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TRANSLATIONS OF EARLY DOCUMENTS  
SERIES I  
PALESTINIAN JEWISH TEXTS  
(PRE-RABBINIC)

THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH

# THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH

BY

R. H. CHARLES, D.LITT., D.D.

CANON OF WESTMINSTER; FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE;  
FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE  
REV. G. H. BOX, M.A.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE  
LONDON: 68, HAYMARKET, S.W. 1.  
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1919

*First Edition 1918.*  
*Second Impression 1919.*

## EDITORS' PREFACE

THE object of this series of translations is primarily to furnish students with short, cheap, and handy text-books, which, it is hoped, will facilitate the study of the particular texts in class under competent teachers. But it is also hoped that the volumes will be acceptable to the general reader who may be interested in the subjects with which they deal. It has been thought advisable, as a general rule, to restrict the notes and comments to a small compass; more especially as, in most cases, excellent works of a more elaborate character are available. Indeed, it is much to be desired that these translations may have the effect of inducing readers to study the larger works.

Our principal aim, in a word, is to make some difficult texts, important for the study of Christian origins, more generally accessible in faithful and scholarly translations.

In most cases these texts are not available in a cheap and handy form. In one or two cases texts have been included of books which are available in the official Apocrypha; but in every such case reasons exist for putting forth these texts in a new translation, with an Introduction, in this series.

We desire to express our thanks to Canon Charles and Messrs. A. & C. Black for their permission to reprint here the translation of the *Ascension of Isaiah*, published in 1900.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.  
G. H. BOX.

# INTRODUCTION

## SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE BOOK

THE apocryphal book known as *The Ascension of Isaiah* appears to be a work of composite structure made up of three originally distinct parts, one of which is of Jewish, the others of Christian origin. The title given to the whole work—*The Ascension of Isaiah*—is due to the principal extant version, the Ethiopic. Strictly, however, it applies only to the last part, contained in chapters vi.–xi. (“The Vision of Isaiah”). The other two parts, which probably circulated independently at first, may be identified with writings (otherwise lost) known as *The Martyrdom of Isaiah* (= i. 1–iii. 12 and v. 1 b–14), a Jewish work, perhaps pre-Christian; and *The Testament of Hezekiah* (iii. 13–v. 1 a), which like *The Vision of Isaiah* (= vi.–xi.) is of Christian origin. The whole work appears to have been combined in its present form by a Christian editor, some time in the second century A.D.<sup>1</sup> The entire book is extant in an Ethiopic version, and fragments of it exist in Greek, Latin, and Slavonic. The original language in which the work was composed was certainly Greek for the two Christian parts, and probably also for the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> “From the third century onward the *Ascension* [in its present form] had an extensive circulation amongst Christian heretics” (Charles).

part (the *Martyrdom*), though this last may depend ultimately upon a Hebrew or Aramaic prototype.

The process by which these parts were fused into the present whole is difficult to determine exactly. According to Dr. Charles the complicated phenomena presented by the versions and fragments may be explained as follows. The last part, containing "the Vision of Isaiah" (vi.-xi.), was edited in two Greek recensions ( $G^1$  and  $G^2$ ). From  $G^2$  a Latin ( $L^2$ ) and a Slavonic (S) version were made.  $G^1$  was united with the Greek texts (G) of the *Martyrdom* and the *Testament*, and the whole composite work so produced was translated into Ethiopic (E); fragments also are extant in Latin ( $L^1$ ). The Greek text of  $G^1$  is not extant, but it can be restored to a considerable extent from a Greek work, based upon it, which has survived, and is known as "the Greek Legend (of Isaiah)."<sup>1</sup> Another fragment of the Greek text, written on a papyrus of the fifth or sixth century, has been published by Grenfell and Hunt. It contains the text of ii. 4-iv. 4 (*i.e.* parts of the *Martyrdom* and *Testament*) and is denominated by Dr. Charles  $G^2$ , though it is not to be regarded as a distinct recension like the  $G^2$  of the Vision (= vi.-xi.). All these texts (the Slavonic in a Latin translation) have been printed in parallel columns, and edited with critical notes, by Dr. Charles in his edition of our book (pp. 83-148).

In accordance with the critical analysis outlined above the whole work may be divided into four parts, and is so divided in the translation that follows.

<sup>1</sup> Discovered by Dr. O. von Gebhardt in a Greek MS. of the twelfth century, preserved in the National Library in Paris.

PART I. (= i. 1-iii. 12) contains the first part of *The Martyrdom of Isaiah*. Isaiah is introduced predicting, in the presence of Hezekiah and Jôsbab (*i.e.* Shear-jashub, Isaiah's son) his own death at the hands of Manasseh. After the death of Hezekiah, Isaiah, on account of the "lawlessness" and infamous practices of Manasseh, withdrew with certain other prophets into the desert in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. Here he is pursued by Balchîrâ, a Samaritan, who denounces him to Manasseh, alleging that Isaiah had uttered prophecies against Jerusalem and the King, in whose heart Beliar dwells.

PART II. (=iii. 13-v. 1a) contains the so-called *Testament of Hezekiah* (iii. 13-iv. 18), a Christian writing. It has been introduced at this point by the Christian redactor to explain why Beliar is so much incensed with Isaiah. This was occasioned by Isaiah's prediction (here recorded) of the destruction of Sammael (Satan), the redemption of the world by Jesus, the founding of the Church, its persecution by Nero, which is the prelude to the final judgement. Incidentally a somewhat sombre picture is drawn of the state of affairs in the Church in these last days. Worldliness and lawlessness prevail among its ministers, there is much covetousness, respect of persons, slander and vainglory, and true "prophets" are hard to find. This picture reflects the state of affairs in the Church as it existed at the close of the first century, and harmonizes with similar accounts given in 2 Peter, 2 Timothy, and Clement of Rome (*ad Cor.* iii.).

PART III. (= v. 1b-14) contains the conclusion of the *Martyrdom*, resuming iii. 12. It recounts the story of Isaiah's martyrdom. The prophet is tempted



by Balchîrâ to recant, but indignantly refusing to do so, is sawn asunder with a wooden saw.

PART IV. (= vi.-xi.) contains *The Vision of Isaiah*, a Christian writing. It describes a vision, which the prophet experienced while he was prophesying in the presence of King Hezekiah. While he was yet speaking he fell into a trance, with his eyes open. Afterwards he related the vision to the King and the prophets, but not to the people. The vision, as related, describes how the prophet was taken by an angel through the seven heavens, and what he saw there. In the seventh heaven he saw the departed righteous, including Abel and Enoch, and finally the Divine Being ("the Great Glory") Himself, together with a second glorious One like Him, and a third who is the Angel of the Holy Spirit. Then the Most High is heard commissioning the Son to descend through the heavens and the firmament to the world, and even to Sheol. The descent of "The Beloved" is then described, the birth of Jesus of a Virgin, His life, death, and resurrection, and the sending forth of the Twelve; and finally His Ascent though the seven heavens where He seats Himself on the right hand of "the Great Glory," the angel of the Holy Spirit being on the left. The prophet having related the vision to Hezekiah, warns him that these things will come to pass.

Dr. Charles thinks that the three independent writings, which form the constituent elements of our Book, were all, in their original form, in existence in the first century. This view is very probable. We have already seen that the picture of the state of affairs prevailing in the Church, given in the *Testament*, harmonizes with a first-century date.

This seems to be true also of the last part (vi.-xi). The Jewish colouring in both the Christian parts suggests a date not later than the end of the first century. On the other hand the *Martyrdom* may well be pre-Christian in substance.

### TITLES OF THE BOOK

The book—or parts of it—is referred to in ancient patristic literature under various titles. Epiphanius terms the last part (vi.-xi.) “the Ascension of Isaiah” (τὸ Ἀναβατικὸν Ἠσαίου), as also does Jerome (“Ascensio Isaiae”); elsewhere it is referred to as “the Vision of Isaiah” (ὄρασις Ἠσαίου, “Visio Isaiae”), and this title is actually prefixed to chapter vi. in the texts of the Versions (“The Vision which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw”). Finally Georgius Cedrenus cites iv. 12, under the title of “the Testament of Hezekiah” (Διαθήκη Ἐζεκιίου)—a title which, as Dr. Charles has shown, originally applied to an independent writing now incorporated in the entire work (= iii. 13-v. 1 a). As has already been mentioned, the Ethiopic version prefixes the title *The Ascension of Isaiah* to the whole composite work, and this is now the commonly accepted name of the entire book.

### THE ANCIENT VERSIONS

The most important of the ancient versions is the Ethiopic (E), including as it does the entire text. It depends upon three MSS., two of which are in the British Museum, and one in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The Ethiopic version was made, of course, from the Greek original, and according to Dr. Charles is “on the whole a faithful reproduction” of the first Greek Recension (G<sup>1</sup>). An edition of the Ethiopic

text was published by Archbishop Laurence in 1819, and an important critical one by Dillmann in 1877. Both these scholars also published translations of E. A Latin version of the last part of the *Ascension* (vi.-xi.) was printed at Venice in 1522 from a MS. now unknown. This is denominated by Dr. Charles L<sup>2</sup>. Two fragments of what appears to be another Latin version, embracing ii. 14-iii. 13 and vii. 1-19, were discovered and edited by Mai in 1828. This version is styled by Dr. Charles L<sup>1</sup>. Fortunately it is possible to compare L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup> in a passage common to both, viz. vii. 1-19. When this is done it appears that L<sup>1</sup> and E agree, to a remarkable extent, against L<sup>2</sup> and the Slavonic (S). Hence Charles infers the existence behind them of two different recensions of the original Greek text (G), which he terms G<sup>1</sup> and G<sup>2</sup>.<sup>1</sup> The combination EL<sup>1</sup> (and the "Greek Legend") = G<sup>1</sup>, and that of SL<sup>2</sup> = G<sup>2</sup>. The arguments are given in full in Dr. Charles's edition, and appear to be convincing.

The Slavonic text, a Latin translation of which (by Prof. Bonwetsch) is given in Dr. Charles's edition, is a version of the last part only, the "Vision of Isaiah" (vi.-xi.). Its title is *The Vision which the [holy] Prophet Isaiah, the Son of Amoz, saw*. It is derived ultimately from two MSS. from which an edition by the Russian scholar, A. Popov, was published. As has been pointed out above it depends upon the recension of the original Greek text denominated G<sup>2</sup>.

The text of the *Greek Legend*, which appears to have been based upon one of the recensions (G<sup>1</sup>) of the original work is printed in full by Dr. Charles

<sup>1</sup> These were two recensions of the Greek text of vi.-xi.

in his edition of our book. The important papyrus fragment discovered by Grenfell and Hunt contains the Greek text of ii. 4-iv. 4. This is styled by Dr. Charles G<sup>2</sup>, but must not be confounded with the G<sup>2</sup> which embraces vi.-xi, and is to be regarded as a distinct recension. Where the papyrus fragment differs from the text of EL<sup>1</sup> this difference, according to Dr. Charles, is to be explained "as due to the errors and variations incidental to the process of transmission" and not (as in the case of G<sup>2</sup> in vi.-xi.) as due to its being part of a distinct recension. The archetypal Greek text may still have been in existence in the fourth century.

#### SPECIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK

In accordance with the critical analysis we may regard our Book as containing three distinct and originally independent works, all of which go back to the first century. The last part reflects the beliefs, prevalent, in certain circles, on such subjects as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the seven heavens, while the *Testament* (iii. 12-v. 1 a) gives a vivid picture of the state of affairs prevailing in the Christian Church at the close of the first century. It should be noted that both the Christian parts are apocalyptic in character, while the Jewish part—the *Martyrdom*—is a legendary narrative. This may well be of a much earlier date than the two Christian parts. For the legend which it embodies—Isaiah's death by being sawn asunder with a wooden saw—has very early attestation, and is not improbably alluded to in Heb. xi. 37 (*they were sawn asunder*). In fact the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews may very well have derived his knowledge

of the legend from the *Martyrdom*. It is referred to clearly by Justin Martyr (*Trypho*, chap. cxx.), and constantly by later Christian writers. It is also attested in Jewish literature. Both Talmuds refer to Isaiah's death at the hands of Manasseh (cf. 2 Kings xxi. 16), and recount that Isaiah took refuge, fleeing from before Manasseh, in a cedar tree, and when this was discovered, Manasseh had the tree sawn asunder; and that as this was done the prophet's blood flowed out (cf. T.B. *Sanhedrin* 103<sup>b</sup>, *Yebamoth* 49<sup>b</sup>, T.J. *Sanhedrin* x). On the other hand the legend is not referred to explicitly by Josephus.

We may regard the *Martyrdom* as an early Jewish Midrash, based upon 2 Kings xxi. 16, and as perhaps composed or already in existence in the first half of the first century A.D. M. Halévy (*Études évangéliques* i. pp. 65 ff.), who accepts a pre-Christian date for the *Martyrdom*, has indeed tried to show that the narrative of Our Lord's Temptation has been influenced by it. But his parallels are not very convincing. The relevant passage in the *Martyrdom* (v. 4-8) may be allowed to speak for itself. It runs as follows: *And Balchîrâ said to Isaiah: "Say: I have lied in all that I have spoken, and likewise the ways of Manasseh are good and right: and the ways also of Balchîrâ and of his associates are good." And this he said to him when he began to be sawn in sunder. But Isaiah was (absorbed) in a vision of the Lord, and though his eyes were open, he saw them (not).*

*And Balchîrâ spake thus to Isaiah: "Say what I say unto thee and I will turn their heart, and I will compel Manasseh and the princes of Judah and all the people and all Jerusalem to reverence thee."*

*And Isaiah answered and said: "So far as I have*

*utterance (I say): Damned and accursed be thou and all thy powers and all thy house. For thou canst not take (from me) aught save the skin of my body."*

This rather bald and jejune account is remote, both in substance and spirit, from the sublime narrative in the Gospels. To suggest anything like direct dependence of the latter on the former, or to regard the Jewish account as the "source" of the Gospel narrative is surely far-fetched. Nevertheless the *Martyrdom* sheds some interesting light on the Jewish demonology current in the first century. Thus Beliar (=Belial) appears as one of the names of the Prince of evil spirits (= Satan). He is "the Angel of lawlessness, who is the ruler of this world" (cf. John xii. 31; xvi. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Ephes. vi. 12). He is in many respects like *Sammael*—also a satanic being—though possibly, as Charles suggests, *Sammael* is regarded as subordinate to *Beliar*, executing the latter's behests (i. 8). The origin and significance of the name *Beliar* (*Belial*) is a matter of controversy; but it seems clear that it had mythological associations, and may originally have been a designation of the underworld (*Sheol*, *Hades*) into which the living descend at death, and from which there is no return (= *Bal-ya'al*, "there is no ascent"). This seems to be the meaning of the term in Ps. xviii. 5:

*The breakers of Death had come about me, and the streams of Belial affrighted me:*

Here *Belial* is parallel to *Death* = place of death, i. e. *Sheol*.<sup>1</sup> Another illuminating passage, in this connection, is Ps. xli. 8:

*A matter of Belial [Hades] (i. e. a mortal disease) is fixed upon him,*

<sup>1</sup> *Death* and *Sheol* are often parallel; cf. e. g. Is. xxviii. 15, 18.

*And now that he lieth he will rise up no more.*

The personification easily follows. *Death* and *Sheol* were so personified (cf. Ps. xviii. 6), becoming names of the prince of the underworld, and in exactly the same way *Belial* (*Beliar*) becomes the name of the prince of evil powers. For a New Testament parallel cf. 2 Cor. vi. 15 (*What concord hath Christ with Belial?*). *Beliar* is also designated expressly by another mysterious name. *Matanbûchûs* (cf. ii. 4, "Beliar whose name is *Matanbûchûs*"). The commonly accepted explanation of this bizarre form is that it is composed of two Hebrew words, *mattan bûkâ*, meaning "worthless gift." But this is not very satisfactory. Halévy suggests that it is really a form of the Hebrew *mith-dabek*, "one who attaches himself," and so designates the evil spirit as the possessor of its victim. There is some support for this explanation in a passage of the Talmud (T.B. *Shabbâth* 32<sup>a</sup>) where, according to one reading of the text, the woman who neglects certain duties is spoken of as threatened by three "mortal possessions" ("attachments of death"), *i.e.* mortal diseases, which Rashi *ad loc.* explains as so called "because they attach and bring close death before its time." The "one who takes possession" is an admirable designation of the evil spirit, and harmonizes well with the representation which depicts *Beliar* as "dwelling" "in the heart of Manasseh" (iii. 11).<sup>1</sup> It should be added that *Belial* (*Beliar*) appears in the *Book of Jubilees* in a Satanic rôle. He is represented as the accuser and father of all idolatrous nations (*Jub.* i. 20). In the *Testaments*

<sup>1</sup> Kohler, in *J.E.* ii. 659, suggests that *Metembûchûs* may be a "corrupt form" of *Angro-mainyush* or *Ahriman*, the evil deity of the religion of Ancient Persia.

of the *Twelve Patriarchs* Belial is depicted as the archfiend, the head of the evil spirits, and the source of impurity and lying.

Another demonic figure that appears in the *Martyrdom* is Sammael (= "venom of God"), who occupies an important place in the late Jewish literature both Talmudic and post-Talmudic. In this literature he is represented as prince of the demons, and is identified with the angel of death, who slays men with a drop of poison. He is "the chief of the Satans" (*Deut. rabb.* xi. 9; cf. *Matt.* ix. 34, "the prince of the devils"), and plays the part of accuser, seducer, and destroyer. He thus seems to be identical with Beliar (Belial), but in the *Martyrdom* he is apparently subordinated to the latter (cf. i. 8). In i. 8 he is surnamed *Malchîrâ*, which may possibly be explained, as Halévy suggests, as = "king of evil" (*melek* or *malki ra'*), or "messenger of evil" (*mal'ak ra'*). Perhaps the name of the Samaritan false prophet, *Balchîrâ*, who takes so active a part in bringing about the prophet's martyrdom, may also be explained as = "chosen of evil" (*behîr-ra'*). According to Dr. Charles' analysis the name "Sammael" was originally peculiar to the *Martyrdom* (i. 8, 11; ii. i), though it also occurs in editorial additions (vii. 9; iii. 13; v. 15, 16; xi. 41). In the last of these passages Sammael is identified with Satan ("Sammael Satan"). It should be added that Beliar is entirely absent from the "vision" (vi.-xi.). He appears, however, in the *Testament*, but not, as in the *Martyrdom*, as a purely immaterial spirit, but as incarnate in Nero, thus fulfilling the rôle of Antichrist ("the Beliar Antichrist," iv. 2, 14, 16, 18). In exactly the same way in the *Sibyllines*



iv. 2<sup>1</sup> Belial (Beliar) descends from heaven as Antichrist, and appears as Nero, the slayer of his mother. This conception is important for the history of the Antichrist idea. Ultimately the idea may be derived from the early myth of a terrible conflict waged with the Dragon of Chaos—Tiamat—by the divine Hero, who eventually overcomes her. Here, very probably, we have the prototype of the later Antichrist legend, which has undergone so remarkable and rich a development in the course of the ages. On the principle which plays so important a rôle in eschatological development, that "Urzeit" = "Endzeit"—the last stage will reproduce the first—the transference of the idea of the mythical combat of the divine Hero with the primæval Dragon to the end of the ages is easy to understand. The conception thus arises of the battle of God with the devil at the end of the world. "It is very likely," says Bousset,<sup>2</sup> "that Antichrist is originally nothing else than the incarnate devil, and that the idea of a battle of God with a human opponent, in whom all devilish wickedness would become incarnate, arose under the influence of definite historical conditions." The first historical figure to be identified with Antichrist was the persecutor of the Jews, the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes, whose lineaments are depicted in the Book of Daniel, and who became the type of the God-opposing tyrant. Later, as in the middle section of our Book (the *Testament*) and in the Book of Revelation, it was Nero.<sup>3</sup> Later still, it was discovered now

<sup>1</sup> Of Christian origin.    <sup>2</sup> Art. *Antichrist* (*E.R.E.* i. 578 f.).

<sup>3</sup> In the Psalms of Solomon (first century B.C.), Pompey the Great, the violator of the Holy of Holies, is the Antichrist. He is referred to as "the dragon" (ii. 29) and the "sinner" (ii. 1). For the Neronic Antichrist in *Revelation*, cf. Rev. xvii.

in this, now in that historical character. But it must not be forgotten that the political application of the idea, though it assumed a dominating place in the later development, was not an essential or original feature of the conception. Occasionally, as in 2 Thess. ii. 3 f.—where “the man of lawlessness” = Beliar, and “he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God” = Antichrist, *i. e.* the combined phrase = Beliar-Antichrist—the Antichrist, freed from political associations, becomes a purely ideal figure which works in the spiritual sphere.

A striking feature of our Book is the designation of the Messiah as “The Beloved.” This Messianic title is found in all parts of the Book, though, according to Charles it was originally peculiar to the two Christian parts, viz. to the *Testament* (iii. 13, 17, 18; iv. 3, 6, 9, 18), and the *Vision* (vii. 17, 23; viii. 18, 25; ix. 12). The passages in the *Martyrdom* where it occurs (i. 4, 5, 7, 13) are, he thinks, due to the final editor. There are good grounds, as Dr. Armitage Robinson has shown,<sup>1</sup> for believing that this title is pre-Christian. It is used in the Old Testament as a title of Israel (*ὁ ἠγαπημένος* LXX); cf. *e. g.* Deut. xxxii. 15, xxxiii. 5, 26, where it is the Greek rendering of *Jeshurun* (cf. also Is. xliv. 2); the terms *ὁ ἠγαπημένος* and *ὁ ἀγαπητός* also occur in Is. v. 1, 7. The transference of the title from the people as a whole to the Messiah was, therefore, perfectly natural, as the parallel cases of “Servant” and “Elect” show. Further, at the time when the Gospels were written the terms “Beloved” and “Elect” were practically interchangeable, for St. Matthew (xii. 18) writes “my

<sup>1</sup> Hastings, *D.B.*, ii. 501.

Beloved" ( $\delta$  ἀγαπητός μου), in citing Is. xlii. 1, where the Hebrew has "mine Elect," and conversely St. Luke (ix. 35), in the narrative of the Transfiguration, substitutes "Chosen" ("Elect") ( $\delta$  ἐκλελεγμένος) for "Beloved" (Mark ix. 7). It should be added that in the phrase  $\delta$  υἱός μου  $\delta$  ἀγαπητός (Mark i. 11; ix. 7),  $\delta$  ἀγαπητός is probably to be regarded as a separate title, and the rendering should be "My Son, the Beloved." The title is used also as a synonym for "Christ" in Eph. i. 6 ("his grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved"), and is freely employed as a designation of Christ in early Christian writings (Ep. Barn., Clem. Rom., Ignatius, Hermas), and certain passages in the LXX where  $\delta$  ἀγαπητός occurs were interpreted Messianically by Christian writers (e. g. Ps. xliv. [xlv] title, Zech. xii. 10). Its frequent use in our Book as a stereotyped term for the Messiah is thus an interesting link in the evidence for the gradual establishment of its use in this sense.

Turning now to the *Vision* (vi.-xi.), we find some interesting and important features which call for comment. In ch. vii. foll. the visionary experience of the prophet is described, how he was conducted by the angel through the seven heavens, and what he saw there. We have here an elaborate description of the seven heavens, which in fulness can only be paralleled with the well-known one in the *Slavonic Enoch*.<sup>1</sup> The conception of a plurality of heavens was widespread in the ancient world, and was probably known to the ancient Babylonians, and certainly to the followers of Zoroaster, as well as to certain Greek philosophers in the West. It can be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the elaborate discussion in Charles' ed. of the *Slavonic Enoch*, pp. xxx.-xlvii.

traced in the Old Testament, in the apocalyptic and New Testament writings, in the Talmud, and in early Christian literature (outside the New Testament). Ultimately it was given up by Christian theology, and was even banned as heretical. The particular conception of *seven* heavens seems to be due ultimately to astral theories. The sevenfold division of the planets gave birth to the sevenfold division of earth and hell in ancient Babylonian thought, and it is exceedingly probable that this division was applied to the heavens also in ancient Babylonian religion.

In the Old Testament the conception of a plurality of the heavens is probably implicit in the Hebrew term for "heaven" (*shāmayîm*) which is plural in form. It comes to explicit expression in such phrases as "the heaven of heavens" (Deut. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cxlviii. 4), and the idea that Satan has access there to the very presence of God (Job i., ii.; cf. 1 Kings xxii. 19-22) may possibly point in the same direction.

It is, however, in the apocalyptic literature of Judaism that the conception is most fully elaborated. One of the fullest descriptions is found in the *Test. XII Patriarchs* (Levi ii. 7 f.). Here, however, as Charles and other scholars have shown, there are traces of redaction, and it is probable that the earliest (and original) form of the passage was a description of *three* heavens, and that this was transformed later by redaction into a description of the seven. Thus the earliest Hebrew idea of a plurality of Heavens, seems to have been that there were *three*, and this idea may underlie the Old Testament passages enumerated above. But by the beginning of the Christian era and subsequently the doctrine of seven heavens was

firmly established in Judaism. A detailed description, as has been said, is given of them in the *Slavonic Enoch* (first century A.D.), and it may underlie the description of the seven "ways" or stages apportioned to souls after death in 4 Ezra vii. 90-98 (end of first century A.D.). From Jewish it passed over to Christian apocalypses such as our Book. In the Babylonian Talmud (*Hag. 12<sup>b</sup>*) there is a discussion of this subject, and the doctrine that there are seven heavens is associated with the name of Resh Lakish (c. 260 A.D.). It is there reported—

*Resh Lakish said: There are seven (heavens), and these be they: Vilon (= velum, "curtain"), Raḳi'a', Shēḥaḳīm, Zebûl, Mā'ōn, Mākhôn, 'Arābōth.*

It is worth noting that in the detailed description of the seven heavens given in the *Slavonic Enoch* a place in one of them (the third) is reserved for the damned. (*Slav. Enoch* x.), and in the second are the fallen angels (ch. vii.).

When we turn to the New Testament we find clear traces of the same conception. St. Paul (2 Cor. xii. 2 f.) explicitly mentions "the third heaven" as the place of location of Paradise, which agrees with the representation of the *Slavonic Enoch*. It has been disputed whether St. Paul's conception embraced only three or seven heavens. But in view of the evidence—of the *Slavonic Enoch* it seems probable that the later and more developed view lies at the background of his thought. Similarly in the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 3, 20; ii. 6; iii. 10; and vi. 12) the remarkable phrase is used "in the heavenly (places)" or "sphere" (*ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*), which certainly points in the same direction. It is remarkable that the presence of evil (evil powers) "in the

heavenly sphere" is here explicitly recognized (cf. Ephes. vi. 12, "against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly sphere"). We may also compare, in this connection, Col. i. 20: "to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavenly sphere." By "the things in the heavenly sphere" are meant probably either the fallen angels imprisoned in the second heaven, or "the powers of Satan whose domain is in the air" (cf. also Ephes. iii. 10). Christ is represented as having "ascended far above all the heavens" (cf. also Heb. iv. 14; vii. 26); and in Rev. xii. "war" in heaven is spoken of, Michael and his angels warring against Satan and his host, who are overthrown and expelled. This last feature gives expression to the religious feeling that found the presence of evil in heaven intolerable.

It can, of course, be argued, and with a considerable amount of truth, that this language of St. Paul and the other New Testament writers must not be unduly pressed. It is a striking fact that nowhere in the New Testament do we find a detailed or materialistic description of the heavenly sphere such as we meet with in some of the earlier apocalyptic writings. There is a marked absence of painful literalism. The dominant ideas behind the language are essentially spiritual. It is, no doubt, largely symbolical. Nor must it be forgotten that the tendency to spiritualize the old crude conception is marked in the late Jewish Apocalypse of Ezra (4 Ezra), the composition of which may be dated about 100 A.D. Nevertheless, even if this be so, it is obvious that the detailed doctrine is implied, and that in its fully developed form it had secured a firm place in first-century

Judaism. This conclusion is confirmed by our Book. The part with which we are at present concerned, viz. the "Vision" (vi.-xi.) was, at the earliest, composed at the latter end of the first century A.D., and probably by a Jewish Christian. It seems not improbable that the detailed account of the seven heavens here given has been influenced by the *Slavonic Enoch*. The description in our Book is, perhaps, less crude and materialistic, but obviously the conception was very much alive in certain (? Jewish and Jewish Christian) circles at the end of the first century A.D. Another point of contact between the two writings may be seen in the idea of heavenly "garments" with which the righteous will be clothed, the "garments" being the spiritual bodies which are awaiting them in heaven (cf. vii. 22; viii. 14, 26; ix. 9, 17, 24-26; xi. 40; also iv. 16). According to the *Slavonic Enoch* (xxii. 8-10) these "garments" of the blessed are to be composed of God's glory. The New Testament parallels to this idea are referred to in the notes.

A word must be said in conclusion about the very important passage, xi. 2-22, which gives the circumstances of Christ's birth of the Virgin Mary, and emphasizes the Virgin-Birth. Several scholars, including Dillmann and Schürer, regard this section as an interpolation, and for this view there is some positive ground in the fact that the section is substantially absent from the old Latin Version and the Slavonic, which omit all references to Mary and Joseph and Christ's birth. Nevertheless, the section is probably a genuine part of the original work, as Charles rightly argues from the internal evidence. The elimination of all reference to the circumstances of the Birth may easily be explained as due to dog-

matic reasons in the interests of a Docetic view of Christ. The Book certainly had an extensive circulation among heretics, and the Latin Version was preserved in these circles. We may add that it would be very extraordinary if, in a Christian writing of the latter part of the first century, which purports to narrate the vision of Isaiah about Christ and His descent from heaven to earth, no mention was made of His birth of a Virgin. The famous passage, Is. vii. 14, had received a Christian application in Jewish Christian circles, as Matt. i. shows. It is incredible that this Jewish-Christian application of the sense was unknown to the writer of the "Vision" at the end of the first century, and it would have been impossible for him to have ignored it. In any case this important section is an early attestation of the doctrine. It should be noted also that the passage, even in its complete form, reveals traces of incipient Docetism. The birth is represented as having taken place without any natural pangs. Doubtless the elimination of all reference to the birth came later, in order to satisfy the demands of the full-blown Docetic theory. The conception of the Trinity is also interesting. The Son and the Holy Spirit are worshipped (ix. 27-36), but they also worship God (ix. 39-40); and the Holy Spirit is referred to as an angel ("the Angel of the Spirit" or "the Angel of the Holy Spirit"). This representation seems also to be characteristically Jewish Christian.

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<sup>1</sup> An edition of the *Martyrdom* (only), by Charles, is included in the Oxford *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, ii. 155-162. In the German *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*, ed. by Kautzsch, an edition of the *Martyrdom* (only) is included (by Beer).

SHORT TITLES, SYMBOLS AND BRACKETS USED  
IN THIS EDITION

1 Enoch = the Ethiopic Book of Enoch.

2 Enoch = the Slavonic Book of Enoch.

*Ap. Bar.* = the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch.

G denotes the lost Greek archetype of G<sup>1</sup> G<sup>2</sup>.

G<sup>1</sup> denotes the lost Greek text from which EL<sup>1</sup> were translated, and on which the Gk. Leg. was based.

G<sup>2</sup> denotes the Greek text from which SL<sup>2</sup> were translated, of which ii. 4-iv. 2 has now been recovered.

E denotes the Ethiopic Version.

S denotes the Slavonic Version.

L<sup>1</sup> denotes the Latin Version from G<sup>1</sup> (consisting of ii. 14-iii. 13; vii. 1-19).

L<sup>2</sup> denotes the Latin Version from G<sup>2</sup> (consisting of vi.-xi.).

⌈ ⌋. The use of these brackets in the English translation of E means that the words so enclosed are found in G<sup>1</sup> and not in G<sup>2</sup>. In certain cases the words peculiar either to G<sup>1</sup> or G<sup>2</sup> are derived from G.

( ). The words or letters so enclosed are supplied by the editor.

\* \*. The words so enclosed are emendations of the text.

† †. The words so enclosed are corrupt.

[ ]. The words so enclosed are interpolated.

*D.B.* = *Dictionary of the Bible*, and *E.R.E.* = *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. Both edited by Dr. Hastings.

*J.E.* = *Jewish Encyclopædia*.

Presumed additions by the final editor of the whole composite work are indicated in the text of the translation by italic type.

# THE ASCENSION OF ISAAH

## PART I

### The Martyrdom of Isaiah<sup>1</sup> (I. I-III. 12).

I. 1. And it came to pass in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah that he called Manasseh his son. Now he was his only one. 2. And he called him into the presence of Isaiah the son of Amoz the prophet, and into the presence of Jôsâb<sup>2</sup> the son of Isaiah, *in order to deliver unto him the words of righteousness which the king himself had seen*: 3. *And of the eternal judgements and the torments of Gehenna<sup>3</sup> and of the \*prince\* of this world,<sup>4</sup> and of his angels, and his authorities and his powers*, 4. *And the words of the faith of the Beloved<sup>5</sup> which he himself had seen in the fifteenth year<sup>6</sup> of his reign during his illness*. 5. *And he delivered unto him the written words which Samnas the scribe had written<sup>7</sup> and also those which Isaiah, the*

<sup>1</sup> The extracts from the Jewish *Martyrdom of Isaiah* are contained (with certain editorial additions indicated by italic type) in i. 1-iii. 12+v. 1b-14. Between these sections the *Testament of Hezekiah* (iii. 13b-iv. 18) is inserted.

<sup>2</sup> Jôsâb = (Shear)-Jashub; cf. Is. vii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Gehenna: cf. iv. 14 (not again in this book).

<sup>4</sup> Prince of this world, i. c. Beliar; cf. ii. 4; iv. 2; x. 29.

<sup>5</sup> i. e. the Messiah, a title frequently occurring in this book (and probably pre-Christian in this sense).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 2 Kings xx. 1-6; Is. xxxviii. 1-20.

<sup>7</sup> Samnas = Shebna (so vi. 17); verses 5b-6 are a summary description of the Vision of Isaiah contained in chaps. vi.-xi.

son of Amoz, had given to him, and also to the prophets, that they might write and store up with him what he himself had seen in the king's house regarding the judgement of the angels,<sup>1</sup> and the destruction of this world, and regarding the garments of the saints and †their† going forth, and regarding †their† transformation and the persecution and ascension of the Beloved. 6. In the twentieth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Isaiah had seen the words of this prophecy and had delivered them to Jôsâb his son. And whilst he (Hezekiah) gave commands, Jôsâb the son of Isaiah standing by, 7. Isaiah said to Hezekiah the king, but not in the presence of Manasseh only did he say unto him: "As the Lord liveth, whose name hath not been sent into this world, and as the Beloved of my Lord liveth, and the Spirit which speaketh in me<sup>2</sup> liveth, all these commands and these words will be made of none effect by Manasseh thy son, and through the agency of his hands I shall depart mid the torture of my body. 8. And Sammael Malchîrâ<sup>3</sup> will serve Manasseh, and execute all his desire, and he will become a follower of Beliar<sup>4</sup> rather than of me: 9. And many in Jerusalem and in Judæa he will cause to abandon the true faith, and Beliar will dwell in Manasseh, and by his hands I shall be

<sup>1</sup> The Messiah will judge the angels; cf. iv. 18, x. 12; according to one view the saints will act as the Messiah's assessors at the judgement, cf. 1 Cor. vi. 3 (1 Thess. iii. 13).

<sup>2</sup> The Holy Spirit speaks through the prophets; cf. ix. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Sammael, originally one of the chief archangels, tempted Eve, and became the chief of the Satans and the angel of death: see further *J.E.* x. 665 f. (art. *Sammael*. For *Malchira* cf. Introduction, p. xvii.).

<sup>4</sup> *Beliar* later identified with Satan (in the Sibyllines with Antichrist). See Introduction, p. xv ff.

sawn asunder." 10. And when Hezekiah heard these words he wept very bitterly, and rent his garments, and placed earth upon his head, and fell on his face. 11. And Isaiah said unto him: "The counsel of Sammael against Manasseh is consummated: nought will avail thee." 12. And on that day Hezekiah resolved in his heart to slay Manasseh his son. 13. And Isaiah said to Hezekiah: "The Beloved hath made of none effect thy design, and the purpose of thy heart will not be accomplished, *for with this calling have I been called and I shall inherit the heritage of the Beloved.*"

II. 1. And it came to pass after that Hezekiah died and Manasseh became king, that he did not remember the commands<sup>1</sup> of Hezekiah his father but forgot<sup>2</sup> them, and Sammael abode in Manasseh and clung fast to him. 2. And Manasseh forsook the service of the God of his father, and he served Satan and his angels and his powers. 3. And he turned aside the house of his father which had been before the face of Hezekiah (from) the words of wisdom and from the service of God. 4. And Manasseh turned aside his heart to serve Beliar; for the angel of lawlessness, who is the ruler<sup>3</sup> of this world, is Beliar, whose name is Matanbûchûs.<sup>4</sup> And he delighted in Jerusalem because of Manasseh, and he made him strong in apostatizing (Israel) and in the lawlessness which was spread abroad

<sup>1</sup> Cf. i. 6. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *forgot*, a play on the name *Manasseh* (in Hebrew); cf. Gen. xli. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *ruler of this world is Beliar*: cf. x. 29; John xii. 31, xvi. 11 (*prince of this world*); 2 Cor. iv. 4 (*god of this world*); Ephes. vi. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Matanbûchûs*, meaning uncertain—possibly = "worthless gift" (Lücke): but cf. Introduction, p. xvi.

in Jerusalem. 5. And witchcraft<sup>1</sup> and magic increased, and divination and auguration, and fornication, [and adultery], and the persecution<sup>2</sup> of the righteous by Manasseli and [Belachîrâ, and] Tobia the Canaanite,<sup>3</sup> and John of Anathoth,<sup>3</sup> and by (Zadok) the chief of the works.<sup>3</sup> 6. And the rest of the acts, behold they are written in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 7. And, when Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw the lawlessness which was being perpetrated in Jerusalem and the worship of Satan and his wantonness, he withdrew from Jerusalem and settled in Bethlehem of Judah. 8. And there also there was much lawlessness, and withdrawing from Bethlehem he settled on a mountain in a desert place. 9. And Micaiah<sup>4</sup> the prophet, and the aged Ananias, and Joel and Habakkuk, and his son Jôsâb, and many of the faithful *who believed in the ascension into heaven*, withdrew and settled on the mountain. 10. They were all clothed with garments of hair,<sup>5</sup> and they were all prophets. And they had nothing with them, but were naked, and they all lamented with a great lamentation because of the going astray of Israel. 11. And these ate nothing save wild herbs<sup>6</sup> which they gathered on the mountains, and having cooked them, they lived thereon together

<sup>1</sup> *witchcraft*, etc.: cf. 2 Kings xxi. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 2 Kings xxi. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Unknown.

<sup>4</sup> *And Micaiah*, etc., cf. vi. 7. "The aged Ananias" may possibly be Hanani, father of Jehu, a prophet: cf. 1 Kings xvi. 1-7.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Matt. iii. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 4 Ezra ix. 26; Dan. x. 2, 3. Such asceticism was one of the most esteemed ways of preparing for the reception of a divine revelation.

with Isaiah the prophet. And they spent two years of days on the mountains and hills. 12. And after this, whilst they were in the desert, there was a certain man in Samaria named Belchîrâ, of the family of Zedekiah, the son of Chenaar,<sup>1</sup> a false prophet, whose dwelling was in Bethlehem. Now †Hezekiah †<sup>2</sup> the son of Chanânî, who was the brother of his father, and in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, had been the teacher of the 400 prophets of Baal,<sup>3</sup> had himself smitten<sup>4</sup> and reproved Micaiah the son of Amâdâ the prophet. 13. And he, Micaiah, had been reproved by Ahab and cast into prison. (And he was) with Zedekiah the prophet: they were with Ahaziah the son of \*Ahab, king in Samaria.\* 14. And Elijah the prophet of Têbôn<sup>5</sup> of Gilead was reproving Ahaziah and Samaria, and prophesied<sup>6</sup> regarding Ahaziah that he should die on his bed of sickness, and that Samaria should be delivered into the hand of Leba Nâsr<sup>7</sup> because he had slain the prophets of God. 15. And when the false prophets, who were with Ahaziah the son of Ahab and their teacher Jâlerjâs of Mount †Joelt†, had heard—16. Now he was a brother of Zedekiah—when they had heard, they persuaded Ahaziah the king of †Agua-rôn †<sup>8</sup> and (slew) Micaiah.

<sup>1</sup> For this false prophet cf. 1 Kings xxii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently a mistake for Zedekiah (*i. e.* the same person as the one just before mentioned). This Zedekiah was an uncle of Belchîrâ.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 22 (confused here with 1 Kings xxii. 6).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 24 (Micaiah, son of Imlah, in 1 Kings).

<sup>5</sup> *Têbôn* = Thisbe, a town of Naphtali; cf. 1 Kings xvii. 1, where "of the sojourners of" is taken by LXX as = "of Thisbe."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 2 Kings i. 1-6.

<sup>7</sup> Corrupt for Salmanassar.

<sup>8</sup> Read *Gomorrah* with the Latin.

III. 1. \*And Belchîrâ\* recognized and saw the place of Isaiah and the prophets who were with him; for he dwelt in the region of Bethlehem, and was an adherent of Manasseh. And he prophesied falsely in Jerusalem, and many belonging to Jerusalem were confederate with him, and he was a Samaritan. 2. And it came to pass when Alagar Zagâr,<sup>1</sup> king of Assyria, had come and captured Samaria and taken the nine (and a half) tribes<sup>2</sup> captive, and led them away to the \*mountains\* of the Medes and the rivers of Tâzôn;<sup>3</sup> 3. This (Belchîrâ), whilst still a youth, had escaped and come to Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, but he walked not in the ways of his father of Samaria; for he feared Hezekiah. 4. And he was found in the days of Hezekiah speaking words of lawlessness in Jerusalem. 5. And the servants of Hezekiah accused him, and he made his escape to the region of Bethlehem. And \*they\*<sup>4</sup> persuaded . . . 6. And Balchîrâ accused Isaiah and the prophets who were with him, saying: "Isaiah and those who are with him prophesy against Jerusalem and against the cities of Judah that they shall be laid waste, and (against the children of Judah and) Benjamin also that they shall go into captivity, and also against thee, O Lord the king, that thou shalt go (bound) with hooks and iron chains:" 7. But they prophesy falsely against Israel and Judah. 8. And Isaiah himself hath said: "I see more than Moses the prophet." 9. But Moses

<sup>1</sup> Read *Salmanassar* with the Latin.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* the (northern) Kingdom of Israel; cf. 4 Ezra xiii. 40, and *Ap. Bar.* lxii. 5, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* Gozan; cf. 2 Kings xvii. 6; xviii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.*? the false prophets; the missing object may be *Balchîrâ* (Grenfell and Hunt).



said : " No man can see God and live " ; <sup>1</sup> and Isaiah hath said : " I have seen God and, behold, I live. " <sup>2</sup> 10. Know, therefore, O king, that \*he is lying\*. And Jerusalem also he hath called Sodom, and the princes of Judah and Jerusalem he hath declared to be the people of Gomorrah. <sup>3</sup> And he brought many accusations against Isaiah and the prophets before Manasseh. 11. But Beliar dwelt in the heart of Manasseh and in the heart of the princes of Judah and Benjamin and of the eunuchs and of the councillors of the king. 12. And the words of Belchirâ pleased him [exceedingly], and he sent and seized Isaiah.

#### PART II (iii. 13-v. 1a)

##### **The Testament of Hezekiah** (iii. 13b-iv. 18).

13. For Beliar was in great wrath against Isaiah by reason of the vision, and because of the exposure wherewith he had exposed Sammael, and because through him the going forth of the Beloved from the seventh heaven had been made known, and His transformation and His descent and the likeness into which He should be transformed, (that is) the likeness of man, and the persecution wherewith He should be persecuted, and the tortures wherewith the children of Israel should torture Him, and the coming of His twelve disciples, and the teaching, and that He should before the Sabbath be crucified upon the tree, and should be crucified together with wicked men, and that He should be buried in the sepulchre. 14. And the twelve who were with Him should be offended because of Him : <sup>4</sup> and \*the watch of\* those who watched the

<sup>1</sup> Ex. xxxiii. 20.    <sup>2</sup> Is. vi. 1.    <sup>3</sup> Cf. Is. i. 10.    <sup>4</sup> Matt. xxvi. 31.

sepulchre :<sup>1</sup> 15. And the descent of the angel of the Christian Church,<sup>2</sup> which is in the heavens, whom He will summon in the last days. 16. And that (Gabriel) the angel of the Holy Spirit,<sup>3</sup> and Michael, the chief of the holy angels, on the third day will open the sepulchre : 17. And the Beloved sitting on their shoulders will come forth and send out His twelve disciples : 18. And they will teach all the nations<sup>4</sup> and every tongue of the resurrection of the Beloved, and those who believe in His cross<sup>5</sup> will be saved, and in His ascension into the seventh heaven whence He came : 19. And that many who believe in Him will speak through the Holy Spirit : 20. And many signs and wonders will be wrought in those days. 21. And afterwards, on the eve of His approach, His disciples will forsake the teaching of the Twelve Apostles, and their faith, and their love and their purity.<sup>6</sup> 22. And there will be much contention<sup>7</sup> on the eve of [His advent and] His approach. 23. And in those days many will love office, though devoid of wisdom. 24. And there will be many lawless elders, and shepherds dealing wrongly by their own sheep, and they will ravage (them) owing to their not \*having\* holy shepherds. 25. And many will change the honour of the garments of the saints for the garments of the covetous,<sup>8</sup> and there will be much respect of persons in those days and lovers of the honour of this world. 26. And there will be much slander and vainglory at the approach of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit will withdraw

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. xxviii. 4.<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rev. ii. 1, 8, etc.<sup>3</sup> Cf. iv. 21; vii. 23; ix. 36, 39, 40; x. 4; xi. 4, 33. The phrase usually means the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> Cf. Matt. xxviii. 19.<sup>5</sup> Cf. ix. 26.<sup>6</sup> Cf. 1 Tim. iv. 12.<sup>7</sup> Cf. 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Pet. ii. 1.<sup>8</sup> Cf. 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.

from many. 27. And there will not be in those days many prophets, nor those who speak trustworthy words, save one here and there in divers places, 28. On account of the spirit of error<sup>1</sup> and fornication and of vainglory, and of covetousness, which shall be in those, who will be called servants of that One<sup>2</sup> and in those who will receive that One. 29. And there will be great hatred in the shepherds and elders towards each other. 30. For there will be great jealousy in the last days; for every one will say what is pleasing in his own eyes. 31. And they will make of none effect the prophecy of the prophets which were before me,<sup>3</sup> and \*these\* my visions also will they make of none effect, in order to speak after the impulse of their own heart.

IV. 1. And now Hezekiah and Jôsâb my son, \*these\* are the days of the \*completion of the world\*. 2. After it is consummated, Beliar the great ruler, the king of this world, will descend, who hath ruled it since it came into being; yea, he will descend from his firmament<sup>4</sup> in the likeness of a man, a lawless king, the slayer of his mother: <sup>5</sup> who himself (even) this king 3. Will persecute the plant<sup>6</sup> which the Twelve Apostles of the Beloved have planted. Of the Twelve one will be delivered into

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 John iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* The Beloved.

<sup>3</sup> The false teachers repudiate the Old Testament. This rather suggests Gnostic teachers.

<sup>4</sup> As distinct from the first heaven above it.

<sup>5</sup> The allusion seems to be to Nero, who is identified with Antichrist: cf. *Sib. Or.* iv. 121; v. 145, 363, etc. For Antichrist as "the man of lawlessness," cf. 2 Thess. ii. 3 (R.V. *margin.*).

<sup>6</sup> *i. e.* the Church. For "plant of righteousness" = Israel: cf. 1 Enoch xciii. 5.

his hands.<sup>1</sup> 4. This ruler in the form of that king will come and there will come with him all the powers of this world,<sup>2</sup> and they will hearken unto him in all that he desireth. 5. And at his word the sun will rise at night and he will make the moon to appear at the sixth hour.<sup>3</sup> 6. And all that he hath desired he will do in the world: he will do and speak like the Beloved and he will say: "I am God and before me there hath been none."<sup>4</sup> 7. And all the people in the world will believe in him. 8. And they will sacrifice to him and they will serve him saying: "This is God and beside him there is no other."<sup>5</sup> 9. And the greater number of those who shall have been associated together in order to receive the Beloved, he will turn aside after him.<sup>6</sup> 10. And there will be the power of his miracles in every city and region. 11. And he will set up his image<sup>7</sup> before him in every city. 12. And he shall bear sway three years and seven months and twenty-seven days.<sup>8</sup> 13. And many believers and saints having seen<sup>9</sup> Him for whom they were hoping, who was crucified, Jesus the Lord Christ, [after that I, Isaiah, had seen Him who was crucified and ascended] and those also who were believers in Him—of these

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* probably St. Peter, who, with St. Paul, suffered martyrdom in the Neronian persecution (64-65 A.D.).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rev. xx. 7-9; xvi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 4 Ezra v. 4 (2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 14; xix. 20).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 4 (Rev. xiii. 5 f.).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Rev. xiii. 4, 8, 12.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Matt. xxiv. 24; Mark xiii. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Rev. xiii. 14. Images of the Roman Emperor were set up in various cities to be worshipped.

<sup>8</sup> *i. e.* 1335 days = Dan. xii. 12. The last period of three and a half years marks the reign of Antichrist.

<sup>9</sup> *i. e.* personally (cf. John xx. 29); this points to the first century.

few in those days will be left <sup>1</sup> as His servants, while they flee <sup>2</sup> from desert to desert, awaiting the coming <sup>3</sup> of the Beloved. 14. And after (one thousand) three hundred and thirty-two <sup>4</sup> days the Lord will come with His angels and with the armies of the holy ones <sup>5</sup> from the seventh heaven with the glory of the seventh heaven, and He will drag Beliar into Gehenna <sup>6</sup> and also his armies. 15. And He will give rest <sup>7</sup> to the godly whom He shall find in the body <sup>8</sup> in this world, <sup>9</sup> [and the sun will be ashamed]: 16. And to all who because of (their) faith in Him have execrated Beliar and his kings. <sup>10</sup> But the saints will come with the Lord <sup>11</sup> with their garments <sup>12</sup> which are (now) stored up on high in the seventh heaven: with the Lord they will come, whose spirits are clothed, <sup>13</sup> they will descend and be present in the world, <sup>14</sup> and He will strengthen those who have been found in the body, together with the saints, <sup>15</sup> in the garments of the saints, and the Lord will minister to those who have kept watch in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke xviii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* from before the Antichrist; cf. Mark xiii. 14 f.; Rev. xii. 6, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. i. 7; Phil. iii. 20, etc.

<sup>4</sup> ? read thirty-five (1335 days); see iv. 12.

<sup>5</sup> *i. e.* the angels; cf. 2 Thess. i. 7; Jude 14; 1 Enoch i, 4, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Rev. xix. 20.

<sup>7</sup> *i. e.* refreshment; cf. Acts iii. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 17.

<sup>9</sup> According to some apocalyptic writers they must be gathered in Palestine in order to secure the Messianic salvation; cf. 4 Ezra ix. 8; xiii. 48.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Rev. xvii. 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. 1 Thess. iii. 13; iv. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Rev. iii. 4, 5, 18; iv. 4; vi. 11, etc.

<sup>13</sup> *i. e.* with spiritual bodies; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 44.

<sup>14</sup> This is the first resurrection (of certain saints): cf. Rev. xx. 1-6.

<sup>15</sup> *i. e.* the glorified saints who had descended.

this world. 17. And afterwards they<sup>1</sup> will turn themselves upward in their garments, and their body will be left in the world. 18. Then the voice of the Beloved will in wrath rebuke the things of heaven and the things of earth and the mountains and the hills and the cities and the desert and the forests and the angel of the sun<sup>2</sup> and that of the moon, and all things wherein Beliar manifested himself and acted openly in this world, and there will be [a resurrection and] a judgement in their midst in those days, and the Beloved will cause fire<sup>3</sup> to go forth from Him, and it will consume all the godless,<sup>4</sup> and they will be as though they had not been created. 19. *And the rest of the words of the vision are written in the vision of Babylon.*<sup>5</sup> 20. *And the rest of the vision regarding the Lord, behold, it is written in the parables according to my words which are written in the book which I publicly prophesied.* 21. *And the descent of the Beloved into Sheol, behold, it is written in the section, where the Lord saith: "Behold, my Son will understand."*<sup>6</sup> *And all these things, behold they are written [in the Psalms] in the parables<sup>7</sup> of David, the son of Jesse, and in the Proverbs of Solomon his son, and in the words of Korah, and Ethan the Israelite, and in the words of Asaph, and in the rest of the Psalms also which the angel of the Spirit inspired, 22. (Namely) in those which have not the*

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* the saints found alive on the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rev. xix. 17, and (for the other angels mentioned) 1 Enoch lx. 12-21; Rev. vii. 1, 2; xiv. 18. *Jubilees* ii.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 2 Thess. i. 8; ii. 8 (Is. xi. 4).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 4 Ezra xii. 33; xiii. 38, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Is. xliii. 1 (LXX).

<sup>6</sup> *i. e.* Is. lii. 13 (LXX). Perhaps the Descent was supposed to be referred to in Is. liii. 8 (Charles).

<sup>7</sup> "Parables," *i. e.* songs.

name written,<sup>1</sup> and in the words of my father Amoz and of Hosea the prophet, and of Micah and Joel and Nahum and Jonah and Obadiah and Habakkuk and Haggai and Zephaniah and Zechariah and Malachi, and in the words of Joseph the Just<sup>2</sup> and in the words of Daniel.'

### PART III (v. 1-14)

**The Martyrdom of Isaiah** (v. 1b-14) resumed from iii. 12).

V. 1. *On account of these visions, therefore, Beliar was wroth with Isaiah, and he dwelt in the heart of Manasseh and he sawed him in sunder with a wooden saw.* 2. And when Isaiah was being sawn in sunder Balchîrâ stood up, accusing him, and all the false prophets stood up, laughing and rejoicing because of Isaiah. 3. And Balchîrâ, with the aid of Mechêmbêchûs,<sup>3</sup> stood up before Isaiah, [laughing] deriding; 4. And Balchîrâ said to Isaiah: <sup>4</sup> "Say: 'I have lied in all that I have spoken, and likewise the ways of Manasseh are good and right. 5. And the ways also of Balchîrâ and of his associates are good.'" 6. And this he said to him when he began to be sawn in sunder. 7. But Isaiah was (absorbed) in a vision of the Lord, and though his eyes were open, he saw them (not). 8. And Balchîrâ spake thus to Isaiah: "Say what I say unto thee and I will turn their heart, and I will compel Manasseh and the princes of Judah and the people and all Jerusalem to reverence

<sup>1</sup> viz. those psalms with no ascription of authorship (e.g. Pss. i. and ii.).

<sup>2</sup> Probably a pseudepigraphic work entitled *The Prayer of Joseph*, only known from a few citations: see Hastings, *D.B.* ii. 778.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ii. 4 (note) = ? *Matanbûchûs*, i. e. Beliar.

<sup>4</sup> Verses 4-8 contain the Temptation of Isaiah by Balchîrâ.

thee. 9. And Isaiah answered and said: "So far as I have utterance (I say): Damned and accursed be thou and all thy powers<sup>1</sup> and all thy house. 10. For thou canst not take (from me) aught save the skin of my body." 11. And they seized and sawed in sunder Isaiah, the son of Amoz, with a wooden saw. 12. And Manasseh and Balchîrâ and the false prophets and the princes and the people [and] all stood looking on. 13. And to the prophets who were with him he said before he had been sawn in sunder: "Go ye to the region of Tyre and Sidon; for for me only hath God mingled the cup."<sup>2</sup> 14. And when Isaiah was being sawn in sunder, he neither cried aloud nor wept, but his lips spake with the Holy Spirit until he was sawn in twain. 15. *This Beliar did to Isaiah through Balchîrâ and Manasseh; for Sammael was very wrathful against Isaiah from the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, on account of the things which he had seen regarding the Beloved,* 16. *And on account of the destruction of Sammael, which he had seen through the Lord, while Hezekiah his father was still king. And he did according to the will of Satan.*

## PART IV

**The Vision of Isaiah** (vi. I-xi. 43).

THE VISION WHICH ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ SAW.

VI. I. In the twentieth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, came Isaiah the son of Amoz,

<sup>1</sup> Balchîrâ is here addressed by Isaiah as a personification of Beliar.

<sup>2</sup> For the figure of the cup in this connection cf. Mark x. 38; xiv. 36, and parallels.



and Jôsâb, the son of Isaiah, to Hezekiah to Jerusalem "from Galgalâ". 2. And (having entered) he sat down on the couch of the king, "and they brought him a seat, but he would not sit (thereon)". 3. "And when Isaiah began to speak the words of faith and truth with King Hezekiah", all the princes of Israel were seated and the eunuchs and the councillors of the king. And there were there "forty" prophets and sons of the prophets: they had come from the villages and from the mountains and the plains when they had heard that Isaiah was coming from Galgalâ to Hezekiah. 4. "And they had come" to salute him "and to hear his words. 5. And that he might place his hands upon them," and that they might prophesy and that he might hear their prophecy: "and they were all before Isaiah." 6. And when Isaiah was speaking "to Hezekiah" the words of truth and faith, they all heard †a door which one had opened and †<sup>1</sup> the voice of the Holy Spirit. 7. And the king summoned all the prophets and all the people who were found there, and they came. And Micaiah and the aged Ananias and Joel "and Jôsâb" sat on his right hand (and on the left). 8. And it came to pass when they had all heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, they all worshipped on their knees, and glorified the God "of truth", the Most High "who is in the upper world and who sitteth on high the Holy One and" who resteth among His holy ones.<sup>2</sup> 9. "And they gave glory to Him" †who had thus bestowed a door in an alien world, had bestowed (it)

<sup>1</sup> *A door, etc.* The text of verse 6 seems to be corrupt. Perhaps we should read with the Latin (I<sup>2</sup>): *Then he spake words of truth; the Holy Spirit came upon him, and all saw and heard words of the Holy Spirit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Is. lvii. 15 (LXX).

on a man†.<sup>1</sup> 10. And as he was speaking in the Holy Spirit in the hearing of all, he became silent "and his mind was taken up from him" and he saw not<sup>2</sup> the men that stood before him, 11. Though his eyes, indeed, were open. Moreover, his lips were silent "and the mind in his body was taken up from him."<sup>3</sup> 12. But his breath was in him; "for he was seeing a vision."<sup>4</sup> 13. And the angel who was sent to make him see was not of this firmament,<sup>4</sup> nor was he of the angels of glory of this world, but he had come from the seventh heaven."<sup>5</sup> 14. And the people who stood near did (not) think, but †the circle of the prophets (did)†,<sup>5</sup> that the holy Isaiah had been taken up. 15. And the vision which the holy Isaiah saw was not from this world but from the world which is hidden from the flesh. 16. And after Isaiah had seen this vision, he narrated it to Hezekiah, and to Jôsâb his son "and to the other prophets who had come. 17. But the leaders and the eunuchs and the people did not hear, but only Samna<sup>6</sup> the scribe, and †Ijôaqêm, and†<sup>7</sup> Asaph the recorder; for these also were doers of righteousness, and the †sweet smell†<sup>8</sup> of the Spirit was upon them. But the people had not heard; for Micaiah and Jôsâb his son had caused them to go forth, when the wisdom of this world had been taken from him and he became as one dead.

<sup>1</sup> *who had thus bestowed, etc.* Text corrupt: read with Charles *who had thus bestowed such excellence of words on a man in the world.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. v. 7.

<sup>3</sup> A description of the ecstatic state.

<sup>4</sup> The abode of Beliar; cf. iv. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Corrupt: read *The prophets recognized.*

<sup>6</sup> = *Samnas* (i. 5), *i. e.* Shebna.

<sup>7</sup> ? read *Joah the son of (Asaph)*; cf. Is. xxxvi. 3 (Charles).

<sup>8</sup> or *good pleasure* (= *eûdoxia*): so Charles.

VII. 1. And the vision which Isaiah saw, he told to Hezekiah and Jôsâb his son<sup>1</sup> and Micaiah and the rest of the prophets, (and) said: 2. \*At this moment\*, when I prophesied according to the (words) heard which ye heard, I saw a glorious angel not like unto the glory of the angels which I used always to see, but possessing such glory and †position† that I cannot describe "the glory" "of that angel". 3. And having seized me by my hand \*he raised me on high\*, and I said unto him: "Who art thou, and what is thy name, and whither art thou raising me on high?" For strength was given me to speak with him. 4. And he said unto me: "When I have raised thee on high [through the (various) degrees] and made thee see the vision, on account of which I have been sent, then thou wilt understand who I am: but my name thou dost not know: 5. Because thou wilt return into this thy body, but whither I am raising thee on high, thou wilt see; "for for this purpose have I been sent." 6. And I rejoiced because he spake courteously to me. 7. And he said unto me: "Hast thou rejoiced because I have spoken courteously to thee?" And he said: "And thou wilt see how a greater also than I am will speak courteously and peaceably with thee. 8. And †His Father also who is greater†<sup>1</sup> thou wilt see; for for this purpose have I been sent from the seventh heaven in order to explain all these things unto thee." 9. And we ascended to the firmament, I and he,<sup>2</sup> and there I saw Sammael and his hosts, and there was great fighting therein,

<sup>1</sup> Read *One more eminent man the Greater Himself* (Charles).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the ascent of Abraham and the angel, and the meeting with Azazel, in *Ap. Abraham*, ch. xii. foll.

and the \*angels\* of Satan were envying one another. 10. And as above so on the earth also; for the likeness of that which is in the firmament is here on the earth. 11. And I said unto the angel (who was with me): "(What is this war and) what is this envying?" 12. And he said unto me: "So hath it been since this world was made until now, and this war (will continue) till He, whom thou shalt see will come and destroy him. 13. And afterwards he caused me to ascend. (to that which is) above the firmament: which is the (first) heaven. 14. And there I saw a throne <sup>1</sup> in the midst, and on his right and on his left were angels. 15. ¶And (the angels on the left were) not like unto the angels who stood on the right<sup>2</sup>, but those who stood on the right had the greater glory, and they all praised with one voice, ¶and there was a throne <sup>3</sup> in the midst<sup>4</sup>, and those who were on the left gave praise after them; but their voice was not such as the voice of those on the right, nor their praise like the praise of those. 16. And I asked the angel who conducted me, and I said unto him: "To whom is this praise sent?" 17. And he said unto me: "(It is sent) to the praise of (Him who sitteth in) the seventh heaven: to Him †who resteth in the holy world†,<sup>4</sup> and to His Beloved, whence I have been sent to thee. [Thither is it sent.]" 18. And again he made me to ascend to the second heaven. Now the height of that heaven is the same as from the heaven to the earth

1 ? " an angel belonging to the order called 'Thrones' " (Charles); cf. Col. i. 16; Test. Lev. iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> For the superiority of right to left, cf. vii. 29, 30, 33, 34, and see further *J.E.* x. 419 f. (art. *right and left*).

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.* ? an angel.

<sup>4</sup> = ? to Him who inhabiteth eternity (Is. lvii. 15): cf. vi. 8.

[and to the firmament]. 19. And (I saw there, as) in the first heaven, angels on the right and on the left, "and a throne in the midst, and the praise of the angels in the second heaven; and he who sat on the throne in the second heaven was more glorious than all (the rest)."<sup>1</sup> 20. And there was great glory in the second heaven, and the praise also was not like the praise of those who were in the first heaven. 21. And I fell on my face to worship him,<sup>1</sup> but the angel who conducted me did not permit me, but said unto me: "Worship neither throne nor angel which belongeth to the six heavens—for for this cause I was sent to conduct thee—until I tell thee "in the seventh heaven". 22. For above all the heavens and their angels hath thy throne been placed, and thy garments<sup>2</sup> and thy crown which thou shalt see." 23. And I rejoiced with great joy, that those who love the Most High and His Beloved will afterwards ascend thither by the angel of the Holy Spirit. 24. And he raised me to the third heaven, and in like manner I saw those upon the right and upon the left, and there was a throne there in the midst; but the memorial of this world is there unheard of. 25. "And I said to the angel who was with me;" for the glory of my appearance was undergoing transformation as I ascended to each heaven in turn: "Nothing "of the vanity" of that world is here named." 26. And he answered me, and said unto me: "Nothing is named on account of its weakness, and nothing is hidden there of what is done." 27. "And I wished to learn how it is known, and he answered me saying: "When I have raised thee to the seventh heaven whence I was sent, to that which is above these,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. iv. 16.

then thou shalt know that there is nothing hidden from the thrones and from those who dwell in the heavens and from the angels."¶ And the praise wherewith they praised and the glory of him who sat on the throne was great, ¶and the glory of the angels on the right hand and on the left was beyond that of the heaven which was below them¶. 28. And again he raised me to the fourth heaven, and the height from the third to the fourth heaven was greater than from the earth to the firmament. 29. And there again I saw those who were on the right hand and those who were on the left, ¶and him who sat on the throne (who) was in the midst¶, and there also they were praising. 30. And the praise and glory of the angels on the right was greater than that of those on the left. 31. And again the glory of him who sat on the throne was greater than that of the angels on the right, and their glory was beyond that of those who were below. 32. And he raised me to the fifth heaven. 33. And again I saw ¶those upon the right hand and on the left, and him who sat on the throne possessing greater glory than those of the fourth heaven¶. 34. And the glory of those on the right hand was greater than that of those ¶on the left [from the third to the fourth]. 35. And the glory of him who was on the throne was greater than that of the angels on the right hand¶. 36. And their praise was more glorious than that of the fourth heaven. 37. ¶And I praised Him, who is not named and the Only-begotten¶ <sup>1</sup> who dwelleth in the heavens, whose name is not known to any flesh, who hath bestowed such glory on the several heavens, ¶and who maketh great the glory of the angels, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John i. 16, 18; iii. 16, 18.

more excellent the glory of Him who sitteth on the throne<sup>1</sup>.

VIII. 1. And again he raised me into the air of the sixth heaven, and I saw such glory as I had not seen in the five heavens. 2. \*For I saw\* angels possessing great glory. 3. And the praise there was holy and wonderful. 4. And I said to the angel who conducted me: "What is this which I see, my Lord?" 5. And he said: "I am not thy lord, but thy fellow-servant."<sup>1</sup> 6. And again I asked him, and I said unto him: "Why are there not angelic fellow-servants (on the left)?"<sup>2</sup> 7. And he said: "From the sixth heaven there are no longer \*angels\* on the left, nor a throne set in the midst, but (they are directed) by the power of the seventh heaven, where dwelleth He that is not named<sup>2</sup> and the Elect One, whose name hath not been made known, and none of the heavens can learn His name<sup>3</sup>." 8. For it is He alone to whose voice all the heavens and thrones give answer. I have therefore been empowered and sent to raise thee here that thou mayest see this glory. 9. And that thou mayest see the Lord of all those heavens and these thrones, 10. Undergoing (successive) transformation until He resembleth your form and likeness.<sup>4</sup> 11. I indeed say unto thee, Isaiah; No man about to return into a body of that world hath ascended or seen what thou seest or perceived what thou hast perceived and what thou wilt see. 12. For it hath been permitted to thee in the lot of the Lord to come hither<sup>4</sup> [and from thence cometh the power of the sixth heaven and of the air]. 13. And I

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* The Ineffable.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rev. ii. 17; xix. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* the seventh heaven.

magnified my Lord with praise, in that through His lot I should come hither. 14. And he said: "Hear, furthermore, therefore, this also from thy fellow-servant"; when from the body by the \*will of God\* thou hast ascended hither, then thou wilt receive the garment<sup>1</sup> "which thou seest, and likewise other numbered garments laid up (there) thou wilt see", 15. And then thou wilt become equal to the angels of the seventh heaven." 16. And he raised me up into the sixth heaven, and there were no (angels) on the left, nor a throne in the midst, but all had one appearance<sup>2</sup> and their (power of) praise was equal. 17. And (power) was given to me also, and I also praised along with them and that angel also,<sup>3</sup> and our praise was like theirs. 18. And there they fall named the primal Father† and His Beloved, "the Christ" and the Holy Spirit, all with one voice. 19. And (their voice) was not like the voice of the angels in the five heavens, 20. [Nor like their discourse] but the voice was different there, and there was much light there. 21. And then, when I was in the sixth heaven I thought the light which I had seen in the five heavens to be but darkness.<sup>4</sup> 22. And I rejoiced and praised Him who hath bestowed such lights on those who wait for His promise. 23. And I besought the angel who conducted me that I should not henceforth

<sup>1</sup> Cf. viii. 26; ix. 9, 24, 25; xi. 3, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 2 Enoch xix. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ap. Abraham* xvii., where Abraham and the conducting angel join in a song of praise in heaven.

<sup>4</sup> The light referred to is no doubt the uncreated light of the Divine Glory, which is a well-known feature in the Midrashic literature; cf. also *Ap. Abraham*, ch. xvii.; Rev. xxi. 23; xxii. 5. [But this light has its centre in the seventh heaven; cf. verse 25 a few lines lower down.]



return to the carnal world. 24. I say indeed unto you, "Hezekiah and Jôsâb my son and Micaiah" that there is much darkness here. 25. And the angel who conducted me discovered what I thought, and said: "If in this light thou dost rejoice, how much more wilt thou rejoice, when in the seventh heaven thou seest the light, where is the Lord and His Beloved [whence I have been sent, who is to be called 'Son' in this world. 26. Not (yet) hath been manifested He who shall be in the corruptible world]<sup>1</sup> and the garments, and the thrones, and the crowns which are laid up for the righteous, "for those who trust in that Lord who will descend in your form. For the light which is there is great and wonderful". 27. And as concerning thy not returning into the body thy days are not yet fulfilled for coming here." 28. And when I heard (that) I was troubled, and he said: "Do not be troubled."

IX. 1. And he took me into the air of the seventh heaven, and moreover I heard a voice saying: "How far will he ascend that dwelleth \*in the flesh\*?" and I feared and trembled. 2. And "when I trembled, behold" \*I heard\* from hence<sup>2</sup> another voice "being sent forth, and" saying: "It is permitted to the holy Isaiah to ascend hither, for here is his garment." 3. And I asked the angel who was with me "and said": "Who is he who forbade me and who is he who \*permitted\* me to ascend?" 4. And he said unto me: "He who forbade thee, this is he \*who is over\* the praise-giving of the sixth heaven. 5. And He who \*permitted\* thee, this is "thy Lord God, the Lord Christ, who will

<sup>1</sup> Omit bracketed words (Charles).

<sup>2</sup> rather, *from above*, i. e. from the seventh heaven.

be called ' Jesus ' in the world", but His name <sup>1</sup> thou canst not hear till thou hast ascended out of thy body." 6. And he raised me up into the seventh heaven, and I saw there a wonderful light and angels innumerable. 7. And there I saw all the righteous "from the time of Adam. 8. And there I saw the holy Abel and all the righteous. 9. And there I saw Enoch and all who were with him", stript of the garments of the flesh, and I saw them in their garments of the upper world, and they were "like angels",<sup>2</sup> standing there in great glory. 10. But they sat not on their thrones,<sup>3</sup> nor were their crowns <sup>4</sup> of glory on them. 11. And I asked the angel who was with me : " How is it that they have received the garments, but have not the thrones and the crowns ? " 12. And he said unto me : 13. " Crowns and thrones of glory they do not receive, till the Beloved will descend in the form in which you will see Him descend "[will descend, I say] into the world in the last days the Lord, who will be called Christ". Nevertheless, they "see and" know whose will be thrones, and whose the crowns when He hath descended, and been made in your form, "and they will think that He is flesh and is a man". 14. And the god of that world will stretch forth \*his hand against the Son,\* and they will crucify Him on a tree, and will \*slay\* Him not knowing who He is. 15. And thus His descent, "as you will see, will be hidden even from the heavens, so that it will not

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* His heavenly name; cf. Rev. xix. 12, and see viii. 7 of this book.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matt. xxii. 30; *Ap. Bar.* li. 5, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rev. iii. 21; Luke xxii. 29, 30; Matt. xix. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* as victors; cf. Rev. ii. 10; iii. 11; iv. 4; Jas. i. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

be known who He is<sup>7</sup>. 16. And when He hath plundered the angel of death,<sup>1</sup> He will ascend on the third day, [and he will remain in that world five hundred and forty-five days].<sup>2</sup> 17. And then many of the righteous will ascend<sup>3</sup> with Him, whose spirits do not receive their garments<sup>4</sup> till the "Lord Christ" ascend<sup>5</sup> and they ascend with Him. 18. Then, indeed, they will receive their [garments and] thrones and crowns, when He hath ascended into the "seventh" heaven. 19. And I said unto him that which I had asked him in the third heaven: 20. " \*Show me how\* everything which is done in that world is here made known." 21. And whilst I was still speaking with him, behold one of the angels who stood nigh, more glorious than the glory of that angel who had raised me up from the world, 22. Showed me a book, [but not as a book of this world] and he opened it, and the book was written, but not as a book of this world.<sup>6</sup> And he gave (it) to me and I read it, and lo! the deeds of the children of Israel were written therein, and the deeds of those whom \*I\* know (not), my son Jôsâb. 23. And I said: " In truth, there is nothing hidden in the seventh heaven, which is done in this world." 24. And I saw there many garments laid up, and many thrones and many crowns. 25. And I said to the angel:

<sup>1</sup> The "harrowing of Hell" was effected, according to the Latin *Gospel of Nicodemus* (Part ii.) by the descent of Christ into Hades; cf. Rev. xx. 13 (Matt. xxvii. 52 f.).

<sup>2</sup> A Gnostic interpolation (Charles).

<sup>3</sup> *viz.* from Hades.

<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* their spiritual bodies.

<sup>5</sup> *viz.* to heaven.

<sup>6</sup> *i. e.* one of the heavenly books; these were to be opened at the judgement; cf. Dan. vii. 10; cf. also in the N.T., Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8; xvii. 8, and often ("the book of life").

“ Whose are these garments and thrones and crowns ? ”  
 26. And he said unto me : “ These garments many from that world will receive, believing in the words of That One, “who shall be named” as I told thee, “and they will observe those things, and believe in them, and believe in His cross : for them are \*these\* laid up.” 27. And I saw a certain One <sup>1</sup> “standing, whose glory surpassed that of all,” and His glory was great “and wonderful. 28. And after I had seen Him,” all the righteous whom I had seen “and also the angels whom I had seen” came to Him. “And Adam and Abel and Seth, and all the righteous first drew near” and worshipped Him, and they all praised Him with one voice, “and I myself also gave praise with them,” and my giving of praise was as theirs. 29. And then all the angels drew nigh and worshipped and gave praise. 30. And \*I\* was (again) transformed <sup>2</sup> and became like an angel. 31. And thereupon the angel who conducted me, said to me : “Worship this One,” and I worshipped and praised. 32. And the angel said unto me : “This is the Lord of all the praisegivings which thou hast seen.” 33. And whilst \*he\* was still speaking, I saw another Glorious One <sup>3</sup> who was like Him, and the righteous drew nigh and worshipped and praised, and I praised together with them. But \*my\* glory was not transformed into accordance with their form. 34. And thereupon the angels drew near and worshipped Him. 35. And I saw the Lord and the second angel, and they were standing. 36. And the second whom

<sup>1</sup> Christ is meant. Note the emphasis laid on the worship of Him in heaven.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. vii. 25. Isaiah underwent successive transformations.

<sup>3</sup> The Third Person of the Godhead (Charles).

I saw was on the left of my Lord. And I asked : " Who is this ? " and he said unto me : " Worship Him, for He is the angel of the Holy Spirit, who \*speaketh\* in thee and the rest of the righteous." 37. And I saw the great glory, the eyes of my spirit being open, and I could not thereupon see,<sup>1</sup> nor yet could the angel who was with me, nor all the angels whom I had seen worshipping my Lord. 38. But I saw the righteous<sup>2</sup> beholding with great power the glory of that One. 39. And my Lord drew nigh to me and the angel of the Spirit "and He said : " See how it is given to thee to see God, and on thy account power is given to the angel who is with thee." 40. And I saw how my Lord and the angel of the Spirit<sup>3</sup> worshipped, and they both together praised "God". 41. And thereupon all the righteous "drew near and" worshipped. 42. And the angels "drew near and" worshipped and all the angels praised.

X. 1. And thereupon I heard the voices and the giving of praise, which I had heard in each of the six heavens, ascending \*and being heard\* there : 2. And all "were being sent up to that Glorious One" whose glory I could not behold. 3. "And I myself was hearing and beholding the praise (which was given) to Him. 4. And the Lord and the angel of the Spirit were beholding all and hearing all". 5. And all the praises which are sent up from the six heavens<sup>3</sup> are not only heard but seen. 6. And "I heard" the angel "who conducted me and" he said : " This is the Most High of the high ones, dwelling

<sup>1</sup> *saw . . . could not see* : i. e. saw for a moment, but could not steadfastly behold. By "the Great Glory," is meant the First Person : cf. 1 Enoch xiv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* the glorified righteous ; cf. Rev. xxii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. vii. 16-17.

in the holy world,<sup>1</sup> and resting in His holy ones, who will be called by the Holy Spirit through the lips of the righteous "the Father of the Lord".<sup>2</sup> 7. And I heard the voice of the Most High "the Father of my Lord" saying to my Lord "Christ who will be called Jesus": 8. "Go forth and descend through all the heavens, and Thou wilt descend to "the firmament and" that world: to the angel in Sheol<sup>3</sup> Thou wilt descend, "but to Haniel<sup>4</sup> Thou wilt not go". 9. And Thou wilt become like unto the likeness of all who are in the five heavens. 10. "And Thou wilt be careful to become like the form of the angels of the firmament [and the angels also who are in Sheol]". 11. And none of the angels of that world shall know<sup>5</sup> "that Thou art Lord with Me of the seven heavens and of their angels. 12. And they shall not know that Thou art with Me, \*till\* with a \*loud\* voice<sup>6</sup> I have called (to) the heavens, and their angels and their lights, (even) unto the sixth heaven, in order that Thou mayst" judge "and destroy" the †princes† and angels "and gods" of that world,<sup>6</sup> and the world that is dominated by them: 13. For they have denied Me and said: 'We alone are, and there is none beside us.'<sup>7</sup> 14. And afterwards from the \*angels\* of death Thou wilt ascend to Thy place, and Thou wilt not be transformed in each heaven, but in glory wilt Thou ascend and sit on My right hand. 15. And thereupon the princes and powers

<sup>1</sup> Based on Is. lvii. 15 (LXX); cf. vi. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Sheol* = Hades: and "the Angel in Sheol" = the Angel of Death.

<sup>3</sup> *Haniel* = Abaddon or Gehenna (the abode of the lost).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. I Cor. ii. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *viz.* at the day of Judgement.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. John xvi. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Is. xlvi. 8.

†of that world† will worship Thee.”<sup>1</sup> 16. These commands I heard the Great Glory giving to my Lord. 17. And †so† I saw my Lord go forth from the seventh heaven into the sixth heaven. 18. And the angel who conducted me [from this world was with me and] said unto me : “ Understand, Isaiah, and see how the transformation and descent of the Lord \*will appear\*.” 19. And I saw, and when the angels saw Him, “thereupon those in the sixth heaven” praised and lauded Him; for He had not been transformed after the shape of the angels there, “and they praised Him” and I also praised with them. 20. And I saw when He descended into the fifth heaven, that in the fifth heaven He made Himself like unto the form of the angels there, and they did not praise Him (nor worship Him); for His form was like unto theirs. 21. And then He descended into the fourth heaven, and made Himself like unto the form of the angels there. 22. And “when they saw Him”, they did not praise “or laud Him”; for His form was like unto their form. 23. And again I saw when He descended into the third heaven, “and He made Himself like unto the form of the angels in the third heaven. 24. And those who kept the gate of the (third) heaven demanded the password,<sup>2</sup> and the Lord gave (it) to them in order that He should not be recognized. And when they saw Him, they did not praise or laud Him; for His form was like unto their form. 25. And again I saw when He descended” into the second heaven, “and again He gave the password<sup>2</sup> there; those who kept the gate proceeded to demand and the Lord to give. 26. And I saw when He made Himself like unto the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Heb. i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> or *sign*.

form of the angels in the second heaven, and they saw Him and they did not praise Him; for His form was like unto their form. 27. And, again, I saw when He descended<sup>n</sup> into the first heaven, "and there also He gave the password<sup>1</sup> to those who kept the gate, and He made Himself like unto the form of the angels who were on the left of that throne<sup>n</sup>, and they neither praised nor lauded Him; for His form was like unto their form. "28. But as for me no one asked me on account of the angel who conducted me<sup>n</sup>. 29. And again He descended into the firmament "where dwelleth the ruler of this world<sup>n</sup>, and He gave the password<sup>1</sup> "to those on the left<sup>n</sup>, and His form was like theirs, and they did not praise Him there; "but they were envying one another and fighting; for here there is a power of evil and envying about trifles<sup>n</sup>. 30. And I saw when He descended "and made Himself like<sup>n</sup> unto the angels of the air, and He was like one of them. 31. And He gave no password; <sup>1</sup> "for one was plundering and doing violence to another."<sup>n</sup>

XI. 1. After this "I saw, and "the angel "who spoke with me, who conducted me<sup>n</sup>, said unto me: "Understand, Isaiah, son of Amoz; for for this purpose have I been sent from God." 2. <sup>2</sup> "And I, indeed, saw a woman of the family of David <sup>3</sup> the prophet, named Mary, a Virgin, and she was espoused to a man named Joseph, a carpenter, and he also was of the seed and family of the righteous David of Bethlehem

<sup>1</sup> or *sign*.

<sup>2</sup> xi. 2-22 are wanting in the Latin version (L<sup>2</sup>) and in the Slavonic. But the whole section appears to be original.

<sup>3</sup> The Davidic descent of the Virgin Mary is here explicitly asserted. This belief has very early attestation; cf. Justin Martyr, *Trypho* c. xliij., xlv., c. etc.



Judah. 3. And he came into his lot. And when she was espoused, she was found with child, and Joseph the carpenter was desirous to put her away.<sup>1</sup> 4. But the angel of the Spirit appeared in this world, and after that Joseph did not put her away, but kept Mary and did not reveal this matter to any one. 5. And he did not approach Mary, but kept her as a holy virgin, though with child. 6. And he did not live with her for two months. 7. And after two months of days while Joseph was in his house, and Mary his wife, but both alone—8. It came to pass that when they were alone Mary straightway looked with her eyes and saw a small babe, and she was astonished.<sup>2</sup> 9. And after she had been astonished, her womb was found as formerly before she had conceived. 10. And when her husband Joseph said unto her: "What has astonished thee?" his eyes were opened and he saw the infant and praised God, because into his portion God had come. 11. And a voice came to them: "Tell this vision to no one."<sup>3</sup> 12. And the story regarding the infant was noised abroad in Bethlehem. 13. Some said: "The Virgin Mary hath borne a child before she was married two months." 14. And many said: "She hath not borne a child, nor hath a midwife gone up (to her), nor have we heard the cries of (labour) pains." And they were all blinded respecting Him and they all knew regarding Him, though they knew not whence He was.<sup>4</sup> 15. And they took Him, and went to Nazareth in Galilee. 16. And I saw, O Hezekiah and Jôsâb my son, and I declare to the other prophets also who are standing by, that (this)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. i. 20 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *op. cit.* xx. (end).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Protev. Jacobi* xix.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John vii. 27.

hath escaped all the heavens and all the princes and all the gods of this world.<sup>1</sup> 17. And I saw: In Nazareth He sucked the breast as a babe and as is customary in order that He might not be recognized. 18. And when He had grown up He worked great signs and wonders in the land of Israel and of Jerusalem. 19. And after this the adversary envied Him and roused the children of Israel against Him<sup>7</sup>, not knowing who He was, "and they delivered Him to the king, and crucified Him, and He descended to the angel (of Sheol). 20. In Jerusalem, indeed, I saw Him being crucified on a tree: 21. And likewise after the third day rise again and remain days. 22. And the angel who conducted me said: "Understand, Isaiah:" and I saw when He sent out the Twelve Apostles<sup>2</sup> and ascended<sup>7</sup>. 23. And I saw Him, and He was in the firmament, but He had not changed Himself into their form, and all the angels of the firmament "and the Satans<sup>7</sup> saw Him<sup>3</sup> and they worshipped. 24. And "there was much sorrow there, while<sup>7</sup> they said: "How did our Lord descend \*in our midst\*, and we perceived not the glory [which hath been upon Him], which we see hath been upon Him from the sixth heaven?" 25. And He ascended into the second heaven, and He did not transform Himself, but all the angels who were on the right and on the left and the throne in the midst 26. Both worshipped Him and praised Him and said: "How did our Lord escape us whilst descending, and we perceived not?" 27. And in like manner He

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ignatius *ad Ephes.* xix.: *And hidden from the prince of this world were the virginity of Mary, and her child-bearing, and likewise also the death of the Lord*: cf. also 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. iii. 17; Matt. xxviii. 18 f.; Acts i. 8 f.

<sup>3</sup> *all the angels . . . saw Him*: cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

ascended into the third heaven, "and they praised and said in like manner." 28. And in the fourth heaven and in the fifth "also they said precisely after the same manner. 29. But there was one glory, and from it He did not change Himself. 30. And I saw when He ascended" into the sixth heaven, "and they worshipped and glorified Him". 31. But in all the heavens the praise increased (in volume). 32. And I saw how He ascended into the seventh heaven, and all the righteous and all the angels praised Him. And then I saw Him sit down on the right hand of that Great Glory<sup>1</sup> whose glory I told you that I could not behold. 33. And also the angel of the Holy Spirit I saw sitting on the left hand.<sup>2</sup> 34. And this angel said unto me: "Isaiah, son of Amoz, \*it is enough for thee\*; "for these are great things"; for thou hast seen what no child of flesh hath seen. 35. And thou wilt return into thy garment (of the flesh) until thy days are completed.<sup>3</sup> Then thou wilt come hither." 36. These things Isaiah saw and told unto all that stood before him, and they praised. And he spake to Hezekiah the King, "and said": "I have spoken these things." 37. Both the end of this world; 38. And all this vision will be consummated in the last generations. 39. And Isaiah made him swear that he would not tell (it) to the people of Israel, nor give these words to any man to transcribe. 40. . . . \*Such things\* ye will read. And watch ye in the Holy Spirit in order that ye may receive your garments and thrones and crowns of glory which are laid up in the "seventh" heaven. 41. *On account of these visions and prophecies Sammael Satan sawed in sunder Isaiah the*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ix. 37; x. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ix. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. viii. 27.

*son of Amoz, the prophet, by the hand of Manasseh. 42. And all these things Hezekiah delivered to Manasseh in the twenty-sixth year. 43. But Manasseh did not remember them nor place these things in his heart, but becoming the servant of Satan he was destroyed.*

*Here endeth the vision of Isaiah the prophet with his ascension.*

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