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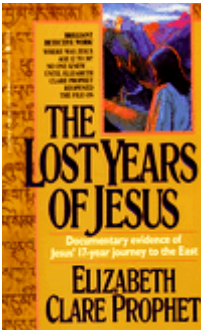
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The Life of Saint Issa

Best of the Sons of Men

Translation by Notovitch

CHAPTER VI

1 The white priests and the warriors, becoming acquainted with the discourses of Issa addressed to the Sudras, resolved upon his death and sent with this intent their servants to seek out the young prophet.

2 But Issa, warned of his danger by the Sudras, left the neighborhood of Juggernaut by night, reached the mountain, and established himself in the country of Gautamides, the birthplace of the great Buddha Sakyamuni, in the midst of a people worshipping the one and sublime Brahma.

3 After having perfected himself in the Pali language, the just Issa applied himself to the study of the sacred writings of the Sutras.

4 Six years after, Issa, whom the Buddha had elected to spread his holy word, had become a perfect expositor of the sacred writings.

5 Then he left Nepal and the Himalayan mountains, descended into the valley of Rajputana, and went towards the west, preaching to diverse peoples the supreme perfection of man,

6 Which is-to do good to one's neighbor, being the sure means of merging oneself rapidly in the Eternal Spirit: "He who shall have regained his original purity," said Issa, "will die having obtained remission for his sins, and he will have the right to contemplate the majesty of God."

7 In crossing pagan territories, the divine Issa taught that the worship of visible gods was contrary to the law of nature.

8 "For man," said he, "has not been permitted to see the image of God, and yet he has made a host of deities in the likeness of the Eternal.

9 "Moreover, it is incompatible with the human conscience to make less matter of the grandeur of divine purity than of

animals and objects executed by the hand of man in stone or metal.

10 "The Eternal Lawgiver is one; there is no other God but he. He has not shared the world with anyone, neither has he informed anyone of his intentions.

11 "Even as a father would act towards his children, so will God judge men after their deaths according to the laws of his mercy. Never would he so humiliate his child as to transmigrate his soul, as in a purgatory, into the body of an animal."

12 "The heavenly law," said the Creator by the mouth of Issa, "is opposed to the immolation of human sacrifices to an image or to an animal; for I have consecrated to man all the animals and all that the earth contains.

13 "All things have been sacrificed to man, who is directly and intimately associated with me his Father; therefore he who shall have stolen from me my child will be severely judged and chastised by the divine law.

14 "Man is naught before the Eternal Judge, as the animal is naught before man.

15 "Wherefore I say unto you, Leave your idols and perform not rites which separate you from your Father, associating you with the priests from whom the heavens have turned away.

16 "For it is they who have led you from the true God and whose superstitions and cruelties conduce to the perversion of your soul and the loss of all moral sense."

CHAPTER VII

1 The words of Issa spread among the pagans in the midst of the countries he traversed, and the inhabitants forsook their idols.

2 Seeing which the priests exacted of him who glorified the name of the true God, reason in the presence of the people for the reproaches he made against them and a demonstration of the nothingness of their idols.

3 And Issa made answer to them: "If your idols and your animals are powerful and really possessed of supernatural strength, then let them strike me to the earth."

4 "Work then a miracle," replied the priests, "and let thy God confound our gods, if they inspire him with contempt."

5 But Issa then said: "The miracles of our God have been worked since the first day when the universe was created; they take place every day and at every moment. Whosoever seeth them not is deprived of one of the fairest gifts of life.

6 "And it is not against pieces of stone, metal, or wood, which are inanimate, that the anger of God will have full course; but it will fall on men, who, if they desire their salvation, must destroy all the idols they have made.

7 "Even as a stone and a grain of sand, naught as they are in the sight of man, wait patiently the moment when he shall take and make use of them,

8 "So man must await the great favor that God shall accord him in his final judgment.

9 "But woe unto you, ye enemies of men, if it be not a favor that you await but rather the wrath of the Divinity-woe unto you if ye expect miracles to bear witness to his power.

10 "For it will not be the idols that he will annihilate in his anger but those who shall have erected them. Their hearts shall be consumed with eternal fire, and their lacerated bodies shall go to satiate the hunger of wild beasts.

11 "God will drive the impure from among his flocks, but he will take back to himself those who shall have gone astray through not having recognized the portion of spirituality within them."

12 Seeing the powerlessness of their priests, the pagans had still greater faith in the sayings of Issa and, fearing the anger of the Divinity, broke their idols to pieces. As for the priests, they fled to escape the vengeance of the populace.

13 And Issa further taught the pagans not to strive to see the Eternal Spirit with their eyes but to endeavor to feel him in their hearts and by purity of soul to render themselves worthy of his favors.

14 "Not only," said he unto them, "abstain from consuming human sacrifices, but immolate no creature to whom life has been given, for all things that exist have been created for the profit of man.

15 "Do not steal the goods of your neighbor, for that would be

to deprive him of what he has acquired by the sweat of his brow.

16 "Deceive no one, so as not to be yourselves deceived. Endeavor to justify yourself before the last judgment, for then it will be too late.

17 "Do not give yourselves up to debauchery, for that would be to violate the laws of God.

18 "You shall attain to supreme happiness, not only in purifying yourselves, but also in guiding others in the way that shall permit them to gain original perfection."

CHAPTER VIII

1 The neighboring countries resounded with the prophecies of Issa, and when he entered into Persia the priests became alarmed and forbade the inhabitants to listen to him.

2 And when they saw all the villages welcoming him with joy and listening devoutly to his sermons, they gave orders to arrest him and had him brought before the high priest, where he underwent the following interrogation:

3 "Of what new God dost thou speak? Art thou not aware, unhappy man, that Saint Zoroaster is the only just one admitted to the privilege of communion with the Supreme Being,

4 "Who ordered the angels to put down in writing the word of God for the use of his people, laws that were given to Zoroaster in paradise?

5 "Who then art thou to dare here to blaspheme our God and to sow doubt in the hearts of believers?"

6 And Issa said unto them: "It is not of a new God that I speak but of our Heavenly Father, who has existed since all time and who will still be after the end of all things.

7 "It is of him that I have discoursed to the people, who, like unto innocent children, are not yet capable of comprehending God by the simple strength of their intelligence or of penetrating into his divine and spiritual sublimity.

8 "But even as a babe discovers in the darkness its mother's breast, so even your people, who have been led into error by your erroneous doctrine and your religious ceremonies, have

recognized by instinct their Father in the Father of whom I am the prophet.

9 "The Eternal Being has said to your people through the medium of my mouth: 'You shall not worship the sun, for it is but a part of the world which I have created for man.

10 "'The sun rises in order to warm you during your work; it sets to allow you the repose which I myself have appointed.

11 "'It is to me, and to me alone, that you owe all that you possess, all that is to be found about you, above you, and below you.'"

12 "But," said the priests, "how could a people live according to the rules of justice if it had no preceptors?"

13 Then Issa answered, "So long as the people had no priests, the natural law governed them, and they preserved the candor of their souls.

14 "Their souls were with God, and to commune with the Father they had recourse to the medium of no idol or animal, nor to the fire, as is practiced here.

15 "You contend that one must worship the sun, the spirit of good and of evil. Well, I say unto you, your doctrine is a false one, the sun acting not spontaneously but according to the will of the invisible Creator who gave it birth

16 "And who has willed it to be the star that should light the day, to warm the labor and the seedtime of man.

17 "The Eternal Spirit is the soul of all that is animate. You commit a great sin in dividing it into a spirit of evil and a spirit of good, for there is no God outside the good,

18 "Who, like unto the father of a family, does but good to his children, forgiving all their faults if they repent them.

19 "The spirit of evil dwells on the earth in the hearts of those men who turn aside the children of God from the strait path.

20 "Wherefore I say unto you, Beware of the day of judgment, for God will inflict a terrible chastisement upon all those who shall have led his children astray from the right path and have filled them with superstitions and prejudices;

21 "Those who have blinded them that see, conveyed contagion to the healthy, and taught the worship of the things

24 But, protected by the Lord our God, Saint Issa continued his way unmolested.

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