frugal but sufficient food, consisting of fruits, bread and water.

When this time was passed he was brought to the Brotherhood in the evening, immediately after the setting of the sun, where certain questions were given him to answer; and when he had there taken the oath of initiation, the brotherly kiss passed the round of the brethren, whereupon the Neophite was dressed in the white garb, as a sacred emblem of his purity of soul,

as he now having consecrated himself to Jehovah in the cause of truth and light.

The elder of the Brotherhood then initiated him, saying: "Beloved son, you are consecrated to Jehovah, therefore choose your path after his will; contend ever undaunted for truth and virtue; try and examine everything minutely and conscientiously, and having tried much, choose the good and useful in life, and use it for the good of yourself and your fellowmen."

Then he was given a spade and an apron, and one of the elders of the Brotherhood spoke as follows: "The Brotherhood is henceforth thy world, thy all, thy father and mother, thy sister and brother; and henceforth it is the duty of the Brotherhood to care for thee, protect thee, and guard thee, for hence thou art its beloved son."

Some of the priests then read the prayer of the Brotherhood, and when he had pronounced the last word, all the brethren shouted in chorus: "Amen! Amen! Amen!"

The usual hymn of praise was then sung, and the brethren sat down to their frugal, brotherly meal, or feast of love, but still the Neophite was not allowed to sit by the brethren's table, but had to take his place by a special table in the presence of the brethren.

Now again came a trial of twelve months, and when all the years of trials, three full years, were ended, the Neophite was considered an actual member of the Brotherhood, and then he was initiated and gradually instructed in the doctrines and secrets of the Order.

The Jews in general called this Brotherhood, "The Holy Brotherhood of the Chosen Ones," or "Hasidees," that is, the pious, or the "Children of Peace," of whom Jesus speaks on several occasions. In Luke, 10 Chap. 5 v., when he says: "When ye come into a house say first, 'Peace be to this house.' And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall turn to you again."

Likewise Nathaniel says to Jesus: "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered and said unto him, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." *Evang. John, 1 Chap., 48 v.*, and also do we refer to the conversation with Nicodemus, *John, 3 Chap.*

The brethren had their special signs, and thereby recognized each other when they met. These signs were: A certain movement of the right hand, a grip, the brotherly kiss, and the word of salutations — "Peace be with you my brethren"; and it is significant that Jesus, on occasions where he suddenly or unannounced stepped forth among his disciples, always saluted them with the words: "Peace be with you." *Luke, 24 Chap., 36 v.*; *Matt. 20 Chap., 19-26 v.*

The Essees represented their doctrines to the younger members and brethren in parables or allegorical form, thereby to form and exercise the mind and sharpen

the thoughts, that they might gradually get used to interpret the glorious doctrines and truths that were hidden under the parables.

Josephus says therefore, "*Maxima enim philosophic pars apud Essenos, prised ritu per Allegorias traditur*"; and we know that the Master, Jesus, often made use of the allegorical representation and parables, when he would impress some moral commandment or high idea in the hearts of his disciples or the people, or some sacred doctrine of his divine truths.

The moral commandments of the Essees appear otherwise to be very much similar to those which the ancient philosophers and wise men taught, but still more similar are they to the doctrines that Jesus preached.

In my little work "*Palestine in the time of Jesus*" I have, page 88, showed this by several examples.

Yes, the very fundamental commandments of the moral law of the Essees con-

sists of the same words that are quoted in Luc., 10 Chap., where it says: "And behold a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him saying, 'Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'"

He said unto him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"

And he answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

And Jesus said unto him: "Thou hast answered right. This do and thou shalt live."

Everybody that entered into the Brotherhood took the solemn vow, "To love God above all, and exercise love and justice to all men."

The places within the borders of Palestine where most of the Essees lived and had their meetings in the time of John the Baptist and Jesus, were the country round Nazareth, the valley Achor near Betha-

bara, the country round the castle of Mas-seda, the desert at Ephraim, the mountainous country at Igutha, not far from Hebron, the town Bethania by Jerusalem, the valley at Thabor and the country surrounding the stronghold Macherous, where John afterwards was a captive and where he by the command of Herod was beheaded.

Such was this remarkable Brotherhood, within whose sacred association the true God was worshipped and the doctrine of true religion preserved in purity, truth and spirit, in many centuries.

For this, their pure, unsophisticated worship, this Brotherhood was renowned, before, by, and after the time of Jesus; and useful, indeed, did their firm faith in God prove; for soon after the departure of the Master came the times when they were tempted, and when it was of need to be firm in their faith.

After Jesus' departure was the Brotherhood subjected to the most severe temptations, the greatest trials and perse-

cutions. The Romans spread war and desolation over the unlucky land of the Jews, and with the horrors of the war followed thousands of miseries. But none were more persecuted than the pious Esseens.

The Roman chiefs and soldiers invented all conceivable kinds of tortures and excruciations, to make them mock and deny God, but by none of all their barbaric means did they succeed in shaking the perseverance and firm faith of these pious people.

In the first fury of the war, many of the Esseens who lived in the cities, had fled to their brethren in the desert and the mountains, and here hidden, could they in peace and brotherly love, exercise their worship of God, according to the teachings of the Master, unharmed, in its purity and truth.

But soon their places of refuge were discovered and traced by their enemies, when they were driven out of their places of concealment, and most of them fell

bloody victims to the fury and rage of the Roman soldiers.

With the greatest calmness, without complaint or murmur, they suffered the lengthened pains of death, and sealed the Master's teachings with their blood.

But there were still many who, in spite of the inventive means used by the Romans to trace their ambuscades, remained undiscovered, and thus were saved from a suffering death, and these are just the fathers of the Brotherhood, who have preserved in its purity their doctrines, secrets, and the knowledge that they themselves inherited from wise fathers, and handed down to their posterity, and these their doctrines give the truest and greatest manifestation of the greatness, wisdom and power of God, and his inscrutable love to all men. Amen!!

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