

APPENDIX

LADDER OF JACOB

BY way of appendix to the fragments of lost books I should like to add one or two notices of apocrypha which do not quite fit into the framework of the main part of the book.

The first of these is the *Ladder of Jacob*, which exists in two recensions in Slavonic, and was translated by Bonwetsch in the Göttingen *Nachrichten*, 1900 (p. 76). I depend upon his text for my rendering.

The first recension, contained in a single MS., rather mutilated, of 1494, in the Rumjançov Museum at Moscow, gives the most original text. The other has been printed by various Russian scholars and, like other apocrypha, is found in the text of the *Palæa*, or Old Testament History.

(Rec. 2): Now Jacob went to his Uncle Laban, and he found a place and fell asleep there, laying his head on a stone, for the sun was set: and there he saw a vision.

(Rec. 1 *begins*): And lo! a ladder was set up on the earth, whose top reached unto heaven. And the top of the ladder was a face as of a man, hewn out of fire. Now it had twelve steps up to the top of the ladder, and upon each step up to the top were two human faces on the right and on the left—twenty-four faces seen to their breast, on the ladder. But the middle face was higher than them all, which I saw made of fire, to the shoulder and the arm, very terribly, more than the twenty-four faces. And as I looked, behold, the Angels of God ascending and descending thereon: but the Lord was set above it, and he called me, saying: Jacob, Jacob. And I said: Here am I, Lord; And he

said to me : The land whereon thou sleepest I will give to thee and to thy seed after thee : and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea ; through thy seed shall all the earth be blessed, and they that dwell thereon, unto the last times, the years of the end. My blessing wherewith I have blessed thee shall pour out from thee unto the last generation. All in the east and the west shall be full of thy seed.

2. And when I heard it from above, fear and trembling fell upon me, and I rose up from my dream. And while the Voice of God was yet in mine ears, I said : How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And I set up the stone that was under my head for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it, and I called the name of that place the house of God (*a line gone : Rec. 2 suggests the supplement* : And I prayed to God and said) : Lord God of Adam, of thy (creature?), and Lord God of Abraham and Isaac my father, and of all whose ways are right before thee, thou that sittest mighty upon the Cherubim and upon the throne of the majesty, of fire and full of eyes, as I saw in my dream ; that holds the Cherubim with four faces, that bears the Seraphim full of eyes, that bears the whole world under his arm, and is borne of none. Thou hast established the heaven for the glory of thy name. Thou hast spread out upon the clouds of the heaven the heaven that flieth (resteth?) under thee, that under it thou mayest move the sun and hide it in the night lest it be held for God : thou hast ordained the way for the moon and the stars, and her thou makest to wax and wane, but for the stars, thou hast commanded them to pass over, lest these also should be supposed gods. Before the face of thy majesty the six-winged Seraphim fear, and hide their feet and their face with their wings, and with the others they fly, and sing (*two lines gone : no help from Rec. 2, which omits all this invocation*) Highest, with twelve faces, many-named, fiery, lightning-formed, holy one ! Holy, Holy, Holy, Jao Jaova, Jaoel, Sabakdos, Chabod, Sabaoth, Omlelech, Elaber, Ame(?) S'me Barech,

eternal king, strong, mighty, very great, long-suffering, Blessed One, that fillest heaven and earth and the sea and the abyss and all æons with thy glory. Hear my song wherewith I have praised thee, and grant me my petition for which I pray to thee, and show me the interpretation of my dream. For thou art strong and mighty and glorious, a holy God, the Lord of me and of my fathers. (*This rather resembles the prayer in the Apocalypse of Abraham, of which a translation is published in this series.*)

3. And while I yet spake my prayer, there appeared a voice (!) before my face saying: Sarekl, prince of them that rejoice (*or of the servants*), thou that art over visions, go make Jacob to understand the interpretation of the dream which he saw, and show him all things whatsoever he saw: but first bless him. And the archangel Sarekl came to me, and I saw: it was a face (*a line gone*) terrible. But I did not fear before his look, for the face which I had seen in my dream . . . was more than this, and I feared not the face of an angel. And the angel said to me: What is thy name? and I said: Jacob. But I (*read he said to me*) Thy name shall not henceforth be called Jacob, but thy name shall be like my name, Israel. And when I came from Fandana (*cf. Apocalypse of Abraham, 2*) in Syria to meet my brother Esau, he came to me and blessed me, and called my name Israel, and told me not his name until I adjured him, and then he told me: Because thou wast . . . [*There is confusion here, it seems, between the two incidents of the ladder and the wrestling. I have wondered whether a dim reflection of the 'Prayer of Joseph' is to be traced in this paragraph, but the text is evidently in a bad state. Rec. 2 has merely the statement that an angel came and said he was sent to interpret the vision.*]

4. But this said he to me: The ladder which thou sawest, which had twelve steps having two human faces which changed their appearance—now this ladder is this age, and the twelve steps are the times of this age, and the twenty-four faces are the kings of

the lawless heathen of this age. Under these kings will be tried (*line gone* : *Rec. 2* thy children's children and the line) of thy sons : they will rise up against the lawlessness of thy descendants and will lay this place waste through four descents (because ?) of the sins of thy descendants, and of the substance of the forefathers will be built this palace in the temple of the name of thy God and thy fathers (? the palace of the temple in the name of the God of thy fathers); but through the wrath of thy descendants will it be desolate until (*Rec. 2* in) the fourth descent of this age : for thou didst see four visions (*or* faces).

5. The first that stumbleth upon the steps . . . angels ascending and descending and faces in the midst of the steps : the Most High will raise up an heir of the descendants of thy brother Esau, and all the lords of the nations of the earth will accept it, who have done evil against thy seed, and will be given into his hand, and he will be hardly borne by them. But he beginneth to rule them with violence and to reign over them, and they cannot resist him, until the day when his decree goeth forth against them to serve the idols (*line gone*) and to all them that appear in such a cause, and so many . . . of thy race, so many to Thalkonagargael.

[*Rec. 2* : The first that stumbleth upon the steps will be a king of thy neighbours and will do evil against thy seed ; he will be unwillingly borne by them. But then beginneth he to rule over them, and with violence to reign over them, and they cannot resist him, and his decree groweth against them that they should worship idols and sacrifice to the dead (*the deified Emperor*) : and he speaketh to use force to all that are in his kingdom, which appear in such an accusation, so many to the Most High out of thy race, and so many to Thalkonagargael.]

6 (*Rec. 1*) : And know thou, Jacob, that thy seed shall be strangers in a strange land, and men will ill-treat them with bondage and lay blows on them daily : but the people whom they serve will the Lord judge. When a king ariseth and fighteth, then will there be to

that place (*al.* when the Most High giveth his judgment to that place, he will lead forth) then will thy seed, even Israel, go forth out of the bondage of the heathen who ruled over them with violence, and will be set free from all reproach of their enemies. For this king is the head of every revenge and retribution of them that make attacks on thee, Israel. And the (at the?) end of the age (*sic*). For the miserable will rise and cry, and the Lord heareth them, and will be softened, and the mighty letteth himself pity their sufferings, because the angels and archangels pour out their prayers for the saving of thy race. Then will their women bear much fruit, and then will the Lord fight for thy race. *Here the oldest MS. ends.*

Rec. 2: And know thou, Jacob, *etc.* to will the Lord judge, For the Most High will let himself pity, *etc.* to the saving of thy race, that the Most High may have compassion; then will their women bear much fruit, and then fighteth the Lord for thy race with terrible and great signs, for the bondage inflicted on them. Their full storehouses will be found empty of wine and of every fruit: their land will boil over with creeping things and every deadly thing. Earthquakes and much destruction will there be. Then will the Most High accomplish his judgment on that place, and will lead forth thy seed out of the bondage of the heathen which rule over them with violence, and they will be saved from the reproaches of their enemies. But the head of the king will be for (an object of) revenge: bitterly standeth he up against them, but they cry, and the Lord heareth them and poureth out his wrath upon the Leviathan the sea serpent, and smiteth the lawless Thalkon with the sword: for against the God of gods raiseth he up his pride. But then, Jacob, appeareth thy righteousness and that of thy fathers, and of them that shall be after thee, walking in thy righteousness: and then shall thy seed blow with the trumpet, and the whole kingdom of Edom shall perish, with all the kings and peoples of the Moabites.

Of these sections No. 4 seems to relate to the Temple

and the Exile, No. 5 more clearly to the Romans, No. 6 certainly to Egypt. What follows is Christian and is only in Rec. 2.

7. But whereas thou sawest angels descending and ascending upon the ladder, in the last times there will be a man from the Most High, and he shall desire to join the upper with the lower. Of him before his coming shall your sons and your daughters prophesy, and your young men shall see visions of him. For there shall be such signs as *these* at the time of his coming: a tree felled by the axe shall drop blood (cf. *Barnabas* xii. 1. *above*); boys of three months old shall speak rationally (*Sibylline Oracles, Testament of the Lord, 4 Esdras*); a child in its mother's womb shall proclaim his way (cf. *Luke* i.); a young man shall be as an old man. And then cometh the expected one, whose path will be perceived by no man. Then will the earth rejoice, because it hath received the glory of heaven. That which was above shall be below. And of thy seed shall grow up a royal root (*or* the root of a king); and he (it) shall increase and destroy the power of the Evil one, but he himself shall be a saviour of the heathen, and the rest of them that are weary, and a cloud which shadeth the whole world from the heat (*Isa.* xxxii. 2), for otherwise that which is disordered could not be put in order, if he came not: otherwise that which is below could not be joined to that which is above.

8. Now at his coming will images of brass (*al.* calves of brass) and stone and all graven things utter their voice for three days long. And they announce to the wise men and let them know what will befall (*or* is befalling) on earth, and by the star will they know the way to him, when they see him upon earth whom the angels see not above. Then will the Almighty be found in a body on the earth, and encompassed by the arms of a mortal, and he reneweth the state of man and quickeneth (Adam and) Eve that died through the fruit of the tree. Then will the deceit of the godless one be overcome, and all idols fall on their faces, for they will be put to shame by one who is adorned with

honour, because they made lying inventions. Thenceforth will they not have power to rule or to give prophecies, for their honour will be taken from them, and they will remain without glory. For he (the child) that is come taketh the power and might from them and recompenseth to Abraham the truth (righteousness) which he promised him. Then he (*or* For this child) roundeth off all that is sharp, and every rough thing maketh he smooth, and he casteth all unrighteousness into the depths of the sea: and he doeth wonders in heaven and on the earth. And he will be wounded in the midst of the house of the beloved (*or* the beloved house: *evidently* "the house of his friends," Zechariah xiii. 6). But when he is wounded, then also the saving and the end of all corruption draweth near. For they that have wounded him shall themselves receive a wound which shall not be healed for them for ever. But the wounded one shall all creatures worship, and upon him shall many hope, and everywhere, and among all the Gentiles, shall he be known. But they that have known his name shall not be put to shame. And his own might and his years shall not fail for ever.

The beginning of this section contains an undoubted reference to a document of uncertain date—the *Wonders in Persia* or *The Dispute at the Court of the Sassanidæ*, of which the sage Aphroditianus is the hero. In it the story is told at great length of the miracles, of speaking idols in particular, which happened in Persia at the time of our Lord's birth. This story may be a good deal older than the document in which it is imbedded. The whole text is best edited by Bratke in *Texte und Untersuchungen* (1899): also by Wirth, *Aus Orientalischen Chroniken*.

I will note, in order to dismiss it, a passage of Epiphanius (*Hær.* xxx. 16), which has been supposed to refer to the *Ladder of Jacob*. Epiphanius says that the Ebionites made use of a book called the *Ascents of Jacobus* (*ἀναβαθμοὶ Ἰακώβου*) which represented him as inveighing against the Temple and its sacrifices. Nothing can be more obvious than that this refers to

James the brother of the Lord and not to Jacob : Light-foot (*Galatians*, 276, 330, 367 etc.) was, I doubt not, right in the main in his view that we have some relics of the book in the Clementine *Recognitions* (Book I.) and (perhaps) in the tale of Hegesippus about James's death.

THE LOST TRIBES

The first document that tells us anything of the legend that the ten (or nine and a half) tribes were dwelling together as a community in a remote and unknown land is the passage in 4 *Esdra*s xiii. 39 sq. The conception is also found in the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, lxxvii., lxxviii. It need not be traced out in full here; but the subject is relevant to the present work, inasmuch as there evidently was a writing (presumably Jewish) which described the conditions under which the lost tribes lived.

We find vestiges of it in various places. First come two passages of the Christian poet Commodian, who, whether he lived in the late third century, as was commonly thought, or later, was acquainted with a good many interesting apocryphal writings.

The first section of the second book of his *Instructions* is entitled, "Of the hidden holy people of Almighty Christ the living God." To translate his terrible Latin literally is beyond me, but something like the sense can be given. The first book of the *Instructions* ends by telling how Antichrist comes and performs wonders. The Jews, searching the Scriptures, cry aloud to the Most High that they have been deceived by Antichrist. Book II. begins : "The last holy hidden people, of whom we know not where they dwell, are desired." It then speaks, very obscurely, of the two and a half tribes who are separated from the nine and a half, and returns to its proper subject in line 21 : "But then the things told in the law hasten to be fulfilled : Almighty Christ comes down to His elect, who have been hidden from us so long and grown to so many thousands. That is the true heavenly people. The son dies not before