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And it may be that his words left me with a need to find antidote against brooding and most solemn brooding for we were not long walking upon the road when I sent forth two of my disciples and said, "Go your way into the village of Bethphage which is before us and so soon as ye enter there shall be a colt whom you will recognize for on him no man has ever sat. Loose such a wild colt from where he is tied and bring him to me. And if any ask why do you this, tell them that the Lord hath need of the colt."

And they went away and found the beast by the door in the first street of the village and loosed him and brought him to me. And I sat upon this colt whose back was ignorant of a rider and my hands were gripped into the mane upon his neck, but then, if I could not subdue the colt, how could I bring peace to what must be the same spirit of uproar in the hearts of men awaiting me at the Temple?

Thereupon, we walked in procession (and I upon the

colt). I was hungry and knew more desire for food than in a year, as if indeed I were now preparing to eat and then not eat again.

Whereupon, seeing a fig tree from afar that was full of leaves, I trotted up upon it, outpacing all who were in the procession in order to take my fill of figs from that tree, but when I came nigh there was naught but leaves. The hour of ripe figs was not near for this tree.

Out of the furies in the colt must his outrage have been borne in on me, and with him was every wind that arose from the anger of my enemies; of a certainty was much rage now in me for I said to the fig tree, "No man may eat fruit from you hereafter!"

Those disciples nearest to me heard it, and took it as an omen that this tree was now cursed, and they were not concerned. But I was left to support the loss and burden of a fig tree whose roots I had severed. "I am the Son of God," I told myself, "yet also a man; thereby must that be a word for willful destruction."

So I knew that the presence of Satan remained in me. Like a hawk who searches the fields below for one beast and swoops to steal a life, so had I struck at the fig tree.

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Now the multitude in front of me took down branches from those palm trees we passed and strewed them before me and sang, "Hosannah! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our David who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in the highest."

And I soon forgot the fig tree for I was sweet amazed at how the people of Jerusalem (and some had never seen me before) were full of favor; in the windows we passed did many wave: Some of our good deeds had ridden in advance of us.

Mayhap the fig tree was with me also for I soon thought of Ezekiel who had spoken of the city of Tyre and how it was famous a thousand years ago for its horns of ivory and its tables of ebony, its shops with emeralds and purple linens and jewelry of coral and agate, its stalls of honey and balm, and wine from Cassia and Calamis, and many precious cloths for chariots in the markets of Tyre, and all spices and chests of cedar.

Yet all had been washed away by the seas in the day of Tyre's ruin; would this soon be said of Jerusalem, as wealthy in this hour as was once the city of Tyre?

And seeing full white buildings with tall columns of such great measure that one knew not whether one gazed upon a

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temple, the house of a great man, or the seat of Roman government, so did I say to myself, "Victory is of the Lord and a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," but such words were too pious in my mouth (for my heart had also leaped at the sight of these riches) and so I also said to myself, "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit. And a great city is like unto a strange woman."

Yet how could I hate Jerusalem? In its beauty was it magnificent. Then could I see in my heart the court of King Solomon on that day when he had made a palanquin of the wood of Lebanon and the pillars thereof had been fashioned of silver and the base of gold. The seat of the palanquin was purple and its claws had been wrought by the daughters of Jerusalem. Wondrous was the love of display in Jerusalem.

Yet what had my followers or myself to display? I saw a Roman nobleman stop to look at our procession, and he gazed upon the hundreds who walked by twos and by three and four in the lane before me and at the hundreds who followed. And if some were well attired, yet the majority of my multitude were in rags and bits of colored apparel.

I looked upon this multitude as if never before had I seen a throng, but then the people of Jerusalem had joined in

among us now, and by large numbers; so did I see as many faces as there are aspects of man, and among those who followed were many who could be counted as less than believers, but rather were among the curious, and the tormented, and the cynical, these last accompanying us so that they could jeer against the Pharisees and thereby repay old rebukes.

Also present were some who were solemn and with much hope that I might provide new piety more solemn than their last, much folded in their hearts from repetition of old prayers. And there were children who looked on all the sights and on myself as well, and laughed at the wonder of God's bounty when it came to the faces of people, and these children were the ones closest to joy and to awe. Then were there also men who were as ruffians with the fearful dissatisfaction of boredom on their brow. They, too, were in part of the throng.

And then there were the poor. From their eyes came a power of poverty composed of great need and great hope and much depth of sorrow; they had been disappointed many times. And I spoke to all as if they were one, since great changes for the better can occur at times such as these, and in a bad

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man more quickly than in a good one. For with the heat and the fever, there can also be sudden recognition of the truth; such truth can rest in the illumination between a word and a throng, and many bad men are quick to know their sins and suffer sore within from the effort to resist remorse.

Now as the throng deepened, so was the colt as full of demons as the swine of Gadarene yet its wicked spirits were young and without the foul odors of practised devils. Still, did my beast buck and take no order to stop, and it was in his mind to cast me over his mane onto the stones of the road. Yet I rode him with the knowledge that he was the colt for me.

For now my expectation of reaching the Temple had become mixed with the awe that I was still a simple Jew of a modest trade approaching a great edifice of walls and buildings of much consecration wherein were still other congregations of chapels and courtyards open for speech and meeting and barter, and this Temple of all temples was on a mount, so was I well-placed on my own mount, and the colt did not allow me to contemplate how profound was my fear and how large was my homage of what was before me.

Yet in my mind, and without seeing it, could I still see

how the steps rose from courtyards to courtyard, and on to more august buildings behind and unto sanctums more sacred, even to one room where none but the High Priest could enter and then but on one day of the year for it was the Holy of Holies: so even though I was the Son of God, so was I also the child of my mother and was feeling more respect for the Temple than could be equalled by my desire to change all within. And I felt whole disturbance and some weakness. And I shivered when the multitude in front of me began to cheer as they mounted over a great rise in the road. For then I knew that my first view of the Temple walls would be on the other side.

But then as I came to the sight, and my colt trotted and jumped and kicked up its feet, so did I also know even as I approached this last rise, that the future years of all such wonder and magnificence was in peril and enemies would compass it around and besiege it on every side; they would they even lay the Temple low to the ground until it was but the wreckage of a wall and not one stone left to rest upon another. And all this would come to pass should the priests of the Temple not understand that my visit was as a message from the Lord and to be honored.

So when I came before it, I wept at the sight of the Great Temple, weeping openly upon my colt. The Temple was beautiful to my vision yet I knew then that it was not eternal. And indeed I understood that the works of man, even if they be in stone, endure no longer than the stamens of a thistle.

And I thought of the words of Amos who said: "The houses of ivory shall perish."

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And when I came into the Temple itself, and dismounted from my colt and climbed the first great steps at the entrance, I discovered between the gates that there was naught for the eye but a large court filled with the men of Mammon. Here was a place where all were exchanging money and goods. How could one admire their beards which were much curled by warm iron, and immaculate and much tailored by the razor and the scissors and their vain pride. To me, these men of Mammon looked like beasts and birds of great pride, even as peacocks: so were the priests who moved among them.

A great rage was growing in me at the thought of wealthy men and their tables enriched with every bounty of food while the poor sat in mud and filth in the stinking alleys of the city.

Silence did I then gird about me like the robe of a high priest that others must not touch, and so did I sit alone on a stone bench by the treasury and beheld how people cast

money into the great box. And many who were rich cast much within. Then, came a poor woman and her shawl was threadbare; she threw in her small coin. Then did the Lord give a sign and my heart leaped.

I called to those disciples who were nearest and said: "This poor woman hath cast in more than all the rich. They leave a tithe of their abundance, while she gave up all she had, even her living for this day. So she has performed a wonder; she has turned Mammon into tribute to God. Whereas the wealthy give to the Lord only to impress each other; thereby do they seek to amass more of Mammon."

And I thought of how money was a great and stinking beast whose foul offerings were supped upon with slobberings and greed, men's bellies full of lust. And all were in such a tumult that they could give off from such feeding but once a day to go to the Temple and pray and give a coin to the great box in the treasury.

And I thought of how the rich are choked with cares that come from the weight of gold. Thereby do their gardens bring no fruit to perfection. For there is oppression in the air. The rich man's blooms bring no happiness to his eye for he only considers that his neighbor, being wealthier than

himself, will display gardens with fruit of greater beauty. And so is the rich man envious, and he suffers the curse of envy and is without rest.

Yet still did I ponder upon how to speak to these wealthy who were here in the outer court of the Temple with the moneylenders. And should I tell them:

"No man can pay allegiance to two masters. Either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will cling to the one he needs and seek to despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

But I thought again of how all who were wealthy would not hear my words for hating them.

Then the Devil spoke to me, and this I knew at once for my Father, even in the darkest night of His meditations, would not address me with such a tongue, nor with teeth to bite the inner spirit of my ear: therefore did the Devil now say: "Before it is all over, those who are wealthy will possess you as well. They will put images of you upon their wall."

Then, I knew that my soul had been seized by this threat; but the voice went on: "Your name and alms in your name, will enrich the treasury of mighty churches; men

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will worship you even as you come to belong more to me. For indeed you will belong to me as much as to Him; that is just: I am equal to Him." And I heard him laugh before he also said:

"Greed is a beast whose defecations are weighed in gold. Yet is not gold the color of the sun out of which all things grow? Ponder such matters, Jesus, and do not deny me too quickly."

To which God now replied in my other ear, and I knew it was my Father: "All that he says makes much sense until it fails to make sense. He gives this speech to all who catch his eye, and his eye is only for the best, and those most beautiful. Alas, all those whom I have fashioned with great hope. Whereas he scorns all who are modest but remain with Me."

And this was the most that my Father ever said to my ear about Satan and His problems with such a Devil; nonetheless was it a thought to torment the palisades of my faith? I wondered if only for a moment: Did we praise the meek, He and I, because those were the only ones who would have allegiance to us?

These thoughts were of such disturbance that in subduing

their mockery, I fell prey to a great wrath.

For I could see in the eyes of the moneylenders a covetousness as sharp as the point of a spear, nay, it was more like unto the evil that is in the eye of the sharp-beaked bird who looks for prey. Then the rage of Isaiah came into me, for in his words did I cry out: "These tables are a pool of vomit and filthiness and there is no place clean!"

And I overturned the table before me with the monies that were upon it, and felt an exaltation in my ears as the coins gave their small cries on striking the stone of the floor, and each possessor ran after his own loss like vermin on the hunt for smaller vermin.

Then did I knock over the seats of those who sold doves, and freed the cages. To this uproar of wings did a multitude behind me come forward and some may even have been feeling the exaltation of the Lord that was in me at this defiance of greed and usury.

Many reverberations did I feel within these holy walls, holy now, yet not so holy as once before, for now more tarnished by greed than before.

And I said: "My house shall be known before all nations as a house of prayer. Is that not written? But ye have made

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it a den of thieves."

Indeed it was but the truth that men who sought Mammon were thieves even if never had they stolen one cup of wheat. And in my nearness now to my Father, did I gain the joy of a holy rage yet also was I much aware that many scribes and priests had heard me from afar, and so it was as if I could hear the Pharisees speaking in all the temples within this Great Temple and in all the courtyards, and I knew that in overturning the tables I had given offense that would blind all judgment of what I would say next.

For I would not allow these priests and elders of this Great Temple to be loyal to their separate accounts, then now must they think of me and thereby feel discomfort that they were ready to pray by evening and weigh Mammon in the morning, and thereby water all the vines of cupidity that grew from one side of their soul to the other.

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Amidst the disorder of the tables so were my next words said; they were: "Destroy this temple and in three days will I raise it up."

Then spoke one of these moneylenders, and he was an old man, and stout, but with clear eyes, "Forty and six years was this Temple building. Thou will rebuild in three days?"

And then was I ready to wonder at what I had said. For there were many in the multitude about me ready to tear down much of what was before them in this Temple, and that with joy. What did not belong to them might well be destroyed. Yet I also knew that even this thought of such destruction spoken once aloud could injure much in days to come. For what is said aloud and heard by others can, when awful by its thought, become the ghost of all that has gone before, and so will live in the chill of dark and never relent and never forgive. That I had spoken of tearing down the Temple could yet bring forth such a ghost. Still had I said it, and

despite all, for to me were here many buildings of immaculate beauty. If I had been but a pilgrim wandering through these halls, so would I have been wondrously impressed by the dedication of their skills, these ancient carpenters and stone masons who had built these great buildings.

By such thinking did I grow calm, and know that I was here to teach, not to destroy.

And I would say that the Lord was still with me. For had it not been also His rage? And was He not telling me now to be wise, to be gentle? I said to my followers, "Be now calm and respect this Temple. These moneylenders are not of the Temple but merely the leavings of evil and that can be found anywhere, and be scrubbed quickly from the stone. Therefore, will I teach. Yet not, " I said, "in this unclean place of entrance where moneylenders were congregated. Come with me further into the holy places."

And I led them to a quiet arbor that was above another rising of stairs and between two small chapels; indeed there was even a cedar to give me shade. Then, as I had foreseen, a delegation came to me of priests and scribes and many of the elders of Jerusalem and they said, "We have been awaiting thee but do not understand the manner of your arrival. Who

gave thee authority to foment uproar?"

I answered, "I will ask one question, and if you can reply, I will tell by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John," I asked, "was it from heaven, or of men?"

And I knew they would reason as follows: "If we say 'From heaven,' he shall say, 'Why then did ye not believe John?' Yet if we say that John was of men, then he was a prophet, and we should have protected him."

So, they answered only, "We cannot tell."

And I said, "Neither do I tell thee by what authority I do these things."

Then came a scribe from the other side of these priests. He came walking forward with such ease that I knew he was a Pharisee from a noble family and educated beyond the measure of others. His eyes were blue and his beard was gentle and of a soft brown, and he smiled as if he were full of affection for me and said, "Master,"--which was a courtesy I looked upon with regard, since in his manner was even a suggestion that he, too, was speaking upon the disruption in the courtyard of the moneylenders; if he could not give approval of such an act yet would he still call me "Master," and so, "Master," he said, "we know that thou desirest to

teach the way of truth so I would ask for an answer to this question. It is of much weight to us and gives us much dispute when we do not know how to reply. Concerning the Romans, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or shall we not give?"

And I knew that for all his gentle warmth, the Devil had minions even so fair as this man and his question was as a snare. For if I replied that one should not give tribute to Caesar, which I expect was the reply he awaited, then these Pharisees could give testimony to the Procurator of this city that I was in rebellion against the Romans. But I feared not the snare. My wit, in this hour, was like an arrow eager to leap from my heart to my lips, and I said, "Give me a penny that I may see it," and when they brought it, I said to them, "Whose is this image?"

And he replied, "Caesar's."

And I said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." And I was pleased inasmuch as I had also as much as said that Mammon was the god appropriate to the Romans and not to the Jews.

I heard a murmur in the multitude of the Temple party as if my words were again displeasing to them. Yet I knew that

this scribe and these Pharisees were marveling at my means for eluding such traps as they set forth. And I could feel their respect. That was now as balm to my agitation. For now must they see that I had the strength to overturn the tables of the moneylenders yet the wisdom to avoid a rash reply. Still, did I also know that my remark had been exceedingly clever; indeed, it reverberated in my ears with that surfeit of wisdom which leaves an echo as hollow as the fall of a stone into an abyss. For could I see also how many a church would find a path to survive in many an evil land on the strength of such words. And would speak of them as my words. Yet was I not tearing at the roots of what I believed? I was not here to build churches, (and all such churches compromised), but must strive rather to bring all to salvation and with God's speed. Why, then, had I spoken thus? Had God estimated the size of my harvest and seen it as so small that He had decided the better path was prudence and thereby let there be many churches built in the swamps of pride and Mammon?

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And as I was preparing to teach in this courtyard, so could I see that the scribe who had addressed me as Master wished to continue his questions to me and he asked, "Master, which is the first commandment of them all?"

And I answered, " 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And so shalt thou love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength.' This must be the first commandment."

"What is the second commandment?" asked the scribe.

"To love thy neighbor as thyself."

The scribe said to me, "Thou hast spoken well. To love one's neighbor as oneself is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And I said to him, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

He was very wise. Mayhap he was the Master of the Book in this Great Temple and so was the man I would seek out on

many matters. Yet, if he had a fine face, still his eyes were as pale as the blue of the sky on a day when there is little of blue and the sky is white; so I did not trust him, albeit his manners were as fine as his beard. That was as well-curled as if he were the noble son of a family whose lands took into their fold many gardens tended by skillful servants. And his speech was as handsome as his appearance. He said, "We are all among the circumcized, and are a people of one faith. And I am of the persuasion of many of us in this Temple that you have not come to this holy place to rend us asunder, but rather to bring us nearer to one another, yea, even though disruption has followed you like the dust before a storm." He paused to great effect and all were listening. "Nowwithstanding, there are many storms that cleanse. So I would ask of you, Master, when comes the Kingdom of God?"

And as he spoke, so could I hear those two voices that live as one in many a Pharisee. Often did their voices come to my ear endowed with good manners and much breeding; yet all the same was there quiet mockery in the utterances of their throat, but as finely sifted into their courtesies as powder into sand. Still did I listen first to his good voice

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for it was not without desire to hope that I might be, indeed, the Son of Man; for that, he had great passion to know. And those priests who had sent him were also of such interest. So was I ready to speak to this scribe.

We conversed on many matters and as men who were equal and of much courtesy toward each other. Only by the second hour did he begin to display his knowledge of the scrolls, and thereby began to discourse with me over the working of cures on the Sabbath.

And so did he murmur: "Publish this not in the streets of Askalon . . . lest the daughters of the uncircumcized triumph." And he smiled as if I would not know that such verses came from the second book of Samuel. "Do ye recall the verse," he went on, "that is saying: 'And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day, and they brought him unto Moses and Aaron and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. But the Lord said unto Moses, 'The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him.'" And all the congregation brought him without the camp and stoned him with stones and he died, as the Lord commanded

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Moses.'" Then the scribe said, "That was in days that are now a thousand years old, and a congregation of this day would not stone such a man. Yet doth not the principle remain? Thou shalt not labor on the Sabbath."

I replied that I had answered this question in many a way. "I say to you again, if you circumcize a babe or a man on the Sabbath, then so may ye lift the scales from the blind and flex the limbs of the halt."

And he said, "I have been waiting for all of this year to converse with you. For I have thought of your works, Master, and I would say that which the Prophet Samuel said to King Saul: 'Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.' And if ye come from He whom you will not declare and wish us to assume that ye are from the Lord, you do not say as much. So we must suffer from the brilliance of your deeds. For your cures can appear to us as witchcraft and full of the bright fire of rebellion. And we in the Temple have fear of that bright light, of such conflagration and such flaming of light, since we have labored for ten hundred years to learn what is in the Book and many have died for the five Books of the Torah. And with what strength we have left, so have we built the walls of our belief in this place and we live by

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the light within that is provided by the deeds of our martyrs who died for our scrolls. So would I remind you that it is written in First Maccabees that King Antiochus, a heathen king, who was set over us from without, and he was a despot. So did he declare to his whole kingdom of Jews and gentiles that all should be one people. Jews and gentiles alike. All should obey his laws, and partake of his religion.

"And all of his heathen and gentiles agreed to the commandment of this king. And to our shame, so did many of the Israelites also consent to this religion before idols and such Jews profaned the Sabbath until the only clear measure of a man who would continue to be a good Jew was that ye could kill him but he would not profane the Sabbath. Yet did King Antiochus continue to deny our holy people and reward those Jews who would sacrifice swine's flesh.

"And then did he command all Jews to leave their children uncircumcized. King Antiochus even said that whoever would not give assent to his commandment should die, and so the Israelites who would not obey him were driven to live in secret places, and abominations were set upon the altar. Whosoever was found with a book of the testament was put to death. And for those women who caused their children

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to be circumcized, so did he have thoss same infants hung, and the doctors who circumcized them were slain.

"All knew then that the Book was as naught before evil men," said the scribe, "unless there was observance of the Book. And so I say to you that in your thought must be recognition of the ten hundred years of the Book and of the martyrs who observed the law and died for the law. So, too, do I say to you that in your haste to serve God, ye encourage the publicans, the sinners, and even the uncircumcized. Ye rush to destroy that which ye have not learned in patience and meditation and in observance of the law on many a Sabbath and in all of your years. Stubbornness is also as iniquity and idolatry."

The scribe had spoken to more and more sound of assent among those who heard, even among my own people was much muttering that he was right, and many were weeping at the death of so many Jews.

Therefore was it not simple to reply.

"Think not," did I tell him, and slowly, "that I am here to deny the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For I say that unless the righteousness of our people shall exceed the righteousness of your scribes and

Pharisees, then we shall in no case enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

"But I would offer a parable," I told him. "Two men," I said, "went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. And the Pharisee stood and prayed: 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all I possess.' And the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven but smote himself on his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you this man went down to his house more justified than the other. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

And before he could reply, I added: "All that you say is just if people observe the Book. But they do not. And this land of Israel hath committed great whoredoms in departing from the Lord, and the Lord looks upon the people of Israel as in whoredom and even searches for a way to save the whore."

Now did the scribe answer me in a tone so light and so full of the wings of confidence that each of his words might

have been a creature to dance upon his tongue; in that moment could I hear Satan in the voice of this scribe for he said, "Yes, you will finish by saying to a people who are not your people, 'Thou art my people.' and they will say, 'Thou art my God.'" And the scribe laughed again and all the mockery he had mixed like powder into the soft sand of his courtesy was now separated and washed over me as if he had seen all things evil and wise whereas I had not.

So did I not speak further until I could find passages to utter; then did I turn once more to the prophets: "From the words of Ezekiel," I told the scribe: "'My sheep were scattered because there is no shepherd, and they became meek to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered, and none did search or seek after them. My flock became meek to every beast of the field because there was no shepherd; neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but fed themselves and not my flock. Behold, I am against the shepherds.'"

"And these shepherds," he answered, "are as my kin? Can it be said that is what you say?"

Nor was I polite in reply.

"Beware," I said, "of scribes who love to go in long

clothing and look for salutations in the marketplace and the chief seats in the synagogues and the uppermost rooms at feasts. They devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. These shall receive greater damnation."

And to myself I was thinking that even a drunken man could lay claim to more knowledge of what was politic than myself. In this Temple I was without guard over the wisdom that knows what one must say to obtain the most and offend the least. But then some of these Pharisees I might never see again and much did I want them unable to forget what I had declared.

"Know me," I added, "that I would be as a good shepherd and would wish to deliver my flock out of all places where they have been scattered on the cloudy and dark day. So I do not despise those who are uncircumcized and ignorant of the Book."

"And thereby would you give a light to the gentiles?" asked the scribe.

"Yea," said I, "so would I also give a light to the gentiles. It will be for the salvation of all."

Then the scribe was silent; I think he was weary. He had not thought that I could stand before him in the words of

the Book and face to face. So I continued to speak when he was silent, "The Lord hath called me from the womb," I said, "from the bowels of my mother, and He made my mouth a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me and hath made me a polished shaft. In His quiver hath He hid me and said unto me, 'Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Raise up the tribes of Jacob and the strong reserve of Israel,' and He also said, 'I will give thee a light to the gentiles that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.' For my Father has said that I must be His salvation, and I know not the meaning of that."

To which the scribe said, "Is that not blasphemy?"

And I replied, "It is what my Father hath said."

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And by now, as the shadows in the great courtyard grew long upon the ground in the lowering of the sun, so did the echoes return to me of all that was contested between the scribe and myself. And I spoke alone to the multitude and to my disciples. And by now was I ready to say all that I thought for I could see that the cause of my Father would not prevail without readiness to give of all my spirit against the powers of this Temple--which were like unto walls of great thickness and much propriety. So must I speak with the mightiest words I could find. And indeed I finally understood what it was to feel the strength of the Lord and by His voice, much as though it came from me.

Many Pharisees were among this multitude, and thereby did I commence by saying: "The scribes and the elders sit in Moses' seat and the Great Temple of Jerusalem is their throne. Whatsoever, therefore, that they bid you observe, that observe. But do not do as they do. For they lay heavy

pieties on men's shoulders, grievous to be borne, yet they will not move such burdens with one of their fingers. Broad are their philacteries, for so do they have them made. And they enlarge the borders of their garments; so do they seek for the uppermost room at a feast and love the chief seats in the synagogues."

And immediately some Pharisees stirred and others began to leave yet were these other Pharisees, as if twice fortified by anger now serving as spies upon me. And they chose to remain. Therefore did I speak once more of the width and sheen of their prayer shawl and how the leather wrappings on their arms had more of substance than their prayer for were they not there to say, "Look upon me, am I not prosperous?" And it was the same with the embroideries on the hem of their costumes. But did they ever grieve concerning the bent fingers of the old women who embroidered their fringe?

Then was my voice loud: "Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye neither go in yourselves to the Kingdom of Heaven nor do ye suffer those who would wish to enter. Ye devour widows' houses and make long prayer. Therefore, shall ye receive the greater damnation."

At which the boldest of the Pharisees began to hoot at me; and others, more timid, chose again to leave. But in my words was I seeing the widows who had lost their houses through the sharp practice of some of those before me. "Wherefore," said I to the Pharisees, "did ye not feed the widow's children instead of acquiring the house? Ye are blind guides! Ye are men of Mammon. But whosoever shall swear by the gold of the Temple, becometh a debtor before the Lord. Fools and blind! Which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin and omit the weightier matters of the law, and of judgment and of mercy and of faith. These ought you to have done and not to leave the other undone, ye blind guides who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter. But within are they full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisees, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter that the inside may be also clean. Woe unto you! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres which appear beautiful without but are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so, ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the

sepulchers of the righteous and ye say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the death of the prophets.' Yet ye are the children of them who killed the prophets. Ye are the measure of your fathers. Ye generation of vipers! How can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

And I knew that I spoke this last with the brave voice of John the Baptist and so now was I truly his cousin. "Behold," I said now: "I will send unto you prophets and wise men and some of them ye shall kill and some shall ye crucify, and some shall ye scourge, and persecute from city to city. And upon you will fall all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zachariah whom ye slew between the Temple and the altar. All of these things shall come upon this generation.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You who stoned those who were sent unto thee! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate! For you shall not see me henceforth until ye say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'"

Yet my heart was heavier than a burden of many stones. For I feared that my words were true. If these were my people and this my Temple, then I must mourn for Israel. And

it was time to depart from the Temple; by now had the Pharisees summoned many officers of the guard and all of such people were wroth with my words.

Yet, the multitude who surrounded me were like unto a tempest of whirling sands upon the desert, and this multitude was of my followers. And they, being much moved by my words, were so ready to bring me forth that no man interfered with my leaving although some of the Temple Guard were not without stones in their hands. And many were the Pharisees with stones in their hearts. But they cast not one bone or rock or clod.

They sought to take me yet no man laid hands on my garments. Mayhap my hour was not come. They would approach and fall back, and approach and fall back, and there was that in my eye which told them not to touch my cloth.

And in such manner did I depart from the Temple on the first day.

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And once without the walls of the Great Temple did all of my throng, being full of exultation, now climb with me to the Mount of Olives.

Then one after another, did disciples come forward on the Mount and having heard me in the Temple, did say: "When shall great things be? And what shall be the sign? And will we all rise at the end of the world, and will ye be with us?"

And again there was a multitude about me, even larger than had been in the Temple. And I said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For the sign of my coming and the end of the world will be only when I am no longer among you." And I knew not why I said so much as that unless it was the power of my dream coming to me every night so that whenever I awoke by darkness or in the dawn, still did I feel as if I had been scourged and had died, and now was risen. Yet here was I each morning and the mission still before me and all others. So powerful was the dream that I could not

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gainsay it; so I repeated, "I will come when I am no longer among you."

They groaned; honest was their pain at these words; such feeling brought tears to my eyes. For I could see that, withal, they loved me. So did I feel a new need to bring them counsel. And with all the strength of the voice of the Lord still within me, I said, "Take heed! For many shall come in my name saying, 'I am Christ' and shall deceive many. Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you be not troubled for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. First, shall nation rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. All these are but the beginning of sorrow. And they shall deliver you up as my followers, and they shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax strong for gold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and only then shall the end come." And in that instant, surrounded by my multitude, who swayed and even growled at such words issuing

from my lips, did I hear the Lord speaking to me of the minions of the Devil who would come upon the earth armed with a store of small miracles, each of these minions claiming to be the Christ, to be like unto the return of myself. And I felt as if beneath me lay a bottomless pit of deception, and I said:

"If any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ,' or say, 'He is here,' believe it not for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and they shall show great signs and wonders insomuch, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. Wherefore if they say unto you, 'Behold, he is in the desert,' go not forth. Or, 'Behold, he is in the secret chambers,' believe it not. For if the lightning comes out of the east and shines even unto the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon not give her light and the stars fall from heaven and the power of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet and they

shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words not. Watch, therefore, for ye do not know the hour your Lord doth come. But know this: if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready. For in such an hour that you think not, the Son of Man cometh.

"And when he cometh, then shall he say to them, 'Go ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and you came unto me. Yea, verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. And inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did not to me.' And these who did not, shall go away unto everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal."

And they cheered mightily, as if all who were listening were guaranteed to be of the party who would go to life eternal. And in the plaudits of this multitude, so did I also think that if the hosannas of many were all that one might need to do God's work, then in truth, my tasks were finished, and all of Judea would be given life eternal. To remind us, therefore, of tasks ahead, I said, "In two days will be the feast of the Passover and the Son of Man will be betrayed and crucified." And as I said it, I felt my words travel far into the sky and so did I know also that in the palace of the High Priest, they must be consulting how they might take me by force or by subtlety, and how they should condemn my life. For other answers were not. And so had I spoken with more force in my voice and more anger in my heart than before and ever before. Soon might all of this multitude be without me, and if without me, would they have learned any means to find their way again to the Lord?

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That night I chose to fast and I prayed, and in the morning was by part restored. It was cool early after dawn and I was ready to go again to the Temple and have many people come unto me and sit about in a circle in a large and open courtyard. And I would teach.

Yet on the way was I interrupted and again at the foot of the Mount of Olives by scribes and Pharisees. They brought unto me a woman; they set her in the midst of all, and they said unto me, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses and the law commanded us that such should be stoned. But what sayest thou?"

And I knew that they looked to find further cause by which to accuse me of leniency to sinners. I stared not at the woman, therefore, nor at them, but said: "Thou shalt not commit adultery. And whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already in his heart." And this was indeed advice for the young men among them whose

eyes might have provided delight in looking upon this woman and their hand soon provide them afterward with surcease and other forms of delights.

I knew whereof I spoke. For I had suffered already from lust. If never by deed, yet had I suffered the secret adultery of the heart (even if I had allowed no such entry into my loins.) Still, I could see, and without looking at this woman before me, all the filth of that which is fornication, and it was the Devil's sport; all the odors of the Devil were in the act.

But so did I also understand such desperation as comes upon witnessing the filth of those who fornicate for their own sake; I was one with John the Baptist on such matters and knew why he had dwelt in the desert and fed on no better than locusts.

And it was then that I also knew how the Devil had conquered every place that surrounded the city of God, (in which city procreation may be honorable for it is sanctified by marriage). Whereas the Devil is master of all that is outlying and in outskirts of the city and those who stray from this capitol of the Lord are mired in fornication.

So did I also understand that in order to give

conception to me, God had not chosen a good man like Joseph but had come forth as Himself so that there not be not one speck of Devil's spew nor one foul odor, nor even the suspicion of such; fornication was the most powerful limb of the Devil and could capture by its grasp an Essene even as purified in spirit as Joseph.

Then, in confusion as to how to reply to these Pharisees who stood before me in much confidence and pride that I would find a way to pardon this woman and thereby could be accused of trafficking with whores, so did I do no more than stoop down. And with my finger I wrote on the ground as though I heard them not.

I knew how wise and far-seeing were their minds at calculating certain matters, and they understood my hatred of fornication, inasmuch as to an Essene doth unseemly fornication deserve naught but the fire. And of all wisdom I had acquired from scripture concerning these perils of an unclean woman, yea, even unto suppurations between their thighs, was all recalled to me now, and much of what was written of Jezebel and how she had been thrown down from the high window of a tower even as it is told in the Second Book of Kings, and her blood was thereby scattered on the wall,

yea, even on the horses, which in their disturbance did tread upon her and leave her under foot. And when the king saw this, he did eat and drink and said, "Go, now! Bury this cursed woman for she is a king's daughter." But they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came and told him and he said, "This is the word of the Lord: 'Dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel and the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field.'"

And if such vengeance had been exacted upon one evil woman, what would visit all men who had known her? And so was an evil woman a disseminator of much peril. And thereby did I not dare to look upon this woman whom the Pharisees had brought, but continued to write with my finger in the sand.

To myself whispered from the book of Proverbs: "The lips of a strange woman are honey and her mouth is smoother than oil, but her latter end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, and her ways are unstable; but she knoweth it not. So do her feet go down to death, these feet that be swift in running to mischief."

And still had I not looked at her. Peter, beside me, kept opening and unrolling the scroll that he carried to

read when we would rest, but with great difficulty for he was near to unlettered; he knew of fish better than the words of scripture. Now, being often close to my thoughts, he pointed with one of his stout fingers, twice the thickness of one of mine, to a passage, and he whispered, "In the scrolls does it say: 'Lust not after beauty in thy heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For on account of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread,'" and when I nodded so that he might go on, he whispered further: "'An adulterous woman eateth and wipeth her mouth and sayeth, 'I have done no wickedness.''"

To myself I nodded. So did I also murmur to myself from the words of Ezekiel upon the harlot Aholibah: "For Aholibah doted upon the Assyrians, her neighbors, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses and desirable young men. Then I saw that she was defiled, and that she increased her whoredoms, for when she saw men portrayed upon the walls, the images of the Chaldeans made with vermillion, girded with girdles upon their loins, she doted upon them. And the Babylonians came to her, into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom and she was polluted with them so she discovered her whoredoms,

and in nakedness, yet she multiplied her whoredoms for she doted upon men whose issue is like the issue of horses."

And now, given fortification from these words of scripture, which were as support to my thoughts and like sinews, I looked up at the woman taken in adultery.

Even as I feared, she was beautiful to look upon. She was fine of bone and flowing of hair, and her eyes were painted with much art. Yet there was that in her which was gentle, even as her mouth was proud and foolish.

So the furies of that oven wherein was my hatred of fornication now cooled in my heart before the soft voices of another spirit that came into me, even as if it were her angel seeking for mercy from such as me, and I was offered a vision of this woman in the depth of sin, buried in the fumes of fornication and with a stranger who could have no better odor to offer than the smoke that rises from hair as it burns. Still must this woman be a creature of God, as were all of us; so might she be close to the Lord in unseen ways, even in her fornications with strangers, even as God and the Son of Man must be close to all strangers, yea, a woman close in her heart to God even as the Devil's hands embraced her body.

And so when these Pharisees, having been long silent and as patient as fishermen, now asked me again, saying, "Moses and the law commanded us that such should be stoned. What sayest thou?" (for they were at an end of patience), I lifted myself up and said unto the circle and unto my disciples and to the circle outside even of the scribes and Pharisees, "He that is without sin among you, come and let him cast the first stone." And I was amazed by what I said for I believed it and felt purified by my own words and was not without virtue and bliss.

A tumult of feeling rose up from them. And it was of such a fury of strength that I knew vertigo and stooped once more and continued to write on the ground as if I were at whole command of all that would ensue.

And soon was their fury dissipated. For they who had heard my words were now pained by their own consciences.

So, I saw them go out one by one. And they commenced with that one of the elders who was oldest and so had the most sin to support, even to the last who was young and near to innocent. And I was left alone. For even Peter had left. The woman was standing before me.

Not yet did I lift myself up and gaze into her eyes, but

then I did, and so doing had visions of the hair that grew at the head of her thighs: And I told myself I was in the presence of evil angels. For I was feeling them much in my belly and they were begging to be cast forth from me. Yet in my belly they remained. And so painful were they that now I had need to be wary of this creature of beauty.

So did I choose to speak again in the words of the prophet Ezekiel, and therefore did I call her "Aholibah," since I did not know her name. "Aholibah," I said, "behold thy sin. For, as it is written: 'I will raise up thy lovers against thee, all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses, and they shall come against thee with chariots and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which will set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about thee and cast thee out, and I shall set judgment before them and they shall judge thee according to their judgments, and I will set My jealousy against thee and they shall deal furiously with thee; they shall take away thy nose and thy ears and thy remnant shall fall by the sword and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire. They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes and take away thy fair jewels. Thus will

I make thy lewdness to cease immediately and thy whoredoms be brought out of the land of Egypt: so that thou shall not lift up thy eyes and hear them, nor remember Egypt any more."

And this harlot whose eyes were as purple in the evening, said gently, "I do not wish to lose my nose."

And I said, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man accused thee?"

She said, and now was her voice modest, "No man is here to accuse me, Lord."

And I said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

Afterward would I learn that her name was Mary Magdalene for she was from Magdala, which is in Tiberius. And that is a city where the bones of Jews who had died as martyrs now lay under the foundations of buildings erected by the Romans. So this woman Mary Magdalene had lain and committed adultery on ground that held the bones of martyrs. Yet did I not regret what I had done. And the woman left. Nor did I know that I would see her again.

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And as I continued along the Street of Herodias on the morning of the second day, so was I thinking of how such a street had been named after the Queen who had brought death to John the Baptist. Before me then was this accursed and fearful name and it was on the avenue that leads to the great gate of the Temple; then also on this street did I encounter a man who was blind from birth. Alas, he had known none of the cunning of sight in early days, and thereby were the many joys and pains of sight not to be seen in the shape of his nose nor in the lines that give subtle understanding to the mouth. He was innocent of vision, and one of my disciples even saw to ask me, "Master, what sin did the parents of this man so commit, that he was born blind?"

Once again did I speak faster even than my comprehension of those words for me, and I replied: "This man is blind so that the works of God can be made manifest to him. But I will cure him for God hath made me the light of the world."

Nor did I know what was meant until I had finished speaking. But on this morning so was I still living within those hours of despair when I awoke in the dark and so could see that nothing might come after me but the night. For if I failed, then God might despair of man and of woman since they were as bestial as the beasts yet had little of what was noble in beasts and long-suffering; nor did many who were human have that which was of grace in beasts and spoke of the Lord's natural presence. So it was out of despair and not from any spirit of vanity that I repeated, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." For how long would I be in the world?

And then I looked upon the eyes of the blind man and naught was remaining there with which to work, not even one sightless eye on either side of his nose; there was naught but the entrance to two small caves in the skull of his head.

I spat on the ground and made clay of this spittle and then I anointed the eyes of this blind man with my clay and said to him, "Go. Wash in the pool of Siloam," which pool was by our side.

And he groped his way therefore, tapping with his stick. And when he came back, he could see. Even as I could hear

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him speak to his neighbors who said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?"

To which others replied, "That is he."

Still others said, "No, he is like him, but it is not he."

To which the man who had been blind now replied, "I am he."

And when they asked how his eyes were opened, I heard him say, "A man who is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and he said unto me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash,' and having done as he said, have I received sight."

Then they said, "Where is this Jesus?"

And the man said, "I know not."

In that day at the Temple, the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight, and he said the same, and some of the Pharisees were quick to say, "This man Jesus keepeth not the Sabbath day."

And others asked, "How can a man do such miracles when there was not even a dead husk of blind eyes, but only a void on either side of his nose?"

So there was division among them. And they asked the blind man, "What sayest thou?"

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He replied, "The man is a prophet."

There were Pharisees of much reason and logic who would not believe that this man had been blind from birth. So they spoke to the parents. To which his parents were in confusion; they could only say, "We know that this is our son and he was born blind, but by what means he now sees we know not, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not."

And then could I understand that they were of so little courage that God might indeed have punished them with a blind son, for now they said, "Our son is of age. Ask him. He shall speak for himself."

Again did the Pharisees call the man who had been blind and they said to him: "Give God the praise. The man who laid clay upon your eyes is a sinner."

This man replied: "Whether he be a sinner, I know not. But I was blind and now I see."

"How then," asked the Pharisees, "how then did he open thy eyes?"

And he answered, "I told you and ye did not hear. Wherefore would ye hear it again?" And his voice was like mine. "Will ye also be his disciples if you believe?"

The Pharisees reviled him for such a remark and said,

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"You may be his disciple. Yet are we followers of Moses. God spoke, we know, unto Moses. But we do not know from whence this Jesus is."

In each moment that he saw the world and the walls of the Temple, this man became bolder and I felt blessed to have given such a fellow the return of his sight. "A marvelous thing," did he say now, "that ye know not from whence this Jesus is, and yet he has opened my eyes. If this man were not of God, could he do anything?"

They cast him out. They beat upon him with their fists and said, "Thou wast born in sin, and now thou does teach?"

So did I have him brought unto me and he said, "Lord, I believe." And he fell at my feet and I said, "I am come into this world that those who do not see might see, and they who would claim to see may be made blind."

And in me was an anger larger than any I had known before, even upon the tables of the moneylenders; such anger was not in my hands nor in my feet nor even in my voice, but an anger that stole into what had been hitherto the most quiet reaches of my heart where much gentleness did reside. And when one of the Pharisees who had overheard me say these words, now asked, "Am I not blind?" and said it with much

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mockery, I replied, "If you were blind, you would have no sin. But since you see, therefore does your sin remain. And to your sin are you blind."

And yet had I said too much. For now could I feel the recoil of the Holy Spirit in me as if my pride had become now too large and too vengeful for many of God's purposes, even though God be full of wrath. And now I could not shape my voice to be more gentle, but still did I say: "I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for the sheep."

Whereupon several of the Pharisees said, "He hath a devil and is mad." And others argued, "Can a devil open the eyes of he who is born blind?"

So they disputed. There was much dispute.

And even as I walked away on this Street of Herodias did an old Pharisee with a kind face, and many lines of wisdom in the twist of his nose and his mouth, come up beside me and he asked if we might have converse. And, by way of presenting himself, he said, "Many of us who are Pharisees would feel that thou didst well to overturn the tables of the moneylenders. For in such an act did you give real tribute to God. And among us are not enough who are willing to give such rebuke to greed. So, I would speak to you." And he

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said that he wished me to understand a matter that he had not comprehended when of my age. And being of a desire to calm myself, I gave assent.

"In those days," he said, "I worshipped God, and even did worship in the spirit of your words. For God is generous and He created us to be much like Him. Yet even so much as we are in His image, still is there one gate we cannot pass and it keeps us from believing that we are as He is."

Since there was much of decency in this elder, I said, "Even if a man believes that he is like God, and is circled in his image, still there are no miracles are in his hand."

"Yes," he said. "You have spoken. Yet what do you say of a man who has miracles in his hand? Is he elevated? Is he nearer to God? Or can he be deluded by the Devil? For the Evil One might even make use of his power to do good since that is also in the art of the Devil; thereby can Satan succeed in giving sight to one who is sightless, and that in order to delude thee further, noble Jesus, concerning the source of your miracles. Thereby would he also increase the delusions you bring to Jews."

"What you say," I told him, "is so subtle that it is you who could be of the Serpent rather than myself."

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He sighed and he said, "I know you are of noble heart. Your heart speaks from your eyes. So I would warn you. Ye need not believe me, but I wish you well."

"I believe you," I said.

"I would caution then. When you speak to others and say that you are the Son of God, and that will ye do, I know, I pray that harm may not come to thee; therefore, if you meet him, say it not to the High Priest, Caiphas. Should he hear such a word from your mouth, the sacrilege would be of a depth beyond all depth.

"But for so long as he hears it not from your mouth, only from the lips of others who are saying that you have spoken so, he will prefer not to believe it. And for so long as he does not, the sacrilege will not exist. Such is your safety. For his word is all among God-fearing Jews in Jerusalem."

So did I nod and smile at him and not know if I would take his advice. But then, how could I command the wisdom of my Father? Or request that He be prudent?

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And soon on this second day in the Temple had my throng multiplied from all that had been heard and spoken in Jerusalem from the day before. And it overflowed from the courtyard where I preached. And because they were much unruly so did I seek to teach how to comport themselves when in communion with the Lord.

"When thou prayest," I said, "do not be as the hypocrites: For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Rather, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father in secret; and thy Father shall reward thee openly. And do not use vain repetition as do the heathen, for such repetition kills the soul. Be ye not guilty, therefore, of excessive prayer; your Father knows what ye have need of, and even before ye ask him."

But they were eager to hear of wondrous things and of great signs in the heavens that should forewarn them; so,

later in the day when there was more calm I spoke of how there would be signs in the sun, the moon, and in the stars. "Upon the earth," I told them, "shall there be distress of nations and perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. But the powers of heaven shall be shaken and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh." And to myself I said, "Oh, Lord, can my words be true? May I pray that they come true?"

Yet I felt as if I cried out to Him from a sullen sea. But still did I want my words to reach into their hearts and offer such support as a timber that keeps afloat each man who holds onto it and above many a wave.

And from afar, beyond the throng, could I see the Pharisees and the Chief Priests talking to officers of the Guard of the Great Temple. Therefore, thinking of them, did I say to a few who were near: "Ye shall seek me but not find me."

And one of the priests standing close to me said, "Will ye go among the gentiles and teach them? What manner of

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saying is this, that we shall not find you?"

But others said, "Of a truth, this is the prophet; this is the Christ."

This priest answered: "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? From scripture is it said that the Messiah shall come out of the town of Bethlehem wherein David was born."

Another said, "Jesus is of Bethlehem. For wherewith is a man's nature if not in the land where he was born?"

But the priest said, "Is he not also of Galilee? Out of Galilee can arise no Messiah." And he nodded his head wisely. He knew. He knew naught of God but could tell you where it was and where it was not that the Messiah could arise. And to a certainty.

But then in this Temple on this second day was I always near to large emotion of sorrow or rage; before complacency was I always short in patience. So I wished to break into the declarations of this priest.

Not by enough did I warn myself that a man of small mind has developed for himself a hard shell to protect his little thoughts.

"Your fathers killed the prophets," I told him, "and you

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build the sepulchers of the prophets. God will send new prophets and apostles and you will slay and persecute many of them, and so great will be their bloodshed that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundations of the world will be required of this generation." And so did I repeat: "All the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation."

And this priest drew back but I pushed forward to say to him:

"From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the table, verily I say unto you it shall be required of this generation."

In my eye could I now behold the ancestors of this priest and their hands were stained with the blood of the prophets, even from Abel to Zacharias; none of these Pharisees near about me now were ready to bear witness to the blood shed by their fathers, and by their fathers' fathers. Rather would they occupy themselves with building sepulchers for the prophets. All the blood of all the prophets from the foundation of the world would now be required of this generation--all such whole recompense.

Not quickly did this priest give ground. He was small in mind, and small in body, but he was as certain of what he knew as a scorpion, and he said: "Thou bearest large record of thyself, but how are we to know if that record is true? It is written in our law that only by the testimony of two men, when it accords, is truth verified."

And I replied, "I bear witness of myself. And my Father, who sent me to you, also bears witness for me."

Whereupon he said, "Where is thy Father?"

I answered, "Neither do you know me nor my Father. For if you know me, you would know my Father also."

Then did he choose to upbraid me again for laboring at cures on the Sabbath, and others cheered for him.

I was short concerning this oft-repeated matter, and I said to him and to all who were like him: "I know you, and in you is not the love of God. I am come in my Father's name and you receive me not. Do you not think I will accuse you to the Father?"

I said this with intent that my voice should ring, but then my rage was larger even than my intent. How I wished to smite the piety of these Jews who were sharp of practice and narrow of mind and had none of the good spirit of those other

Jews with whom I had built houses in Nazareth. Nor did these priests have the honest courage, no matter what faults, of those who had joined me as disciples.

I said more. I said, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life, and hath given him authority to execute judgment. Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming when all that are in the grave shall hear His voice and shall come forth, they who have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. And my judgment is just unto all thy ancestors." And this did I repeat: "Unto all thy ancestors."

And by that speech did I arouse a greater rage than any on the first day: now it burned in these priests and Pharisees and without let. For if they had a belief that would be balm to all cankers in their soul arisen from all that was lacerated in them by the strain between piety and Mammon, so was it that they lived in full belief of the protection offered to their acts by the intercession of their ancestors. They believed in their ancestors before they believed in God, but then was it not their faith that these ancestors would carry them across all seas and gulfs

now separating them from God. And here was I, uprooting the graves of these ancestors, and passing judgment on ancient and evil deeds. And all this said before I even came to the sins of the sons.

They would disbelieve me. So would they double their rage. They could not endure such a plenitude of pain in their souls. For I knew I was revealing all they had not done for God. And so was I also revealing all they had not done for their neighbor. Such sins of omission made it hopeless for them to listen. And, indeed, did they feel righteous at closing their ears. So they believed they would not listen in order that they give no audience to the Devil. And I could have wept.

The tears stood forth in my eyes like sentinels on guard; I knew that the most powerful of my own people saw me as the Devil. And I could not believe how much pain was there for me in knowing that I was repugnant to the leaders of my people, truly repugnant, yea, even as the swine of Gadarene had been repugnant to me.

Still had I agitated them grievously. They were sore displeased even if they had not listened. So great was their rage that all light in our chamber became red to my eyes, and

indeed their souls were as in the fire. Toward such rage as they felt did I offer naught. For I could not restrain my tongue: "Ye shall know the truth," I told them, "and only the truth shall make you free." If these were Pharisees and their robes gleamed with the whiteness of its cotton and their hands were clean, full were they of pride of the most subtle construction; invisible towers had risen in their hearts to offer homage to themselves; they answered me: "We are of the seed of Abraham and were never in bondage to any man. How sayeth thou, 'Ye shall be made free'?"

And I answered them: "Whosoever committeth a sin is the servant of sin. Ye are Abraham's seed yet ye seek to be rid of me, a man who hath come to tell you the truth, as I have heard it from God."

They answered, "We, too, have one father and He is also God."

To which I said, "If God were your father, you would love me. Why do you not understand my speech? It is because you cannot hear my word. You are of your father, the Devil. It is the lusts of your father that ye will do. You hear me not because you are not of God."

Was I preparing a furnace by whose heat would iron melt? Never had I seen any Pharisee so provoked as were these. Their eyes beccame as red as the light to come off their bodies. "Now do we know," they said, "that thou hast a devil. For do you not dare to say that you are greater than our father Abraham? And are more honored by God than he?"

"My honor is as nothing," I told them. "It is my Father who honors me. Ye have not known Him, but I know Him. And your father Abraham rejoices to see my day."

Whereupon these Pharisees said to me, "Thou art not old yet of forty years, and thou hast seen Abraham?"

I replied, "Before Abraham was, I am."

Then they took up stones to cast at me. Such anger was in their resolve that I could not pass among them as I had in the late hours yesterday when some had been ready to hurl a rock, yet had not. I had passed through their midst and gone by. Now, I could not. One, and then another, would be bold enough to cast a stone. And after the first stone, many. So I stepped behind one of my disciples, and he behind others, and so did we did slip away. Even as they raged in their fire did they have fear of following me.

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And among my disciples was concern at where I should stay now and so we chose the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany. None would go there nor wish to think of looking there. Still did word of my presence go out to some. Even as we were at table on this second evening, so there came a woman to visit me with an alabaster box of spikenard; very precious was such ointment, and she broke the box and laved it into my hair.

Now there were some among my disciples who felt indignation and said, "Why such great waste of this ointment? Why was it not sold, and for more than three hundred pence, and all given to the poor?" It was Judas who asked this.

And I looked at him with much disfavor, causing Judas unease. But then this woman, and her name also was Mary, the same name for my mother, for Mary of Magdalene, and for that Mary who was a sister to Lazarus. So was this yet another

Mary in the home of Simon the Leper, and she not only anointed my feet with the remains of the spikenard, but wiped my feet with her hair.

And in such a moment did I realize that abasement is next to godliness for I saw beatitude in her eyes and knew such happiness in my loins. And the house was filled with the sweet odor of the ointment.

Again, did Judas ask: "Why was this pomade not sold for three hundred pence?"

And when others also murmured against the woman, I said, "Why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me." Being wroth with Judas, I said more: "Ye have the poor with you always," I said, "and whensoever you will, you may do them good. But me, you have not always."

I was also wroth with myself. For the ceremony bestowed upon me by this woman and the love that came into me from her hands had given great happiness; at this instant I did not, in truth, feel like a friend of the poor: I was living in short breath and fear of my own death, and how it must be oncoming; so did I also brood upon the Egyptians who prepare a body for its death. And the perfumed substance in the spikenard gave filling to the loneliness in my belly.

Then did I now know how the rich feel. Now, could I understand their need for lavish display. To them, was lavish display as worthy as blood. And then, too, did I know then how greed was their balm against much foreboding. Which was cause for me to wonder again how much of myself must belong to the Devil inasmuch as I, too, was now speaking with a forked tongue. If, from the left corner of my mouth I had said that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, yet from the other corner, did I issue sentiments no better than a malediction: "Ye have the poor with you always."

Or, was it at the behest of the Lord? Did I speak in such opposites that I might reach out to all who were to the left of me or to the right? On this thought was I provided with an image of great temples and beautiful edifices erected to me and so no longer knew in this moment whether God, man, or Devil spoke in my heart and made it of such complication.

What I could see was that I wanted to be all things to all men; it was meet that each should take from me a separate wisdom; indeed did I now think: Many roads lead to the Lord. Yet neither was I free of the worm of inner

derision. And it was there to tickle my ear. Mayhap the Devil had also installed his evil wisdom; through me, could he now suggest that it was not ungodly to enrich oneself.

And I noticed that Judas had left our presence and was gone away into the night, that same night where many were wandering on the road between Bethany and Jerusalem and all spoke of changes to come.

Disciples came to me on this night and said that Judas had spoken ill of me, He had declared that I was ready to betray the poor and that I was like all others who do not remain true to their convictions in the time when such convictions commence to chafe and burn. And I felt much injury at such remarks. Yet was I obliged to forgive Judas since I had already spoken ill of myself to myself.

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Now on the third day after the evening at the house of Simon the Leper, I knew on awakening that the chief priests had held debate on this same night concerning how they might take me by craft and put me to death. But there were other voices in my ear to tell of other priests who had said, "Not on this day of feast, lest there be an uproar of the people." For today was the feast of the Passover and of unleavened bread.

I cannot know if the Lord was with me or the Devil pinioned my feet, but I chose not to go to the Temple on this third morning. If prudence be derived from God and cowardice from the Devil, then there is a line between that no man can mark. On this morning I was not as the Son of God, but only a man in my heart, and no more than a man who dwells in fear.

In my dream had it been long foretold that I would be three days in Jerusalem before the Romans laid hands on me. So were my limbs heavy on the morning of this third day in

Jerusalem; I could not rise. Fever seized my limbs again and my eyes ached from all I had seen and my ears from what was heard; unholy spirits congregated in my chest; I wished to quit the city of Jerusalem. Multitudes, I knew, would be waiting to accompany me to the Temple for teaching, even as had been on the first day and more on the second. But now I could not stir and was not ready to enter the city until night was nigh. And I took counsel with myself whether it might not even be in God's will to leave and preach by the Sea of Galilee again; here in Jerusalem was but an abundance of sinners strong as in their resistance to those who might say: Sin no more.

I could not rise from my bed. God's voice was not in my ear. By afternoon, the disciples gathered about me and said, "Since this is the first day of unleavened bread, tonight they will kill the paschal lamb. Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat on the Passover?"

And I thought to send them out like spies within a foreign land, for at last I heard the words of my Father even as they reached my tongue and I said, "Go forth, ye two." And if there were two I had chosen, it was only by looking at their feet, so I cannot say their names: "Go forth, ye two,

into the city," I said, "and there shall you meet a man bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him unto wheresoever he shall go in by a gate. And say ye to the good man of the house, 'My Master sayeth, "Where is the guest chamber? I shall eat the Passover here with my disciples."' And the good man will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared. There make ready for us."

And all this I saw with clarity, and knew that God had given it me. But since I had also had many a vision through many a night of much that would happen on this third day, I hoped that what I saw now would not be fulfilled. Let it be that my two disciples would meet no man bearing a pitcher.

But no, they went into the city and found all as I had said. My disciples made ready the Passover. And in the evening, when it was safe to travel, I came to that house with my twelve, and we sat, and we ate.

I was silent. So did I remain silent until I took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave a piece to each of my twelve and then I said, "Eat of me, for this is my body." Every word I uttered on this night, must, I knew, be cut to the exactitude of a gem. Thereby, in that moment wherein I said, "Eat of me, this is my body," so did I also know that

what I said was true and most solemn in its truth. For in our death is it not that our flesh returns into that soil whereon grain will come forth; since I was the Son of God, so would I also be present in the grain.

Then I took the cup and gave thanks to the Lord, and gave them to drink and said of the wine, "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for you and for many."

And in my foreboding, so did I know that my blood was like unto the spirit that comes to us from fruit and from grapes. Whereupon, tasting of the sorrow of the grapes who had been bruised to make this wine, so was exaltation also part of the sorrow; such exaltation rose to the crown of my head, and I told them, "Verily, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it in the Kingdom of God."

And then I had a vision of my blood pouring forth from me into the Sea of God, and that was true: All blood was in part of water, and water had only to leave its own vessel to embark on a journey that would not rest until was found another bowl of fluid small or vast in which to meditate. And I could see my own blood pouring forth from me on its way at last into the Sea of God.

But I could feel my apostles stirring among themselves. One spoke up to say, "How can a prophet give of his flesh to eat?"

And I said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him."

Yet did I also hear muttering among my disciples and one spoke out: "But this is a hard saying. Who can hear it?"

And I answered: "Have I not chosen you? Are you not my twelve?" It was in my tongue, but I resisted that which I would say next: "Have not I chosen you, and from your twelve, is not one a devil?" And that I knew, and with as much certainty as that with which I would watch a fly loosing its poisons into my soup even as it swam in the circle of its death. Yea, and with such certainty did I know that this must be so. And in great sorrow. But here was cause for the sorrow I had tasted in the wine. So did I say: "One of you who eats with me now shall betray me. And woe to him. Good it were for that man if he had never been born."

And to whom I was speaking I did not know, yet I did

know, and he was close to me, as close as my own sins and my own fatigue before my great obedience to God. And I felt sorrow for all who would suffer, but was sorrowful most for this man who would betray me. His suffering would be more than mine. And thinking such thoughts, I grew stronger, and was pleased to live in the benefice of such compassion and uttered a prayer to myself: "Under the burdens carried by the Father, let the Son grow large in his compassion." And again was I stronger.

And I arose from supper and laid aside my garments and took a towel and girded myself about, after which did I pour water into a basin and I began to wash the feet of each disciple, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith each was girded.

And when I came to Peter, he said unto me, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

And I said unto him, "What I do, thou understandest not now, but shalt know hereafter."

And Peter said to me, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Then I replied, "If so, then thou hast no part with me," and added, (for I was still thinking of him who would betray me), "Ye are not all clean."

It gave me great composure to wash their feet, and some were remarkably clean before I touched them, and others stank of the alleys of Jerusalem; still, I knew whose feet were brave and which were ready to flee. But when I was done, I said: "If I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. Do as I have done to you."

But I was still troubled in spirit and could not keep from saying to them all: "Verily, one of you shall betray me." And indeed, I could not hold back such words.

And now the disciples looked upon one another and in great uneasiness, and some by the depth of their perplexity were innocent to my eye. Simon Peter even asked, "Lord, who is it?"

I replied, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it."

And dipping my bread in the wine, I gave that sop to Judas Iscariot, and whatever of me was like Satan did enter into him on that touch of our hands. And our souls stood forth in our eyes: Indeed, did a portion of the Devil leave me for him?

The lights in Judas' dark eyes grew bright and he was now of a purpose whose end I saw, and yet would I still

expect it not. He was Judas and loyal to me--still did I wish to believe in such. Thereby, even as I was the Son of God, and yet no more than a man, so could I now understand how men could have faith, yet be faithless; praise God and worship Mammon. So I said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." And I did not know what he would do and was tender in my voice. Whereupon, no man at the table understood with what intent I spoke to him, and some could have thought I sent him on a good mission since I clasped him by the shoulder. And indeed he went out. And immediately. And it was dark on this night.

I was as moved as if I had stepped into that night when I swam in the Sea of Galilee and yet my body in the water and I was above.

And I said, "A new commandment I give unto all of you: Love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples. For soon I go, and whither I go you cannot come."

And Peter said unto me, "Lord, whither goest thou?"

And I answered, "Thou canst not follow me now. Afterward shalt thou follow me."

Peter said, "Lord, let me follow thee now. I will lay

down my life for thy sake."

And I answered, "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." And wherefrom I said it, I did not know, yet did I grieve as if I did know, and I could not bear to look upon Peter.

And he said, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee into prison and into death." He believed it. He was strong where he stood. Yet I felt the vertigo of his spirit and in that moment Peter displeased me. There was that in his countenance which was smug, even as the best of warriors can grow fond of themselves and gross. And so I said unto him, 'This day, even in this night, before the cock crow once, thou shalt deny me thrice.'

But he spoke the more vehemently: "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." And likewise so said they all.

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I said in reply: "Are there swords among us?"

And when there was no answer to my mockery, I said, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."

But then they spoke, "Lord, behold, here are two swords," and two of the twelve did reveal that they had swords, whereupon Peter took one.

And I said unto them, "It is enough," even if I knew that twelve legions of angels might not be enough for my need. But then I was sore with the uneasiness that is nigh unto death.

Yet was gloom like a garment that I must put aside, and with effort and new breath did I respond when the apostle Thomas said: "Lord, we know whither thou goeth, yet how can we know the way?"

And I said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father except by me." And I felt no shame at this absence of modesty--for now it was too late to search

for finer ways to explain that it was the way and not the man.

Whereupon Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father."

And I asked him: "Dost thou not believe that I am the Father and the Father is in me? Verily I say unto you, Philip, believe in me and the works I do, shall you do also."

And I knew as never before that they must believe that I was in my Father and He in me, or they would have no power to do works. Yet I could not leave them comfortless. So I told them: "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. Love one another as I have loved you."

And never had I felt more love for all of them. And more need to bring wisdom for all that would await them. So, "Behold," I said, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men for they will deliver you up to the councils and they will scourge you in their synagogues and you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake for a testimony against them and the gentiles. But when they

deliver you up, take no thought of what or where you shall speak, for it will be given you in that same hour. For it is not ye that speak but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." And to that could I bear witness.

These were words to bring fear to all but my best. For few can seek for greater faith within their faith by climbing ever upward. That, I saw, might even be the achievement of the meek--to be braver than others on their ascent up the palisades of faith.

Then I added: "Be not afraid, my friends, of them that kill the body; fear, rather, Him who hath power to cast into hell. Fear Him."

And if I had had a sword in my hand, I could not have severed the thoughts of their head more from all previous thoughts; now they knew the only fear that is true: it comes from beholding the Lord. Now they saw that death was not the end but the beginning of joys or of tortures surpassing all known before. And which would it be for them in death--joy or torment? This much had I accomplished: No longer would they avoid contemplating death in the hope that they could avoid the judgment that follows upon death.

I spoke indeed as if I were gone, and I believed it.

Yet also did I believe that I would never leave them. These were moments of instruction between them and myself, and I saw how in conceiving of my absence, so could they receive the import of what I would teach. And therefore did I believe that I would be with them tomorrow. And be able to repeat this lesson.

Yet, with such foreboding did my heart live, and on each breath, that I also knew how all I said was true, except the last, for when I said, "Love one another as I have loved you," I had much to ponder inasmuch as my love had been impure and not always present.

So, to tell them what was true and must be true, I added, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend. Wherefore do I command ye these things, that ye love one another. For you know that the world has hated me and soon it will hate you. If ye were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, so I have chosen you, and the world, therefore, hateth you."

I looked at them and some were ugly and some were misshapen of body; some were misshapen of nose; and the hands of many were thick and broken, the legs of others were

crooked, yet they were not only my disciples but my friends and I would love them. "They have persecuted me," I said to them. "They will also persecute you. And all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, for if I had not come and spoken unto them, then they had known that they sinned. But now they have no cloak for their evil deeds."

And it was then I heard a sound of great roaring in the wilderness and at a great distance away from my ear even if it was a sound within my ear; mountains were dividing and folding upon themselves inside of me; it was the rage of the Devil. And I knew why his rage was immense. For if the Pharisees would be without a cloak for their sins, then so was the Devil pruned of his strength and scourged in his pride. All of sin was his harvest. If there had been a war between the Lord and the Devil, so had it taken place in the Temple, there were God and Satan at deadlock. And I wondered again if God had brought me forth from Mary to rend this contest asunder. Had I been God's lieutenant even before I became His Son? Had the Lord conceived me first in His heart?

"The time shall come," I said to my people, "when whosoever killeth you will think that he does God service."

All wars shall be waged in God's name to the profit of the Devil."

And I was weeping with joy which was possessed of the terrible sorrow in its midst that I might not see them for yet another morning, and I knew that if my loyalty was to God, my love was for man.

And I spoke across to them to say, "Ye shall weep and lament, yet your sorrow shall turn into joy."

Then if it were my desire that this be true, and, for all of eternity, true, still I knew also that my Father's heart was heavier in this hour than my own and I did not dare to wonder whether I had failed in the larger share of my mission. But I lifted up my eyes to heaven and prayed, "Now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." And never had I presumed to say as much to my Father, but it gave me great hope against trials to come, that He had been with me from the beginning, yea, even before the beginning.

"If, Father," I said, "I am to be no more in the world, yet these my men are here and I have given them Thy word and the world will hate them soon even more because they are not of the world, so I pray that Thou shouldst take them into

Yourself, and keep them from the evil of others. As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, may they also be one in Us that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and Thou in me. And that the world may know that Thou hast sent me and Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

And I could feel the love of God, and such love was like an animal of heavenly beauty whose eyes glowed in my heart.

Yet no better did I now know whether my foreboding was equal to death or I was living still in the shadows of my dream? Even as my preachments were with echo in the chamber where we sat at supper, so did I wonder: Can I truly save the world? Or are my words no more than the moisture from my breath? Is it the praise of men that I love more than the praise of God? And thinking such, knew that I must go again to the Temple even if it be the night of the third day, and I must go with all these questions in my heart.

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And my sense of foreboding grew; my legs were heavy and my chest was a furnace.

And when we came to a place named Gethsemane, I said to my disciples, "Sit ye here while I shall pray."

And with me, for I chose them, came Peter and James and John. And then I was in amazement, and sore amazed, for my limbs were exceedingly heavy. I began to climb the small hill to the garden of Gethsemane for it was a place I knew for its beauty after passing through on the day before. But now my limbs were exceedingly heavy. So I said to Peter and to James and John, "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death." Indeed, I could protect them no longer from my fear.

"Sit ye here," I said, "and watch while I go and pray yonder." And why I did not know, but I also said, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

And then I went forward a little where they could not see me and I could support my weight no longer and fell to

the ground like a log whose pores are heavy with water. As I lay there so did I pray that this hour might pass from me and I might live again in less great and immediate terror of my death. My sweat was on my brow like unto great drops of blood falling to the ground and again I wished for this hour of desolation to pass. So I said, "Father, all things are possible unto Thee. Take away this cup from me."

And then as if that pit which is bottomless could find bottom, so did I feel the hand of an angel reaching to me in succor and I said to my Father, "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." And felt some return to my limbs. I rose up, but heavily.

Yet when I made my way to the disciples, they were sleeping. And finding them so, I said: "Peter, couldst thou not watch one hour? The spirit may be ready but the flesh is weak."

And I also knew that had my disciples been loyal enough to overcome fatigue and keep watch, then might my foreboding be smaller. Whereas they had slept, and could hardly save me. So I knew that Peter was full of terror and also absent of strength, inasmuch as such a man would avoid his duties only if ill and full of fear: sleep, for many strong men, is

their hour of cowardice.

And again I went away and prayed by myself in this garden of Gethsemane and again I felt the power and the truth of the dream I had had every night for a fortnight. And the odor of betrayal was even in the flowers of the garden. For when I returned to Simon Peter and James and John, so were they again asleep. And once more did they not know how to reply.

So I said, "It is enough. The hour is come. He who hath betrayed me is at hand."

And even as I spoke so came Judas toward us and with him a great number with swords and staves and none of them were of my people; rather were they of the Temple guards. And as soon as these men were upon us, so did Judas go straightaway to me and say, "Master, Master," and he kissed me on the mouth.

And I, knowing his lips in this hour also knew that such desire for me was in his mouth that his embrace must offer a sign to the guards; how, then, could it not be that he had said: "Whomsoever shall I kiss, that same is he who speaks as the Messiah." And they would have laid hands on my back, but Simon Peter drew his sword, and smote a servant of the High

Priest and cut his ear so it was raw in flesh and with blood.

Whereupon I said to the servant, "Suffer ye thus far and no further." And I touched his ear and healed him. And I asked his name and his name was Malchus.

Then I said to all: "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the Temple teaching and ye took me not." But all of this was but true to the weight and meat of my foreboding; out of omens rise all deeds. And so I said, "The Scriptures must be fulfilled," inasmuch as now I knew that such a dream as mine would find confirmation in holy writings.

It was then even as I was seized that a young man with a coat of linen cloth wrapped about his naked body, came into the garden. When the soldiers laid hold on him, so did he slip out from his linen and flee in his naked self. And I was not without a glance at his male beauty and knew that I might never look again upon the nakedness of a man and never now upon a woman, for no woman had ever been mine. And therefore knew what loss it was, as well as a vast blessing to be the Son of Man but now a man oneself. And the naked young man had looked like a girl. And my disciples forsook me and fled.

I suffered these guards to lead me away.

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And they took me into the High Priest's house. And it was a house of much length. At the other end of the hall where a fire had been kindled, so did they all sit down together, all followers of the High Priest and the Temple. And I could see how Peter had also followed and now sat among them and warmed himself by the fire.

The men who held me put a blindfold to my eyes and struck me on the face. They they mocked me as in a game for they said: "Prophecy! Tell us who it is who smote thee."

And some began to spit on me and other of these servants of the Temple struck me with the palms of their hands.

Then came the chief priests and the elders and all the council and I knew they sought false witness against me to put me to death. But no one could they find, yea, until at the last came two false witnesses who told the High Priest Caiphas that I had said "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands and within three days I will build another

made without hands." And yet even so did their witnesses not agree, for they disputed whether I had said I would rebuild it with or without hands.

Caiphas, the High Priest, was tall and of kindly presence and his white beard was worthy of the prophets. Now did he stand in the midst of the others and ask of me: "Answerest thou nothing?"

I held my peace and did not reply.

But now did this High Priest Caiphas say: "I adjure thee by the Living God that thou tellest us whether thou be Christ the Son of God, our Messiah."

He had adjured me. I could not swear false oath to the High Priest of all of my people, no not even if I was also the Son of God and by such a half superior to him. Still I could not betray the oath of my people, misguided Jews though they might be. So I said, "I am he who you say. I am the Son of the Blessed. Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then, with great deliberation as if not surprised by what I said, and yet with much passion in the tearing, did the High Priest rend his robes and say, "What need have we of witnesses? Behold, ye have heard his blasphemy."

And as Caiphas had given rip to his garments, so had he declared to all of Israel that I was not my Father's Son, but his own, a son of the Jews and thereby was I of Caiphas, and a son of such sacrilege upon the Book that he as the High Priest was in mourning for the son for whom he had rent his clothes. Thereby had he given his judgment: I was to be treated as a sacrifice and given up to Rome.

And if they had smote me before, so did his Guard beat upon me now. Such statement by the High Priest had removed all fear that I might bear witness upon those who struck at me, so did they remove the blindfold and beat me openly upon my face.

And all the while, from that part of me which had been remote from such strife, as if an angel stood lightly by my shoulder and upheld my spirits, so could I see down the long length that was the hall. And there was Peter on a bench warming himself. A damsel came up to him even at that instant and asked, "Was thou not with Jesus of Nazareth in the Temple?"

And he said, "I know not, neither do I understand what thou sayest."

And he left her and went out onto the porch even though

the night was cold. There another maid saw him and began to say, "This is one of them."

But again he denied me, saying, "Woman, I know him not."

Yet was there another moment. Even as they were finished with beating upon me, so did a man come by and say to Peter: "Surely thou art one of them. For thy speech is from Galilee."

But Peter must have been in fear of retribution over the cost of what he had cut from the ear of Malchus for he began to curse: "I know not this man of whom ye speak."

It was then the cock crowed and Peter stood as if stricken; then I knew he would recall what I had said to him.

He left the porch weeping. He wept. And bitterly. And for this while I did not yet feel the pain of being struck in many places and on the face. Even as I had been beaten, so had I held close to the presence of the Lord, and of His angel; they were like armor for my flesh.

Yet did I feel the anguish of Peter. My sorrow for Peter, sharp as a lance in my chest, hurt most. For he was a good man. And I knew he would spend his life making amends for this brief hour in which he had denied me. So his life would be hard.

Afterward, in a small dungeon where they cast me for an hour and then another, and then through the night, and into the dawn, I came to know my bruises.

And in the dawn, the High Priest Caiphas came again with chosen elders and scribes and his council and I was bound again and carried away. They delivered me to the Romans.

Now was fear felt by the man born of Mary. As a boy I had heard much of the cruelty of the Romans and how they were of evil cunning when it came to heartless acts. Never could I listen to stories of concupiscence among Jews--I had been an Essene!--but still was there much gossip among young men of Nazareth concerning deceptions between Roman wife and Roman husband even when one was Empress and the other Emperor; also did we hear of their royal sport with lovers and mistresses, and of betrayals and of beheadings. Even more did we hear of the severity of the Romans when they wreaked punishments upon such Jews as would utter even one word of rebellion against the Roman state these Romans had enforced upon Israel. To be a Jew was to live in fear of the Romans. Now was I being delivered by my High Priest to the Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate.

So did I also know that Pontius Pilate was a man who

lived in fear and awe and trembling of Herod Antipas, the emperor of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea as appointed by the Romans. Or of such was his reputation, this Pontius Pilate, that of Herod Antipas was he afraid. Yet Herod Antipas was he who had lived in fear of John the Baptist.

And in this case, I was taken to a hall at the side of the court of Pontius Pilate. There would be listed all the complaints of Jews and other people not known. And as I was led by one of the officers of the Temple, my arm bowed, my legs stiff, into the presence of the Procurator, so did I hear each this side of the crowd that Jesus, having betrayed me, had also betrayed that night. Upon hearing that I was confused by the fact, so had he come to return thirty pieces of silver paid to him by the widows. And the procurator said, "What is that to us?" which I did not believe. At this point he did not speak in such fashion, but saying that he had the Temple guard by whom Jesus was seized. And as he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, all thirty pieces, and went, and he himself.

I would not speak.
"That is so," said the man who led me by the arm, and he added, "And our priests did not know what to do with this."

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And in this dawn, I was taken to a hall at the side of the court of Pontius Pilate. There would he listen to the complaints of Jews and other people not Roman. Now, as I was led by one of the stalwarts of the Temple, my arms bound, my legs free, into the presence of the Procurator, so did I hear from this man of the Guard that Judas, having betrayed me, had also repented last night. Upon hearing that I was condemned by the Jews, so had he come to return thirty pieces of silver paid to him by the elders. And the priests said, "What is that to us?" which I did not believe, since priests did not speak in such fashion, but mayhap it was the Temple guard by whom Judas was reviled. And so he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, all thirty pieces, and went. And he hanged himself.

I could not speak.

"That is so," said the man who led me by the arm, and he added, "And our priests did not know what to do with this

thirty pieces of silver. It is not lawful to put such coin into the treasury when it is the price of blood."

What he said was true and without fault and all priests would obey such law. But then that is the way of the pious. And my guard told me that they were taking counsel on the thirty pieces and would seek to buy the field of the potters of which use is made to bury strangers.

The words of Jeremiah had been fulfilled. He had said, "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, and gave them for the potters' field." And again I felt how my dream and the scriptures were as one and were now upon me. For it was written.

Yet even if written still did I have hope that Pontius Pilate would release me; mayhap he shared the fear of Herod Antipas whom, I had been told by publicans (who had been told by Romans) that Herod Antipas would try to sleep but was without sleep after beheading John the Baptist.

Now, I stood before Pontius Pilate. He was a small man with a sharp nose and sharp shoulders and even sharp were his knees, as if he had climbed to many a position by the quickness of his mind and his joints. And it is indeed rare to find a man with a sharp nose who is stupid. So could I

also see that he was wary, and did not wish my death, even if nothing of benevolence came from him to me; rather was it a detestation of the winds of disorder.

Now was his morning occupied with me. And he was sore annoyed.

He said to those who had brought me, "What accusation carry ye against this man?"

They bowed and said modestly, "He is, sir, a malefactor."

"Then take him," said Pilate, "and judge him according to your law."

They answered: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." And indeed did these Romans reserve all power of execution for themselves. Whereupon, Pontius Pilate left his hall of judgment to take counsel, and when he came back, he said unto me, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

I answered, "Did others tell it thee?"

And Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your nation and your chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What then hast thou done?"

I answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. For if it were, then would my servants fight, even as would your

servants fight for you, and then I should not be delivered to the powers of the High Priest."

Pontius Pilate looked at me then with attention and yet with much that partook of amusement. For my bruises were manifold, and several colors of punishment were upon my skin. He said, "Art thou then a king indeed?"

And I answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. Yet but for one cause was I born: I am only a king that I should bear witness unto the truth."

And Pilate said unto me, "What is truth?" So did he speak like a Pharisee yet was he without beliefs. For he said, "Where there is truth, there will be no peace. And where peace abides, there will you find no truth."

Some Jews of the High Priest's party now gave a small moan of dissent. If they knew aught, so did they know what was truth. And on this morning their truth was that I should be condemned by the Romans.

Having heard their utterance of unhappiness, Pilate asked again: "Yes, what is truth?" And answered the question himself for he added, "In property is truth. In land is truth, especially in the ownership of it. And in the law of the land is the most truth. And ye are a Galilean

whereby ye are of Herod's jurisdiction, not mine. And inasmuch as Herod is today and this morning not only in Jerusalem but visiting my court, and has spoken to me of you and has long been desirous to see you, having heard many things of you, may it be, he would hope to see some miracle performed by you." Whereupon Pontius Pilate smiled. "Can miracles be, however, performed in the courts of the gentiles? The gods of the gentiles, considering all, may have more domain than the gods of the Jews."

So did Pontius Pilate speak. If I now had hope, it was not large.

Thereby was I taken across the palace and into the chambers of Herod Antipas who spoke to me but a little and was much distracted by the presence of a woman of more beauty than was I accustomed to gaze upon, and she now sat at table with him. Neither did he introduce her. Yet, his soldiers smiled at seeing me since they must have heard much of my doings and now could not see more than my rags and my welts. But Herod stood up and commanded that a robe be brought that was worthy for a king, or, he said, a robe fit, at least, for the officers of a king, and now did he have it put upon me.

Then did he say: "Since you are in Jerusalem, so are

you in the jurisdiction of Pontius Pilate. But you are also a Galilean and have come from lands I oversee. So do I send you back to Pontius Pilate properly dressed." And his eyes were small and buried far in his head, mayhap not to bear ever again the weight of the sight of the bloody head of John the Baptist. And indeed he had hardly looked at me for his hand was on the woman. Mayhap he had not heard as much of me as I had heard of him.

Back was I led across the halls and columns of the palace to Pontius Pilate and there before the Procurator still stood the High Priest. And Pilate was speaking: "Ye have brought this man to me as one who perverteth the people, yet behold, I have as yet found no fault in him concerning those things of which you have made accusation. Nor does Herod. Behold, he has sent him back in a robe of purple. Therefore will I chastise him and release him. Should ye bring a man before me and ask that I condemn him to death, it will be done if he is a grievous malefactor. Today, however, is one of the days of your feast, and by our law and by your law it is agreed that I must release one Jew who is found in prison during this time of the feast. Will ye that I release unto you, therefore, this King of the Jews?"

There was a prisoner named Barabbas within these walls who had made insurrection against Rome; therefore, did Pilate say unto my accusers, "Will ye that I release Barabbas, or do I release this Jesus who is called Christ?"

And the priests of the Temple turned to the multitude who were around them; now I saw again that none of my people had accompanied me; so were they not part of this multitude.

And this much could I see since my people were poor, or, if rich, were timid, and nearly all were unlettered, and in fear of the Romans. Whereas were here many stalwarts of the Temple, and scribes, and Pharisees and Saducees and elders, and many townspeople who were, by their garb, not without wealth. All of them were among this multitude surrounding the priests. So could I come to understand, and much too late, that a multitude is no more than a storm of wind: It can do much damage in its passage, but will leave no other trace of its purpose than the spoil strewn behind.

So when Pilate asked unto them, "Who would ye that I release?" the multitude answered, "Barabbas."

And Pilate than said: "What should I do with this Jesus who is called Christ?"

Then did they shout: "Let him be crucified!"

And Pilate said, "Why? What evil hath he done?"

I could see that he was truly curious and somewhat vexed concerning their passion to punish me unto death. Why had it not been Barabbas? Romans believe in an empire that is orderly; so to them is murder a deed worthy of a sentence of death. Whereas blasphemy is merely an insult to a god and so does not concern them. They believe in many Gods. Thereby is the Kingdom of Heaven to them but a marketplace. Wherefore, you do not kill a false merchant, merely chastise him. Yet the multitude cried back to Pontius Pilate only the more, saying, "Crucify him! Crucify this Jesus!" Ad he saw their passion. Their truth was not land but punishment of sin.

Now Pilate called for a bowl of water and he took it and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this person," even as he was ready to accept their decision and thereby keep the peace.

To which all of my people replied, "His blood be on us, and on our children." They were sincere. They would take a vow upon their children.

And I was wounded grievously and felt myself already upon the cross; it was the spear of their certitude that

wounded me. Hearing their voices, so did I want to cry out:
"Do not take such a vow! My blood will be not only upon your
children but upon your children's children, and all
descendants, and your blood will congregate one thousand,
even two thousand years from now in catastrophe beyond
dimension."

And Pontius Pilate released Barabbas unto them. But as
if I were a mansion of many parts to be felled column by
column and room by room, so did the dream that I had
undergone of suffering on the cross reveal itself to me now
as not an illusion but the history of my life written before
I knew it for myself. So was it no test that my Father had
prepared for me, nor even a test to try the faith of my
disciples, but merely the story of my end written before I
was born; so were the rooms in the mansion of my heart laid
low even as my soul was laid low.

And soldiers took me into their common room and stripped
me and covered me with that purple robe fit for a king, or
the officer of a king, and plaited for me a crown of thorns,
placed it upon my head, and handed me a reed for my right
hand. So was it placed in mockery of a sceptre.

Then did they bow before me, touching their knees to the

ground and cried out: "Hail, King of the Jews."

Whereupon they rose and spit into my face and with that reed, they whipped me upon the head. They were Romans and crude.

Then they placed a cloth upon the crown of thorns to protect their hands and wound the wreath firmly onto my forehead, pressing on the thorns until the blood began to pour from my brow, and such trickle of blood was like unto the white worm of death creeping upon my flesh after the bite of the scorpion that lived in the thorn.

Now was the robe taken away, and in my nakedness did they return my old raiment to me, and it felt as tender upon my flesh as the hand of the Lord upon a newborn babe.

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As we came out of the palace of Pontius Pilate, there was a man, a Cyrene, also Simon by name, and him they compelled to bear my cross, and thereby I knew why they had laughed at me when I was without raiment and had mocked my nakedness. For no weight was left to me but my bones. No longer was I equal to the young man carpenter who came out of the hills of Galilee; I was now a thin man, worn to but a part of his weight by the desire to move mountains. And they laughed at me and called me King of the Jews.

Whereupon, walking, and in shame that I was too weak to bear my cross, so did we come unto a place called Golgotha. which is a word of much rarity among the Hebrews, for it says: "the place where lives a skull." There, they gave me vinegar to drink mingled with gall, and it was as bitter as my fortunes, and I could not swallow.

There followed us a great company of people, and in the main were they women who wailed and lamented after me. For

now that I had been condemned, few from the Temple chose to remain, whereas some of my followers had returned, the women being first among them, and they cried out at knowing the pain that I would receive.

I knew that I had not given understanding to their deeds, having sought to change all through the efforts of men; if my throat had not been too dry for speech, I would have turned to them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me but for yourselves and your children. The days are coming in which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren, for the wombs that never bore and the breasts which never gave suck.'"

Yet saying this, did I think of the fig tree that I had cursed and to myself added, "For that too do I ask forgiveness."

And in the crowd I saw my mother and a disciple I knew, standing by my mother, so I said unto her, "Woman, behold thy son," and to him I said, and it was Timothy, who was simple, "Behold thy mother," and he understood; I knew from that hour would he take her into his own home. And so did I feel better for having said this since I knew that of all of my disciples, he would yet take great care of her.

And then not far from my mother did I see Mary Magdalene. And I said to her, and it was the opposite of all I would have said to the daughters of Jerusalem, but to Mary Magdalene I whispered, "Take hope. Have children, and multiply. For God hath forgiven you."

But had God forgiven me? Or had I failed in His purpose?

Now, had the crosses been erected on the hill of Golgotha; there were three crosses. To the left of me and to the right were thieves already tied to their frame. Yet, before they put me up, so did Pontius Pilate come by and look at the sign tied around my neck which said, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." And one of the few priests of the Temple still present said to Pilate, "Write not 'the King of the Jews,' but that 'He said, 'I am King of the Jews.''" He was not a king by saying it."

And Pilate answered, "What is written, is written."

I could see how his reply was clever. It was as if I understood his thoughts. For to Pilate, should it prove to be that I was indeed King of the Jews, then was it better for him to have said so. And if I were not such a king, so would he be esteemed for his scorn in placing such a sign upon a

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wretch. So he was a good Roman. For he could preserve two conclusions opposite to each other, and by such balance exhaust the strength of one against the other. Thereby could I wonder if that was how these Romans had conquered so much of the world.

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Then did they drive a spike into each of my palms and but one spike through both of my ankles; I did not cry out. My throat knotted as in seizure, yet would I not cry out. For now I could remember the myriad of nails I had hammered into wood planks, and never thought of the pain of the tree, or the forest, whereas now, into the nailing of my flesh, did I see the heavens divide even as the spikes pierced my palms.

And it was worse, and took so long for my ankles that I knew all the colors of the rainbow; they were but the strings of that almighty soul which is luminous in pain. Then I understood that pain is the most powerful possession of God and in pain has He dwelt.

As His son, was I now ready to share His pain?. At this moment did pain seem larger to me than all of the seas.

Early as I hung upon that crucifix, did I see the soldiers kneeling below me; these Romans were parting my garments. They would even debate on how to rend my coat

inasmuch as it was without seam and woven from the top throughout. Therefore did they decide: "Let us cast lots for it whole and thereby keep it whole and for one." And the wounds in my flesh hung upon the nails while yet another part of scripture was fulfilled which sayeth, "They have parted my garments among them but for my vesture they did cast lots."

Of two thieves who were crucified with me, one on the right hand, the other on the left, were no nails driven through their palms, nor a spike through their ankles. Having been tied to the cross so did they hang from their wrists, and were in pain sufficient for their agony to hover above me as it passed by my head from one side to the other and back.

And those who chose to pass by the hill of Golgotha would revile me as they passed, saying, "If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross." And other things did they say and with much ridicule, such as, "He saved others; himself he cannot save," and "He said, 'I am the Son of God.' But where is his Father?"

The thief hanging on the cross by my right side now railed at me; he said, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and me!"

And I thought, "This man is a malefactor from his birth; he thinks of no more than his own life, no matter how mean." And I turned my head to the other thief who said aloud to the first, "Dost thou not fear God? We receive the reward of our deeds, but this man between us hath done nothing amiss." And then this second thief said unto me, "Lord, remember my face when thou comest into thy Kingdom."

And I said unto him: "Today shall thou be with me in paradise."

But my pain was great. So I could not know if I believed my words. Nor whether he could hear them. My voice was of less wind than a whisper.

In the sixth hour after they had driven these spikes into me, darkness came over the land, and it was very dark; already were my wounds mortified, and my head having been much beaten, so did I dream of the mollifying warmth of ointment, and was amazed that I could suffer in such wise and not cry out. And I recited to myself from the Psalms, speaking to myself within: "My days are consumed like smoke; my bones are burned as a hearth and cleave to my skin. I am like an owl of the desert and have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping. My days are like a shadow and

I am withered like grass and the pain that gnaws takes no rest. My bowels boil; my skin is black; my bones are burned with heat." Such words came to me, and served in some little, as balm, for relief did I feel by saying those words.

So did I come to think and for a little that the hand of the Lord was near me, and that He had set me down in the midst of a valley full of bones; behold, they were very dry. And even as I knew that these were the words of Ezekiel, so did I also believe that all of this was with me and happening to me while I suffered on this cross and I heard Him say unto me: "Can these bones live?"

And I answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest."

He said: "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live."

And I, thinking of the power of my Father to work miracles even in the valley of bones now had hope that if I died, so would I rise again.

Yet even as Job passed from fever unto that chill which is worse than fever, as is written, "out of whose womb came

the ice and the hoary frost to heaven," so, in my loincloth did I shiver for my nakedness and said aloud if any could hear: "The face of the deep is frozen." No longer could I see God. Nor did He speak any further at this moment in my shivering.

And one soldier kept offering me vinegar now that he saw it was distasteful; and he kept saying with more vigor and even more, as I grew faint, "King of the Jews, why can you not save yourself?"

And again as is written in the second book of Kings: "Hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung and drink their own piss with you?" Now I knew the words of Ecclesiastes, and they were as real as the pain of my limbs, for now I also understood that "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live and after that they go to the dead."

And in my pain I cried out to my Father, "Why do Ye nothing? Evil opens like a flower and flourishes. Canst Thou not see what a damage will be done if Ye allow me no miracles in this hour?"

When my Father replied, it was like the voice from out

of the whirlwind; He said in my ear with a voice even louder than my pain, "Wouldst thou annul My judgment? Wilt thou condemn Me that thou mayest be justified?"

Then I began to weep. For I did not have the courage of Job. And once more did I seek to give of my last best effort, and I said: "While my breath is in me and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, surely my lips shall not speak unrighteousness, neither shall my tongue utter deceit."

The words were as empty as my torment was large. "Woe to him," had Ecclesiastes said, "who is alone when he falls and hath not another to lift him up." And my confusion was like a myriad of small fish encircling me. So did I pray again to my Father, praying "Grant me even one miracle for myself."

And all was emptiness.

Pain was written upon the sky. And all was blackness but for pain. It came like lightning from the night sky and thunder did not follow, but only came groans. So were they my groans. And whether my Father did not hear me or could not, so did I go backward and again backward and retreated still another step, reaching backward through the scroll of the scriptures from the end to the beginning, and I thought

of the hour in the Garden of Eden when the Lord God commanded Adam, saying, "Of every tree in the Garden thou must freely eat, but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat."

And it was then I could comprehend. For when His lightning did strike at this hour on the hill beside Golgotha, so was His thunder as loud as His voice; then I knew what one must not know; I, like Eve, had entered into the knowledge of good and evil. And I comprehended that God was my Father but was He all-powerful? He was not. Such was the knowledge of good and evil. And if I cried out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?", I knew the answer He could not give. For God my Father was but a god and He lived among other gods. And I had failed Him.

They took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave me to drink, and one of them said, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."

And I cried out again in a loud voice, and it was the last of my share of the heavenly rage that my Father had given me. Yet did I also know that I must not die in rage and with a curse in my heart. Rather must I justify what I had taught. And thereby, in hope that all be not lost, so

did I look upon this jeering face of the Roman soldier who gave me vinegar to drink and I prayed: "My Lord," I said, "forgive them. For they know not what they do."

All the strength of my life passed then into the Spirit. And it went out from me. And I said, "It is finished." And I died. I saw a white light that shone like the brightness of heaven if heaven was of a white light.

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And in the years that followed, in the lifetime of those who came after my life, were scrolls written (and most pious were they) by those who had known me. And so were scrolls also written by those who had not known me. (Even more pious were they!) Still, such scribes--and they were now called Christians--had indeed heard much about my journeys. Their scrolls often spoke of angels arising at my death, and others would claim that the veil of the Temple was broken, and rocks were split apart, graves opened, and the bodies of many prophets who had been sleeping arose and came out of their tombs, and they marched into the holy city and appeared to many. And the people knew and feared greatly and say: "Truly, this was the Son of God."

I was not there and cannot say whether there was much untruth in this, yet of those who were near to me were many who were plentiful with exaggeration in every description of me; in truth, many believed neither in the son nor in the

Lord by enough measure to say no more than the truth. which truth, as ye have seen, was much. Therefore, I, like Daniel, if I had my wont, and if I had my will and my way, would now seal my gospel so that its truth is everlasting, even to the end of time.

Yet I cannot. For much was said after I was gone, and I must speak of that as well.

Of what follows, I have been told many tales, and some seem to me to keep with more of the events I know than others, but then it is not for me to know, since as was foretold in the scriptures, so did I rise on the third day, and of that I know enough to say that my disciples were never too close to this truth.

Any man who sees a wonder and is illumined by its light, can hold off the Devil for long, but yet will the Devil enter his tale with every power of exaggeration.

Yet this much I expect is true: That to hasten the death of the robbers who lingered long after me, soldiers came and broke their legs which great pain took away their power to survive, whereas when they came to me, it was seen that I had expired already. Indeed, only my ankles had been broken with their spike.

One of the soldiers pierced my side with a spear and forthwith there came forth much blood and water.

Then came a man named Joseph of Arimathea, who was one of my disciples, albeit a rich man, but in secret for fear of the consequence, he besought Pontius Pilate for permission to take the body of this Jesus. And Pilate gave him leave. Therefore did Joseph of Arimathea come and take the body that once was mine and with him came Nicodemus, and they brought a mixture of myrrhh and aloes, about a hundredpound weight and wound what had been my body with new clothes together with these spices, as is the manner of the Jews when they bury. And near the place where I had been crucified was a garden and in that garden, was a sepulcher newly hewn from the rock which this Joseph of Arimathea had prepared for himself. But they laid me there inasmuch as the sepulcher was nigh at hand.

So was I placed in a rich man's tomb. And they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed.

The Chief Priest and some of his Pharisees had slept in much doubt and anguish, for by then they knew not whether what they had done was for good or ill, and such doubt could they not bear. So on the next morning did they come together

before Pilate, and tell him that I had said, "After three days will I rise again." Whereupon they requested of the Procurator that he safeguard the sepulcher until the third day until dark, "lest the disciples of Jesus come by night and steal him away and then proceed to say to the people, 'He is risen from the dead,' in which case the first error shall be compounded by the last."

And Pilate said to them, "Keep your own watch."

So they went to the sepulcher and sealed the great stone and set a watch.

Now there are some who say that that was when an earthquake came and the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door; because his raiment was white as snow, so did these keepers flee in terror.

And there are others who claim that very early on the morning of the third day, even as the harlot and the virtuous woman are brought together by death, so did Mary Magdalene come with Mary, my mother, unto the sepulcher at the rise of the sun, and the women said, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door?"

But when they looked, they saw that the door was already

apart from the opening and they could enter into the tomb and there could see a young man clothed in a long white garment and he said unto them, "Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, but he is risen. He is not here. Go your way and tell his disciples and Simon Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee and there shall you see him."

And the truth may be as something like that. For I do know that I was risen on the third day, and it was not unlike the hour when I swam in the Sea of Galilee yet walked above my body. And I believe I can recall an hour when I left the sepulcher to wander through the city and the countryside. But I know not what became of my remains, nor whether others took them away for burial, since I was now living in the spirit that had come out of my remains.

Yet did I also hear that some of the Temple elders gave money unto the soldiers to claim that my disciples came by night and stole me away in order to claim that I was risen. There is much confusion.

Some would say I appeared among my disciples and said unto them, "Why are ye sad?" And they thought I was only a stranger in Jerusalem and so did not know what had befallen. And they then said to me, "Our sorrow concerns Jesus of

Nazareth who was a prophet mighty in deed and before God and all the people. But our rulers have delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him. Yet did we believe that it was he who would redeem Israel."

And I said unto them, "O fools, and slow of heart. Believe!"

But there were some still who doubted and I had to say to them, "Behold my hands and my feet. It is I. Handle me. See that ye are witnesses of these things." And they felt of the holes in my palms. Nonetheless, all agree, among those who followed me, that I was at last received into heaven and sat on the right hand of God. And many of my disciples went forth and preached everywhere that the Lord would work with them and would confirm the word with many signs. And now, in my name, did many come to believe that they had the power to cast out devils, and indeed they spoke with new tongues and were able to take up serpents and many another deadly thing, and it would not hurt them. And when they laid hands on the sick, so did some of the sick recover. Many were their claims.

But were the Jews were mightily divided after my death. For half went forth with my disciples and became new

disciples; such Jews became a continuation of the Jews but called themselves Christian, whereas the half that would cleave to the Temple argued among themselves for a hundred years on whether I was or was not the Messiah.

Be it said that the rich and pious among them prevailed; they could not believe that the Messiah had come among them as a poor man with a crude accent--God would not permit such! Indeed, they live by such beliefs today.

Still must it also be said that those who follow Christ and call themselves Christian are by now also rich and pious and they are no better than the Jews of the Great Temple; in fact they are often less in their sincerity than those Jews who condemned me then.

Yet the Church is in my name and is greatest in all the world, and its holiest temple is named after Peter; it is a place of much magnificence in Rome. In no place is there more gold.

And God and Mammon still grapple for the soul of man; nor does either triumph. I remain where I am, on the right hand of God, and look for greater wisdom than I had before, and I think of many with love. Yet my Father does not often speak to me. I know His secret, even as did Eve when she

tasted the apple from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Nonetheless, I rejoice, for the throne on which I sit is like unto the Garden of Eden and I honor my Father, even if His vision is mightier than His powers: surely He sends forth all love which He can afford to release inasmuch as His love is not illimitable; His wars with the Devil augment and forever augment, and great battles have been lost, even to the end of the second millenium. Yet, through me, will He send such love as He still stores for that creature who is man, and that other creature who is woman, and I remain the bearer of the Holy Ghost of all love that is tender and so I would now bestow the blessing of tenderness on all who read my gospel, these, my words.

The end