

through the ages -- through the days of Abraham, Moses, and the ^{Ten} Commandments spoken in thunder and lightning on smoking Sinai in the voice of Jehovah. To know and understand the Child, one must know the parent!"

CHAPTER II

The Wisdom of the Stars

The year 1883

It has been written that man's destiny - from birth to death, and thereafter - had been traced in words of fire in the record of the stars by the Hand of the Creator. What was is and will be has been set in the mind of man - to ^{be} read in the record of the stars. For man's mind had been set also by the Hand of the Creator. The mind in which the soul resides is part of the all prevailing Mind which is the Creator.

To know what's on Earth, put there where it is, in the exact spot in the orbit of the Sun - guide and mentor set by the Hand of God - is the stars' business: The wisdom of the stars.

Dr. Sheraton who took great pains to follow in detail the pattern of life of Rabbi Nechemiah, whom he had ^{come} to see in another world after a long and painful journey, conceived the lines of the story of Kinships in his own mind as related to the first-born son of his host, and the life the Rabbi himself led. The story of the wisdom of the stars as the followers of Nechemiah in his little community saw it, and what he saw himself while he lived with them! The story he was anxious to impart to his ^{later} son, during his polio days. A strange story he wished to bequeath to

his son - the strange Kinships between Heaven and Earth. Even stranger was the belief of the little town of Zabel that their rabbi could command the heavens and the stars therein.

Out of the multitude of stars in the great heavens two looked down from their great distance on the little town of Zabel on the morning of the eve of the Ninth day of the month of Ab. A son, first-born, was to come to Rabbi Nechemiah on that day. A happy event on this day of mourning for a lost glory - the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem! Was it a sign from heaven?

Big Star nudged his younger brother, Little Star: "A peculiar people these Israelites, Hebrews, or Jews..."

"Why not call them Abrahamites and be done with it," Little Star asked, "since their father was Abraham?"

"Very clever, little brother, but dost thou not know that Abraham was the father of another people also?"

"Well, all right, but what's so peculiar about these Israelites, or Hebrews, or whatever you call them?"

"Hardly a spot on Earth where you won't find a member of that little race."

"Well," Little Star chuckled a star's chuckle of forked lightning and reverberating thunder, "well, didn't He say to Isaac something about his seed being as dust?"

"Well said, Little Star," Big Star said, "but also God said to Abraham: 'Look now toward the heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to count them.' And He said unto him, 'So shall thy seed be.'"

"Thou seest too much with thy starry eyes," Little Star rebuked his older brother, "both predictions mean the same thing - numbers!"

"No, there is another meaning and a deeper one: They'll reach the stars in spirit, and grovel in the dust in their physical nature! The holy man in that little town is a symbol. He is lofty in spirit, reaching into

the heavens, yet how lowly his earthly body, how few his wants! Days and nights he contemplated the ways of the Lord and how best to serve Him, yet hardly a morsel of food passes his mouth for days on end.

"How little understanding is yours, my little brother, of that sacrificial spirit of his! Surely you were of age to remember Rabbi Akiba, who lived nigh ~~to~~ two thousand years ago. When the Roman Executioner was tearing his flesh with combs of iron this Rabbi said to his weeping disciples, 'All my days I have longed for this hour. I have loved God with all my heart, and I have loved Him with all my might; now that I can love Him with my whole life, complete happiness is mine.'"

~~The morning of the day of the Fast of Ab~~ They heard the holy man's murmured prayer: "Oh, my God, Thou hast given me over to starvation and penury; into the depths of darkness Thou hast plunged me, and Thy might and strength hast Thou taught me. But even if they burn me with fire, only the more will I love Thee and rejoice in Thee."

"Now don't go and tie yourself to the talith (praying shawl) fringes of this one in little Zabel," Little Star spoke up, "there are many of them dotted across the length and breadth of the land. And they can be a mighty tiresome lot. All of them. They see a sign and symbol in every dot and tittle in the Bible....."

"You are as sharp-tongued and malicious as the enemies of Israel," Big Star rebuffed him. "But maybe you havn't lived long enough to let your thought and judgment mellow, settle and run crystal-clear like the water freshets. I have lived long enough to let false pride and prejudice pass me by, and not to rule me. The truth is that the Lord of Creation had chosen little Israel to stand before Him in the thunder and smoke and lightning at Mount Sinai. In all Creation, and in all Time He had never made another such appearance. And never spoke to another people face to face. To no other people had he given the Ten Commandments in

the Sacred Tongue: the language of religion of all time. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the Moral Law is written on the Tablets of Eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for every cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid at last, . . . not always by the chief offenders, but paid by someone. Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long-lived , but doomsday comes at last to them. "

CHAPTER III

Nechemiah

"Nechemiah!"

It was his wife calling. It startled him. His mind was troubled. She has become the taskmaster of his emotions and thoughts. He must think of her, for he loved her well in his own way; but they weren't pleasant thoughts, for she was suffering. One doesn't think of one apart from you if one is a part of you, as his wife, or the Almighty. The thinking wells up in you from your inner being as if it were part and parcel of your own very self. But his wife now has pain and suffering which he has not, therefore that part of her is not a part of him, and he has to think of her as a part separate from him. And that is painful and a burden.

"Nechemiah," he heard his name again. There was a light tremor in her voice. It was painful, painful, but he went into her bedroom.

There was faint daylight, semitranslucence of early dawn, as if a curtain were drawn over his eyes. Were his eyes blurry and veiled with tears! He had never shown weakness before great audiences whom he