

Maria Valtorta



THE GOSPEL  
AS REVEALED  
TO ME

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7 parts

*The birth and Hidden Life of Mary and Jesus*  
chapters 1-43

*The first year of the Public Life of Jesus*  
chapters 44-140

*The second year of the Public Life of Jesus*  
chapters 141-312

*The third year of the Public Life of Jesus*  
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*Preparation for the Passion of Jesus*  
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*Farewell to the Work*, chapter 652

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Maria Valtorta

THE GOSPEL  
AS REVEALED  
TO ME

VOLUME SIX  
Chapters 364-432

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# The third year of public Life of Jesus.

## **364. In the Temple. Universal prayer and the parable of the true son and of the illegitimate sons.**

1<sup>st</sup> January 1946, 6. 35 a. m.

<sup>1</sup> Jesus says:

364. 1

«Get up, Mary. Let us sanctify the day with a page of the Gospel. Because My Word is sanctification. See, Mary. Because to see the days of Christ on the earth is sanctification. Write, Mary. Because to write about Christ is sanctification, because to repeat what Jesus says is sanctification, because to preach Jesus is sanctification, because to teach our brothers is sanctification. A great reward will be given to you for that charity. »

<sup>2</sup>Jesus has left Ramah (vision of 17<sup>th</sup> December 1945) and is already in sight of Jerusalem. He is proceeding, as He did last year\*, singing the prescribed psalms. Many of the people on the crowded road turn around to look at the apostolic group passing by. Some greet them reverently; some look only stealthily at them, smiling with respect, and they are mainly women; some watch them only; some smile ironically and contemptuously; lastly, some pass by haughtily and with evident ill-will. Jesus is walking calmly in His best clothes. Like everybody else He has changed in order to enter the Holy City decently, and I would say, elegantly dressed.

364. 2

Marjiam also is up to the situation in his new garments this year and he is walking beside Jesus, singing at the top of his voice, which, in actual fact, is somewhat harsh, as it is not yet manly. But his imperfect tone is lost in the full chorus of his companions' voices and it emerges as clear as silvery trilling only in the top notes, which he still sings in a steady boy's voice. And he is happy...

\* last year, in 195. 4.

During a pause in singing, while the Damascus Gate is already in sight - that is where they are entering to go straight to the Temple - they stop to let an impressive caravan pass, as it takes up the whole road obstructing the traffic. While wise people stop at the roadside, Marjiam asks: «My Lord, will You tell me another beautiful parable for Your son who is so far away? I would like to add it to those I have already written, because I am sure that at Bethany we shall meet his messengers and have his news. And I am dying to give him joy, which I promised him and which both his heart and mine desire... »

«Yes, My son. I will certainly tell you one. »

«One that will really comfort him, that will make him understand that he is still Your beloved... »

«I will do that. And I will rejoice, too, because it will be the truth. »

«When will You tell it, Lord? »

«Very soon. We will go straight to the Temple, as is our duty, and I will speak there before they prevent Me from doing so. »

«And will You speak for him? »

«Yes, son. »

«Thank You, Lord! It must be so painful to be separated thus... » says Marjiam, whose dark eyes begin to shine with tears.

<sup>364. 3</sup> Jesus lays a hand on his head <sup>3</sup>and He turns around to beckon to the Twelve to approach Him and set out again. The Twelve, in fact, had stopped to listen to some people, I do not know whether they believe in the Master or are anxious to know Him, and they had stopped for the same reason that had compelled Jesus and His apostles to stop on the roadside.

«We are coming, Master. We were listening to those people among whom there are some proselytes who have come from far, and they were asking us where they could meet You» says Peter moving towards Him.

«Why do they want to meet Me? »

And Peter, now beside Jesus Who has set out again, says: «They want to hear You speak and to be cured from some diseases. See that tilted cart, behind them? There are some proselytes from the Diaspora in it, who have come by sea or from distant countries, urged to make this pilgrimage by their faith in You, besides their respect for the Law. Some are from Ephesus, some from Perga,

some from Iconium and there is a poor fellow from Philadelphia, whom they, being mostly rich merchants, have received in their cart out of pity, hoping thus to gain the Lord's favour. »

«Marjiam, go and tell them to follow Me to the Temple. And they will have both health for their souls through My word and health to their bodies, if they can have faith. »

The boy goes away quickly. But the Twelve raise a chorus of disapproval because of the «imprudence» of Jesus, Who wants to make Himself conspicuous in the Temple...

«We are going there specially to show them that I am not afraid. To prove to them that no threat can make Me infringe the precept. Have you not understood their trick yet? All their threats, all their apparently friendly advice aim only at making Me commit sin, so that they may have a real charge against Me. Do not be cowardly. Have faith. My hour has not come. »

«But why do You not go and reassure Your Mother first? She is waiting for You... » says Judas Iscariot.

«No. I am going to the Temple first, which, until the moment prearranged by the Eternal Father for the new era, is the House of God. My Mother will suffer less waiting for Me than She would, knowing that I am preaching in the Temple. And I thus honour My Father and Mother, by devoting my very first hour in Jerusalem to the former, and by granting tranquility to the latter. Let us go and be not afraid. Those who are afraid may go to Gethsemane and brood over their fear among the women. »

The apostles, reprimanded by this last remark, no longer speak. They line up, in threes except in the front line, where Jesus is, where they are four, and when Marjiam arrives they are five, and in fact Thaddeus and the Zealot place themselves behind Jesus, leaving Him in the middle between Peter and Marjiam.

<sup>364. 4</sup>At the Damascus Gate they see Manaen. «Lord, I thought it was better for me to come and remove every doubt about the situation. I can assure You that there is no danger for You, except the ill-will of the Pharisees and scribes. You can go without any fear. »

«I knew, Manaen. But I am grateful to you. Come to the Temple with Me. If it is ho burden to you... »

«Burden? I would defy the whole world on Your behalf! I would do anything! »

The Iscariot mumbles something.

Manaen turns around resentfully. He says in a firm voice: «No, man, those are not just “words”. I ask the Master to prove my sincerity. »

«There is no need, Manaen. Let us go. »

They proceed among the obstructing crowds and when they arrive at the house of some friends, they get rid of their sacks, which James, John and Andrew leave on behalf of everybody in a long dark hall, and then join their companions.

<sup>364. 5</sup> <sup>5</sup>They enter the enclosure of the Temple passing through the Antonia. The Roman soldiers are watching, but they do not move. They talk in low voices among themselves. Jesus looks to see whether there is anyone He knows. But He does not see Quintillian or Alexander, the soldier.

They are now in the Temple, in the not very sacred swarm of the first yards, where are merchants and money-changers. Jesus looks and quivers with indignation. He turns pale and walks so stately that He seems to be taller in stature.

The Iscariot tempts Him: «Why do You not repeat the holy gesture\*? See? They have forgotten... and there is desecration once again in the House of God.. Do You not grieve at that? Are You not rising against them? » Judas' dark handsome face, which is ironical and false notwithstanding every effort he makes to avoid it appearing so, is even vulpine, as he says those words, bending a little, as if he were paying respectful homage, looking Him up and down.

«It is not the hour. But all that will be purified. *And forever! ...* » says Jesus resolutely.

Judas smiles a little and comments: «The “forever” of men!! It's very precarious, Master! You can see!... »

Jesus does not reply to him, intent as He is on greeting from afar Joseph of Arimathea, who is passing by wrapped in pompous robes, followed by other people.

They say the ritual prayers and then go back to the Court of the Gentiles, under the porches of which many people have gathered.

<sup>364. 6</sup> <sup>6</sup>The proselytes, previously met in the street, have followed

\* **gesture**, the one in 53. 4.

Jesus all the time. They have taken the sick people with them and have now laid them in the shade of the porches, near Jesus. Their women, who have been waiting for them here, now move slowly closer. They are all veiled. But one is already sitting, probably because she is ill, and her companions take her near the other sick people. More people crowd around Jesus. I can see that there is astonishment and confusion among the groups of rabbis and priests because of the open arrival and preaching of Jesus.

«Peace be with you, with each of you listening to Me! Holy Passover brings the faithful children back to the House of the Father. This blessed Passover of ours is like a mother who is thoughtful of the welfare of her children and calls them at the top of her voice, that they may come from everywhere leaving all matters pending for a greater matter. The only great and important one: to honour the Lord and Father. From that we understand that we are brothers, and the command and care to love our neighbour as ourselves derive also from that, through kind witness. Have we never met before? Did we not know each other? We did not. But if we are here, because we are the children of One Father Who wants us in His House for the Passover Banquet, then, we feel, if not with our material senses, but certainly with our superior part, that we are all equal, all brothers, who have come from One only, and thus we love one another, as if we had been brought up together. And our union of love is an anticipation of the other more perfect one that we will enjoy in the Kingdom of Heaven, under the eyes of God, all embraced by His Love: I Son of God and of Man, with you men, sons of God; I, the First-born, with you, brothers beloved beyond all human measure, to the extent that I became the Lamb for the sins of men.

But while we are enjoying our brotherly union in the House of the Father, let us think of our brothers who are far-away, but still our brothers: in the Lord or through their origin. Let them be in our hearts. Let us take our absent brothers in our hearts to the holy altar. Let us pray for them, gathering their remote voices in our spirits, together with their yearning to be here. And as we collect the conscious longing of remote Israelites, let us collect also the yearning of souls belonging to men, who are not aware of having a soul and of being the children of One Father only. *All the souls in the world cry to the Most High from the prisons of*

*their bodies.* In dark prisons they moan towards the Light. Let us have mercy on them, since we are in the light of the true Faith.

364.7 ¶Let us pray: Our Father, Who are in Heaven, may Your Name be held holy by all mankind! To know it is to set out towards holiness. Let Gentiles and heathens become aware of Your existence, o Holy Father, and let them come to You, Father, like the three wise men in days gone by but not inert, because nothing pertaining to the coming of the Redemption of the world is inert, let them come to You guided by the Star of Jacob, by the Morning Star, by the King and Redeemer of the stock of David, by Your Anointed Son, Who has already been offered and consecrated to be the Victim for the sins of the world.

Let Your Kingdom come to every place on the earth where You are known and loved, and where You are not yet known. And above all let it come to the three times sinners, who know You but do not love You in Your works and manifestations of Light, and endeavour to reject and suffocate the Light that came to the world, because they are souls of darkness, who prefer the works of darkness and they do not know that to suffocate the Light of the world is to offend You, because You are the Most Holy Light and the Father of all lights, beginning from the One that became Flesh and Word to bring Your Light to all men of goodwill.

May Your Will, Most Holy Father, be done by every heart in the world, that is, may every heart be saved, and let none be left without the fruit of the Sacrifice of the Great Victim, because that is Your Will: that man be saved and may enjoy You, Holy Father, after the forgiveness which is about to be granted.

Give us Your help, o Lord, all Your help. And give it to those who are awaiting it, to those who do not know that they are awaiting it, give it to sinners with repentance that saves, give it to heathens with the force of your rousing call, give it to unhappy people, to prisoners, to exiles, to those whose bodies or spirits are diseased, give it to everybody, as You are Everything, and the time of Mercy has come.

Forgive, o Good Father, the sins of Your children. Forgive the sins of Your people, which are the most serious, the sins of those who want to persist in error, whilst Your predilection and love gave Light just to this people. And forgive those who are brutalised by corrupt paganism that teaches vice, and are drowned in

the idolatry of such dull mephitic heathenism, whereas there are valuable souls among them, whom You love having created them. We forgive, I am the first to forgive, so that You may forgive, and we implore Your protection over the weakness of men, that You may free Your creatures from the Principle of Evil, from whom all crimes, idolatries, sins, temptations and errors come. Free them, o Lord, from the dreadful Prince, so that they may come to Your eternal Light. »

8The crowd have followed this solemn prayer with great attention. Famous rabbis have also approached the group and among them there is Gamaliel, holding his bearded chin thoughtfully... A group of women has also come close to them, they are wearing mantles with a kind of hood that covers their faces. And the rabbis have moved away haughtily... Many faithful disciples have hastened there having heard that the Master had arrived; among them there are Hermas, Stephen, John the priest, then Nicodemus and Joseph, the inseparable two, and many friends of theirs, whom I think I have seen previously. 364. 8

In the pause after the prayer of the Lord, Who becomes engrossed in thought, looking seriously austere, Joseph of Arimathea is heard saying: «Well, Gamaliel? Do you still not think that this is the word of the Lord? »

«Joseph, I was told: “These stones will shake at the sound of My words” » replies Gamaliel.

Stephen cries rashly: «Work the miracle, o Lord! Give the order, and they will tumble down! It would be a great gift, if the building collapsed and the walls of Your Faith rose in their hearts! Do that for my master! »

«Blasphemer! » shout an angry group of rabbis with some of their pupils.

«No» shouts in turn Gamaliel. «My disciple has spoken an inspired word. But we cannot accept it because the Angel of God has not yet cleansed\* us of our past with the live coal taken from the Altar of God... And perhaps, even if the cry of His voice» and he points at Jesus «should unhinge these doors, we would not yet believe... » He lifts the hem of his wide snow-white mantle and pulls it over his head, almost covering his face, and goes away.

\* **cleansed**, as in: *Isaiah 6, 6-7*.



Jesus watches him go... <sup>9</sup>He then resumes speaking and replies to some people who are grumbling among themselves and seem scandalized and to make their scandal more obvious, they heap insults on Judas of Kerioth, who puts up with them without reacting, but shrugs his shoulders with dissatisfied countenance.

Jesus says:

«I solemnly tell you that those who seem to be illegitimate are instead true sons, and those who are true sons become illegitimate. Listen to this parable.

Once there was a man who had to leave home for a long time because of some business engagements, when his sons were still very young. From the place where he was, he used to write letters to the older sons to keep them in due respect for their father, who was far away, and to remind them of his teaching. The last son, who was born after the father had left, was still at nurse with a woman who lived far from there, in the country of the man's wife, who was not of his race. The wife died when the son was still a baby and away from home. His brothers said: "Let us leave him where he is, with our mother's relatives. Perhaps our father will forget about him and we will gain by it, as there will be one less to divide the property with, when our father dies". And they did so. The child was thus brought up by his mother's relatives, he was unaware of his father's teaching, he did not even know that he had a father and brothers and, what is worse, he bitterly considered: "They have all disowned me as if I were illegitimate", and he even thought that he was, as he was so deeply hurt at being rejected by his father. "

It so happened that when he grew up and found a situation - because, embittered as he was by the above considerations, he had conceived a strong aversion also for the family of his mother, whom he deemed guilty of adultery - he went to the town where his father was. And without knowing who he was, he approached him and had the opportunity to hear him speak. His father was a wise man. As he did not receive any satisfaction from his remote sons - who by now behaved as it pleased them and were on conventional terms with their remote father, purely to remind him that they were, "his" sons and therefore he should bear that in mind in his will - the old man devoted himself to giving good

advice to the young people he approached in the land where he was. The young son was attracted by such righteousness, which was so fatherly for many young men and he not only approached him but he availed himself of every word of the old man, thus soothing his embittered spirit. The man was taken ill and had to decide to go back to his fatherland. And the young man said to him, “Sir, you are the only person who has spoken to me with justice, elevating my spirit. Allow me to follow you as your servant. I do not want to relapse into my previous evil state”. “Come with me. You will take the place of a son, of whom I have never been able to get news”. And they went back to the paternal house together.

Neither the father, nor the brothers, nor the young man himself realized that the Lord had once again gathered together those of the same blood under one roof. But the father had to shed many tears because of the sons known to him, because he found that they had forgotten his teaching, had become greedy and hard-hearted, without faith in God, but with many idolatries in their hearts: pride, avarice and lust were their gods and they would not listen to anything which was not human profit. The stranger, instead, approached the Lord more and more, and he became just, kind, loving and obedient. His brothers hated him, because their father loved him, although he was a stranger. But he forgave them and loved them, because he had understood that peace is to be found in love.

One day the father, who was disgusted with the behaviour of his sons, said: “You have taken no interest in your mother’s relatives, and not even in your brother. You remind me of the behaviour\* of Jacob’s sons towards their brother Joseph. I want to go to that country to find out about him. I may find him and be comforted by him”. And he took leave both of the sons known to him and of the young stranger, whom he gave a sum of money that he might go back to the place from which he had come and start a little business there.

When he arrived in the country of his dead wife, her relatives told him that the forsaken son had changed his original name Moses into Manasseh\*\*, because by his birth he had really made

\* **behaviour**, narrated in: *Genesis 37, 3-28*.

\*\* **Manasseh**, whose meaning, explained immediately after, is in: *Genesis 41, 51*.

his father forget that he was a just man, as he had abandoned his child.

“Do not do me wrong! I was told that all traces of the boy had been lost, and I did not even hope to find any of you. But tell me. What is he like? Has he grown into a strong man? Is he like his mother who died in giving birth to him? Is he kind? Does he love me? ”

“He is strong, indeed, and he is as handsome as his mother was beautiful, but his eyes are dark. And on his side he has the same birthmark as his mother. And he has a slight lisp, like you. He was grown up when he left here, exacerbated by his fate, as he doubted his mother’s modesty and he bore you ill-will. He would have been kind if he had had no ill-will in his soul. He went across mountains and rivers as far as Trapetius to... ”

“Did you say Trapetius? In Synopy? Tell me! I was there and I met a young man with a slight lisp, he was alone and sad, and he was so kind although he appeared to be rather harsh. Was it him? Tell me! ”

“Perhaps it was. Look for him. On his right hand side he has a dark birthmark in relief, as your wife had”.

The man departed at once, hoping to find the stranger in his house. But he had left to go back to the colony of Synopy. And the man followed him... He found him. He made him go to his house to examine his side. He identified him. He fell on his knees praising God Who had restored his son to him, a son who was much better than the others who were becoming more and more brutish, whereas this one had become more and more holy during the months which had intervened. And he said to his good son: “You will have the share of your brothers because, without being loved by anyone, you have become more just than they”.

Was it not fair? It was. I solemnly tell you that those are true sons of God who, although rejected by the world, despised, hated, insulted, forsaken as if they were illegitimate children, considered a disgrace and calamity, know how to surpass the sons who grew up at home but rebelled against its laws. The fact that one comes from Israel does not entitle one to enter Heaven, neither is that destiny guaranteed by the fact that one is a Pharisee, a scribe or a doctor. It is necessary to have goodwill and follow the Doctrine of love generously, becoming new in it and children

of God in spirit and truth through it.

You, who are listening to Me, must bear in mind that many who feel safe in Israel will be supplanted by those whom they consider publicans, prostitutes, Gentiles, pagans and galley-slaves. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who can put new vigour and faith into their lives by accepting Truth and Love. »

<sup>10</sup>Jesus turns around and goes towards the group of sick pros- 364. 10  
elytes. «Can you believe what I said? » He asks in a loud voice.

«Yes, Lord! » they reply in chorus.

«Do you want to accept Truth and Love? »

«Yes, Lord. »

«If I gave you nothing but that, would you be satisfied? »

«Lord, You know what we need most. Give us Your peace and eternal Life above all. »

«Stand up and go and praise the Lord! You are all cured in the holy Name of God. »

And He quickly turns His steps towards the nearest gate, mingling in the crowds who have filled up Jerusalem, before the excitement and amazement in the Court of Pagans becomes a delirious search for Him.

The bewildered apostles lose sight of Him. Only Marjiam, who never let go the hem of His mantle, is running happily beside Him and says: «Thank You so much, Master! Thanks, on behalf of John! I wrote everything while You were speaking. I have only to add the miracle. Oh! It's wonderful! Just for him! It will make him so happy!... »

**365. The trapping of the Iscariot of the innocence  
of Marjiam. A new disciple, a nursed brother of Jesus.  
In Bethany, in the home of the sick Lazarus.**

3<sup>rd</sup> January 1946.

<sup>1</sup> Jesus enters the quiet green Garden of Gethsemane. 365. 1

Marjiam is still with Him and he laughs thinking of how anxiously Peter must be rushing to join them. He says: «Oh! Master! I wonder how he must be grumbling! And if You had gone on to Bethany instead of stopping here, he would be in a desolate state. »

Jesus also smiles looking at the youth and He replies: «Yes. He will overwhelm Me with his moaning. But it will teach him to be more careful the next time. While I was speaking, he was not paying attention, but talking to other people... »

«There were many asking him questions, Lord» says Marjiam; who no longer laughs, but tries to justify Peter.

«One can make a gesture with good grace that one will reply later, when the Word of the Lord has finished speaking. <sup>2</sup>Remember that, for your future life, when you will be a priest. You must exact the greatest respect while you teach and in the place where you teach. »

«But then, Lord, it will be poor Marjiam who will be speaking... »

«It does not matter. It is always God Who speaks through the lips of His servants, in the hours of their ministry. And as such He is to be listened to in silence and with respect. »

Marjiam pulls a wry face, which is expressive of his internal feeling.

Jesus notices it and says: «Are you not convinced? Why such an expression? Speak, son, without any fear. »

«My Lord, I was just wondering whether God is on the lips and in the hearts of His priests at present, and I was terrorised at the thought that future priests may be like them... And I concluded saying that... many priests make the Lord cut a poor figure... I have certainly committed a sin... But they are so nasty and greedy, so arid... that... »

«Do not judge. But remember your sensation of disgust. Bear it in mind in the future. And with all your strength avoid being like those who disgust you and ensure that those under your direction are not like them either. Make the evil you see be useful for a good purpose. Every action and piece of knowledge must be changed into good through righteous judgement and will. »

«Oh! Lord! Before we go into the house, which is already in sight, please reply to another question! You do not deny that priests at present are faulty. You tell me not to judge. But You judge. And You can do so. And You judge with justice. Now listen, Lord, to my question. When priests of the present speak of God and of religion, we know what the majority of them are like, but I am referring to the worst among them, are we to listen to

them as being truthful? »

«Yes, My son, always. Out of respect for their mission. When they perform actions pertaining to their ministry, they are no longer Annas, a man, or Sadoc, a man, and so forth. They are “the priest”. Always separate poor humanity from ministry. »

«But if they act even so badly... »

«God will provide. <sup>365. 3</sup>And then!... Listen, Marjiam! There is no man entirely good or entirely wicked. And no one is so entirely good as to be entitled to judge his brothers as being completely wicked. We must bear in mind our own faults, and set against them the good qualities of those we want to judge, we shall then have the right measure for a charitable judgement. I have not yet found a completely wicked man. »

«Not even Doras, Lord? »

«Not even him, because he is an honest husband and a loving father. »

«Not even Doras’ father? »

«He, too, was an honest husband and a loving father. »

«But he was nothing but that! »

«He was nothing but that. But in that respect he was not wicked. So he was not totally wicked. »

«Is Judas not wicked either? »

«No. »

«But he is not good. »

«He is not totally good as he is not totally wicked. Are you not convinced of what I am saying? »

«I am convinced that You are totally good and that You are completely devoid of wickedness. Yes, I am persuaded that You are so. So much so, that You never accuse anyone... »

«Oh! My dear son! If I uttered the first syllable of a word of accusation, you would all assail the person accused, like wild beasts!... I prevent you from doing so, so that you may not get stained with the sin of rash judgement. Try to understand Me, Marjiam. It is not the question that I do not see evil, where there is evil, or that I do not see the mixture of good and evil in some people. Neither it is the question that I do not understand whether a soul rises above or falls below the level to which I led it. It has nothing to do with all that, son. But it is a matter of prudence to avoid lack of charity in you. And I will always do so. Also in fu-

ture, when I shall have to declare My opinion on a person. Do you not know, son, that at times a word of praise and of encouragement is of more avail than many reproaches? Do you not know that out of one hundred very bad cases, considered as relatively good, at least half become really good, because, after being helped by My word, they are assisted also by very kind people, who would otherwise shun men who are pointed out as being very wicked? *Souls are to be supported, not depressed.* But if I were not the first to support them and cover up their faults, pressing you to be kind to them and assist them, you would never devote yourselves to them with active clemency. Remember that, Marjiam... »

«Yes, Lord... (a deep sigh). I will remember that... (another deep sigh)... But it is so difficult in the face of certain evidence... »

365. 4     <sup>4</sup>Jesus stares at him. But He can only see the upper part of the forehead of Marjiam, who has lowered his face.

«Marjiam, look up. Look at Me. And tell Me: which evidence is it difficult to ignore? »

Marjiam gets mixed up... His bronzed face blushes... He replies: «Well... there are many, Lord... »

Jesus insists: «Why did you mention Judas? Because he is “evidence”. Perhaps the one which is more difficult for you to overcome... What has Judas done to you? In what did he scandalise you? » and Jesus lays His hand on the shoulder of the youth, who has blushed so much that he has become deep purple.

Marjiam looks at Him with tears shining in his eyes, he then frees himself and runs away shouting: «Judas is a desecrator!... But I cannot tell... Respect me, Lord!... » and he hides in the wood, called in vain by Jesus, Who makes a gesture of disheartened grief.

365. 5     <sup>5</sup>But His voice has drawn the attention of the people in the house at Gethsemane. And Jonah appears at the kitchen door with Jesus’ Mother, followed by the women disciples: Mary of Clopas, Mary Salome and Porphirea. When they see Jesus they set out to meet Him.

«Peace be with you all! Here I am, Mother! »

«All alone? Why? »

«I came ahead of the others. I left them at the Temple... But I was with Marjiam... »

«And where is my son now? I don't see him» asks Porphirea who looks rather upset.

«He went up there... But he will be here shortly. Have you enough food for everybody? The others will soon be here. »

«No, Lord, we have not. You said that You were going to Bethany... »

«Of course... But later I thought that it was better to come here. Go quickly to get what is necessary and come back at once. I will stay here with My Mother. »

The women disciples obey at once without any objection.

Jesus remains alone with Mary and they walk slowly under <sup>365 6</sup> the thick tree branches, through which thin needle-like sunbeams filter delineating tiny golden circles on the green grass.

«I am going to Bethany after our meal, with Simon. »

«Simon of Jonah? »

«No, Simon Zealot. And I am taking Marjiam with Me... » Jesus becomes silent and pensive.

Mary notices and asks: «Has Marjiam displeased You? »

«No, Mother. On the contrary! What makes You think so? »

«Why are You pensive?... Why were You calling him so insistently? And why did he leave You? Why did he run away from You as if he were ashamed? He did not even come to greet his mother and Me! »

«The boy ran away because of a question of Mine».

«Oh!... » Mary is deeply astonished. She is silent for a short while, then She whispers, as if She were talking to Herself: «The couple in the Earthly Paradise ran away after their sin, when they heard the voice of God... But we must understand the boy, Son. He is growing into a man... and perhaps... Satan bites every man, Son» says Mary in a pitiful imploring voice...

Jesus looks at Her and says: «How motherly You are! You are the "Mother"! But do not think that the boy has sinned. On the contrary, I assure You that he is suffering because he has been hurt by a striking disclosure. He is pure and very good... I will take him with Me today, so that he may realize, without being told, that I understand him. Words would be of no use, and in any case I would not be able to find any which could justify the desecration of innocence. » Jesus utters the last words in a severe voice.



«Oh! Son! Is it as bad as that? I will not ask You any name. But if any of us was able to upset the boy, it could only be one... What a demon! »

365.7 <sup>7</sup>«Let us go and look for Marjiam, Mother. He will not run away from You. »

They go and find him behind a hawthorn bush.

«Were you gathering flowers for Me, My dear son? » asks Mary going towards him and embracing him...

«No, but I was longing for You» says Marjiam with his face still wet with tears.

«And I have come. Let us go now, because today you are going to Bethany with My Jesus! And you must be dressed properly. »

Marjiam's face shines with joy, as he has already overcome his embarrassment, and he says: «Just He and I? »

«And Simon Zealot. »

Marjiam, who is still a boy, leaps for joy and runs out of his hiding place and falls on Jesus' chest. He is excited.

But Jesus smiles and encourages him saying: «Go and see whether your father has arrived. » And while Marjiam runs away, Jesus remarks: «He is still a child, although so sensible in thought. It is a real crime to upset his heart. But I will take the necessary action» and He walks towards the house with Mary.

Before they arrive there they see Marjiam running back towards them. «Master... Mother... There are some people... some of those who were in the Temple... The proselytes... There is a woman... A woman who wants to see You, Mother... She says that she met You in Bethlehem... Her name is Naomi. »

«I met so many women, then! But let us go... »

365.8 <sup>8</sup>They arrive at the little opening where the house is. A group of people are waiting for Jesus and as soon as they see Him they prostrate themselves. But a woman stands up at once and runs towards Mary throwing herself at Her feet and calling Her by Her name.

«Who are you? I do not remember you. Stand up. »

The woman stands up and is about to speak when the apostles arrive panting.

«Lord, why did You do that? We have been running about Jerusalem like crazy people. We thought that You had gone to Johanna's or to Annaleah's... Why did You not remain with us? »

they ask rather confusedly.

«Since we are now all together, there is no sense in explaining why. Let this woman speak in peace. »

They all gather around her to listen to her.

«You do not remember me, o Mary of Bethlehem. But for thirty-one years I have remembered Your name and Your face as the symbols of mercy. I had come from far, too, from Perga, because of the Edict. And I was pregnant. But I was hoping to get back home in time. My husband was taken ill on the way and he languished and died in Bethlehem. I gave birth to my child twenty days before he died. And my crying pierced the sky and desiccated my breast and turned my milk into poison. And both my son and I became covered with blisters... And we were thrown into a cavern and left there to die... Well... You were the only one who came cautiously, now and again, for a full month, and You brought us food and treated our sores, weeping with me and suckling my child, who owes his life to You... You risked being stoned because they called me the “leper woman”... Oh! My sweet star! I have not forgotten that. I went away when I was cured. And at Ephesus I heard of the slaughter. I looked for You for such a long time. I could not believe that You had been killed with Your Son during that dreadful night. But I never found You. Last summer a man from Ephesus heard Your Son, he found out who He was, he followed Him for some time and was with Him and with other people at the Tabernacles... And when he came back, he told me. And I came to see You, Holy Mother, before I die. I came to bless You for every drop of milk You gave my John, depriving Your blessed Son of it... » The woman is weeping, in a respectful attitude, with her head slightly bent, holding Mary’s arms with her hands...

«One should never refuse to feed a baby, sister. And... »

«Oh! no. I cannot be Your sister! You are the Mother of the Saviour, and I was a poor forlorn woman, far from her house, a widow with a suckling, whose breast was as dry as a torrent in summer... I would have died without You. You gave me everything and I was able to go back to my brothers, who are merchants in Ephesus, thanks to You. »

«We were two mothers, two poor mothers, with two babies, in the wide world. It was your grief to be a widow, and Mine to be

pierced because of My Son, as old Simeon told me in the Temple. I only did my duty as a sister by giving you what you no longer  
<sup>365. 9</sup> had. <sup>9</sup>Is your son alive? »

«He is over there. And Your holy Son cured him this morning. May He be blessed for that! » And she prostrates herself before the Saviour shouting: «John, come and thank the Lord. »

A man, of the same age as Jesus, leaves his companions and comes forward. He is strong and his face is honest, even if he is not handsome. But the expression of his deep eyes is beautiful.

«Peace to you, brother of Bethlehem. Of what disease did I cure you? »

«Of blindness, Lord. I had lost one eye, and I was about to lose the other one. I was the head of the synagogue, but I could no longer read the sacred rolls. »

«You will now read them with greater faith. »

«No, Lord. I will now read You. I want to remain with You as one of Your disciples, without setting up a claim for the milk that I sucked from the breast that nourished You. The days of one month are nothing and cannot create any bond, but the mercy of Your Mother in the past and Yours this morning are everything. »

Jesus addresses the woman: «And what do you say? »

«That my son will belong to You twice. Accept him, Lord. And the dream of poor Naomi will be fulfilled. »

«Very well You will belong to the Christ. » And turning towards His apostles He says: «Receive your companion in the name of the Lord. »

The proselytes are elated with emotion. All the men would like to remain, but Jesus says firmly: «No. You will remain what you are. Go back to your homes, preserve your faith and wait for the hour to be called. And may the Lord be always with you. Go»

«Shall we find You here again? » they ask.

«No. Like birds that fly from branch to branch, I move around without resting. You will not find Me here. I have no itinerary and no dwelling place. But if it is just, we shall meet again and you will hear Me. Go. Let the woman stay with the new disciple. »

And He enters the house followed by the women and the apostles who are deeply moved and comment on the episode which they ignored so far, and on Mary's sublime charity.

<sup>10</sup>And Jesus goes to Bethany at a good pace. Simon Zealot and Marjiam are beside Him. They are both very happy to have been chosen for that visit. 365. 10

Marjiam, who is now in better spirits, asks many questions about the woman who came from Ephesus and whether Jesus was aware of the fact.

«I did not know. The kind actions of My Mother are countless and are done in such mild silence that they are generally unknown. »

«But the episode is really beautiful» says the Zealot.

«Yes, so much so that I want to let John of Endor know. What do You think, Master? Shall we find his letters at Bethany? »

«I am almost certain that we shall. »

«We should find also the woman who was cured of leprosy» remarks the Zealot.

«Yes. She complied with the precepts faithfully. But the time of her purification must now be over. »

<sup>11</sup>Bethany appears on its tableland. They pass in front of the house where once there were peacocks, flamingoes and stilt-birds. The house is now closed and forsaken. Simon notices it. 365. 11

But his remark is interrupted by the cheerful greeting of Maximinus, who appears at the gate. «Oh! Holy Master! How much happiness in so much grief! »

«Peace to you. Why grief? »

«Because Lazarus is suffering terribly with his ulcerated legs. And we do not know what to do to relieve his pain. But he will feel better, at least spiritually, when he sees You. »

They go into the garden and while Maximinus runs ahead, they walk slowly towards the house.

Mary of Magdala runs out shouting adoringly: «Rabboni» and she is followed more calmly by Martha. They both look very pale like people who have suffered and lost sleep.

«Stand up. Let us go to Lazarus at once. »

«Oh! Master! Master, You can do everything, cure my brother! » implores Martha.

«Yes, good Master! He suffers more than he can bear! He is worn out and he groans with pain. He will certainly die, if he continues so. Have mercy on him, Lord! » urges Mary.

«I am full of mercy. But the time of miracle has not yet come

for him. Let him be strong and be strong with him. Help him to do the will of God. »

«Ah! Do You mean that he must die?! » asks Martha moaning and weeping.

And Mary, whose eyes are shining with tears and love, a double love, for Jesus and her brother, exclaims: «Oh! Master, but in this way You prevent me from following and serving You, and You prevent my brother from enjoying my resurrection. Do You not want Lazarus' house to rejoice because of a resurrection? »

Jesus looks at her smiling kindly and wittily and He says: «Just for one? One only? Come on! You do not think much of Me if you think that I can do one thing only! Be good and strong. Let us go. And do not weep like that. You would dispirit him with grievous suspicion. » And He sets out ahead of them.

365. 12 <sup>12</sup>In order to nurse Lazarus more comfortably, they have placed him in a room near the library, opposite the dining hall. Maximinus shows Him the door, but lets Jesus go in alone.

«Peace to you, Lazarus, My dear friend! »

«Oh! Holy Master! Peace to You. There is no more peace for me, for my body. And my soul is depressed. I am suffering so much, Lord! Give me the dear order: "Lazarus, come out" and I will rise completely cured to serve You... »

«1 will give it to you, Lazarus. But not now» replies Jesus embracing him.

Lazarus is very thin and yellowish, with deep-set eyes. He is clearly very ill and weak. He weeps like a child showing his bluish swollen legs, with sores, which I think are varicose and are bleeding in several parts. He perhaps hopes that by showing Jesus the dreadful situation, He may be moved and work the miracle. But Jesus covers the sores delicately with the linen bandages sprayed with balm.

«Have you come to stay here? » asks Lazarus disappointedly.

«No, but I will come here frequently. »

«What? Are You not spending Passover with me this year either? I made them bring me here on purpose. At the Feast of the Tabernacles You promised me that You would stay with me for a long time after the Dedication... »

«And I will. But not now. Shall I annoy you if I sit here, on the edge of your bed? »

«Oh! no. On the contrary the coolness of Your hand seems to mitigate the heat of my fever. Why are You not staying, Lord? »

«Because as you are tormented by sores, I am tormented by enemies. Although Bethany is considered to be within the limits for the Supper for everybody, in My case it would be considered a sin, if I celebrated Passover here. Everything I do is considered sinful by the Sanhedrin and the Pharisees... »

«Ah! the Pharisees! That is true! But in my house, then... At least that! »

«Of course! But I will mention it at the last moment, as a precaution. »

«Yes! Do not trust them. <sup>13</sup>Everything went well with John. You know? Ptolmai came yesterday with other people and he brought some letters for You. My sisters have them. But where are Martha and Mary? Are they not doing the honours of the house to You? » Lazarus is restless like many sick people. 365. 13

«Do not worry. They are outside with Simon and Marjiam. I came with them. And I do not need anything. I will call them. » And He calls those who had wisely remained outside.

Martha goes out and comes back with two rolls which she hands to Jesus. In the meantime Mary informs them that a servant of Nicodemus has said that he has come ahead of his master, who is coming with Joseph of Arimathea. And at the same time Lazarus remembers a woman who «came yesterday in Your name» he says.

«Ah! Yes! Do you know who she is? »

«She told us. She is the daughter of a rich man from Jericho, who went to Syria many years ago, when he was young. He called her Anastasica in remembrance of the flower of the desert. However, she would not reveal the name of her husband» explains Martha.

«It is not necessary. He repudiated her and thus she is only “the disciple”. Where is she? »

«She was tired and she is sleeping. She had a hard time during the last days and nights. If You wish so, I will call her. »

«No. Let her sleep. I will see to her tomorrow. »

<sup>14</sup>Lazarus looks at Marjiam admiringly. Marjiam is on tenters 365. 14  
hooks. He would like to know the contents of the rolls. Jesus notices it and opens them. Lazarus says: «What? Does he know? »

«Yes, he does, as well as the others, with the exception of Nathanael, Philip, Thomas and Judas... »

«You did the right thing in not letting him know» exclaims Lazarus. «I have many doubts and fears... »

«I am not unwise, My dear friend» says Jesus interrupting him and He reads the rolls and then He relates the main pieces of news, that is, that the two have settled down, that the school is thriving and that everything would be proceeding very well, if John's health were not declining. <sup>365. 15</sup>But He can say no more because they are informed of the arrival of Nicodemus and Joseph.

«May God protect You, Master! Always, as this morning! »

«Thank you, Joseph. And you, Nicodemus, were you not there. »

«No I was not. But I heard that You had arrived and I thought I should come to Lazarus's house, as I was almost certain that I would find You here. And Joseph joined me. »

They speak of the events of the morning, standing around the bed of Lazarus, who is greatly interested in them and seems relieved of his suffering.

«But Gamaliel, Lord! Did You hear him? » asks Joseph of Arimathea.

«Yes, I did. »

Nicodemus says: «I instead say: But Judas of Kerioth, Lord! After You left I found him shouting like a demon in the middle of a group of disciples of the rabbis. He was accusing and defending You at the same time. And I am sure that he was convinced that he was doing the right thing. They wanted to find fault with You, and were certainly instigated to do so by their teachers. He refuted their accusations heatedly saying: "My Master has one fault only! He does not enhance His power enough. He misses good opportunities. He wearies good people with His excessive meekness. He is King! And He must act as a King. You treat Him as a servant because He is so meek. He ruins Himself by being nothing but meek. The only thing that counts with you, vile cruel people, is the lash of absolute violent power. Oh! why can I not make a violent Saul of Him! "»

Jesus shakes His head without saying anything.

«And yet, he loves You in his own way» remarks Nicodemus.

«What a disconcerting man! » exclaims Lazarus.

«Yes. You are right. Although I have been with him for two years, I do not understand him yet» confirms the Zealot.

Mary of Magdala stands up with the majesty of a queen and in her beautiful voice she proclaims: «I have understood him more than anybody else: he is abomination placed close to Perfection. And there is nothing else to be said» and she goes out to perform a task and takes Marjiam with her.

«Perhaps Mary is right» says Lazarus.

«I think so, too» says Joseph.

<sup>16</sup>«And what do You think, Master? »

365. 16

«I say that Judas is a “man”. As Gamaliel is. A limited man close to infinite God. Man is so limited in thought, that unless he breathes in a supernatural atmosphere, he can accept one idea only, with which he becomes encrusted and remains forever. And he does so even against evidence, stubbornly and obstinately, even out of faith in what has struck him most. Gamaliel after all has faith, like few people in Israel, in the Messiah, Whom he recognized and of Whom he got a glimpse in a Child. And he is faithful to the words of that Child... And the same applies to Judas. Saturated as he is with the Messianic idea, as most people in Israel entertain it, and in which he was confirmed by the first manifestation he had of Me, he sees and wants to see Christ as king. An earthly powerful king... and he is faithful to such opinion. Oh! How many, even in future, will ruin themselves because of an erroneous concept of faith, stubborn against reason! But what do you think? That it is easy to follow truth and justice in everything? What do you think? That it is easy to reach salvation just because one is Gamaliel or the apostle Judas? No. I solemnly tell you that it is easier for a boy, for a common believer to be saved, than it is for one elevated to a special task or mission. Generally the pride of their vocation overwhelms those who are called to a special destiny, and such pride opens the door to Satan and rejects God. It is easier for stars to fall than it is for stones. The Cursed One strives to put stars out and he insinuates himself crookedly to lever up the chosen ones and thus overturn them. If a thousand or ten thousand men fall into common errors, their ruin affects them only. But if one appointed to a special destiny falls and becomes the instrument of Satan instead of God's, his voice instead of “mine”, his disciple instead of



“mine”, then the ruin is much greater and may even bring about deep heresies, which injure countless souls. The good I give will bear much good if it falls on humble ground, which will remain humble. But if it falls on proud ground or which becomes proud because of the gift received, then the good turns into evil. Gamaliel was granted one of the first manifestations of the Christ. It was to be his early call to the Christ. That is why he is deaf to My Voice calling him. Judas was granted to be an apostle: one of the twelve apostles among the thousands of men in Israel. It was to be his sanctification. But what will it be?... My friends, man is the eternal Adam... Adam had everything. Everything except one thing. He wanted that one. And if man would only remain Adam! Very often he becomes Lucifer. He has everything except divinity. He wants that. He wants the supernatural to astonish, to be applauded, feared, known, celebrated... And in order to have something which God only can give gratuitously, he embraces Satan, who is the Monkey of God and gives simulated supernatural gifts. Oh! How horrible is the fate of those demons!

365. 17 <sup>17</sup>I leave you, My friends. I will withdraw for a little while. I need to concentrate on God... »

Jesus, Who is quite upset, goes out... Those who are left: Lazarus, Joseph, Nicodemus and the Zealot, look at one another.

«Did you notice how upset He was? » Joseph asks Lazarus in a low voice.

«I did. He seemed to be seeing a dreadful sight. »

«What can be worrying Him? » asks Nicodemus.

«He only and the Eternal Father know» replies Joseph.

«Do you know what it is, Simon? »

«No. He has certainly been depressed for months. »

«May God save Him! But hatred is certainly growing. »

«Yes, Joseph. Hatred is growing... I am afraid that Hatred will soon overcome Love. »

«Don't say so, Simon! If that must happen I will no longer ask to be cured! It is better to die than watch the most dreadful error. »

«The most dreadful sacrilege, you should say, Lazarus... »

«And yet... Israel is quite capable of that. It is ready to repeat the gesture of Lucifer by going to war with the Blessed Lord» says Nicodemus with a sigh.

Sad silence follows, as if each of them had a lump in his throat... It is getting dark in the room where four honest people are meditating on future criminals.

**366. Towards Gethsemane with Simon Zealot,  
Marjiam and the new disciple Anastatica.  
Letters from Antioch.**

22<sup>nd</sup> January 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus has left Bethany together with those who were with Him, that is, Simon Zealot and Marjiam. But they have been joined by Anastatica, who is completely covered by her veil and is walking beside Marjiam, while Jesus is a little behind them with Simon. The two couples are speaking while walking. They are talking on their own of what is closest to their hearts. 366. 1

Anastatica says to Marjiam, continuing on the same subject of their conversation: «I am dying to meet Her. » The woman is perhaps speaking of Eliza of Bethzur. «Believe me, I was not so deeply moved when I got married or when I was declared a leper. How shall I greet Her? »

And Marjiam with a kind smile, which is serious at the same time, replies: «Oh! with Her true name! Mother! »

«But I do not know Her! Is that not too familiar? After all, who am I, as compared with Her? »

«What I was last year. Nay, you are much more than I was! I was a poor, dirty, frightened, coarse little orphan. And yet from the very first moment She always called me son and She has been a real mother to me. Last year I was trembling with excitement waiting to see Her. But when I saw Her, I no longer trembled. I no longer suffered from the terror that had remained in my blood since I had seen, with my eyes of a boy, first the fury of nature which destroyed my house and family completely and later... and later, still with my eyes of a child, I had to see how man can be more cruel than jackals and vampires... And I trembled... I wept... all the time... and I felt here a painful sensation of fear of grief, of hatred, of everything... In a few months I became acquainted with all the evil, sorrow and cruelty there is in the world... And I could not believe that there was still kindness,

love, protection... »

«How? When the Master took you?!... And when you were among His disciples, who are so good?! »

«I still trembled, sister... and I still hated. Oh! It took me a long time to be convinced that I was not to be afraid... And it took even longer to be able not to hate those who had made my soul suffer by acquainting it with what man can be: a demon clad as a beast One does not suffer without long lasting consequences, particularly when one is a child... A mark is left, because a child's heart is still tender and warm with the kisses of his mother and it hungers more for kisses than for bread. And instead of kisses he receives blows... »

«Poor child! »

«Yes. Poor. So poor! I no longer had any hope in God or respect for men... I was afraid of man. Even when I was close to Jesus or in Peter's arms, I was afraid... I used to say: "Is it possible? Oh! This will not last. They will get tired of being good too..." ". And I was longing to be with Mary. A mother is always a mother, is she not? And in fact, when I saw Her, when I was in Her arms I was no longer afraid. I understood that my past was over and that from hell I had come to paradise... When I saw that they were forgetting about me and leaving me aside, I was upset for the last time... I always suspected mischief. And I cried. Oh! How lovingly She embraced me then. I never mourned my mother's death again since that moment and I did not tremble anymore... Mary is kindness and peace for unhappy people... »

«And I need kindness and peace, too... » says the woman with a sigh.

«And you will shortly have peace. See the greenery down there? That is where it is hidden, in the house at Gethsemane. »

«And will Eliza be there as well? What shall I say to them. What will they say to me? »

«I do not know whether Eliza is there. She was ill. »

«Oh! She will not die?! If she did, who would accept me as a daughter? »

«Be not afraid. He said: "You will have a mother and a home". And that is what will happen. Let us walk a little quicker. I cannot restrain myself when I am near Mary. »

They quicken their steps and I can no longer hear them speak.

<sup>2</sup>The Zealot notices that they are almost running along the crowded road and he says to Jesus: «They look like brother and sister. See how friendly they are. » <sup>366. 2</sup>

«Marjiam is good company for anybody. It is a difficult virtue and it is so necessary for his future mission. I am taking care to increase such favourable disposition in him, because it will be very useful to him. »

«You are training him according to Your own taste. Is that right, Master? »

«Yes. His age allows Me to do so. »

«And yet, You were able to mould also old John Felix... »

«Yes. Because he let Me destroy him and re-create him completely. »

«That is true. I have noticed that the greatest sinners, once they turn, exceed in justice us, who are relatively guilty. Why? »

«Because their contrition is proportionate to their sin. Immense. Consequently it crushes them under the millstone of sorrow and humbleness. “I have my sin constantly in mind” says\* the psalmist. That keeps their spirits humble. It is a good remembrance when it is joined to hope and trust in Mercy. Half perfections, and even less than half, very often come to a stand, because they are not spurred by the remorse of having committed serious sins and by the necessity of making amends in order. to proceed towards true perfection. They stagnate like still waters and they are satisfied because they are clear. But even the clearest water will become slimy and foul, unless motion purifies it of the particles of dust and rubble that the wind blows into it. »

<sup>3</sup>«And are the imperfections, which we allow to exist and <sup>366. 3</sup> persist in us, dust and rubble? »

«Yes, Simon. You are still too stagnant. Your movement towards perfection is almost imperceptible. Do you not know that time flies? Do you not consider that in the time which is left, you ought to strive to become perfect? If you do not possess the strength of perfection, to be achieved by means of a firm will in the time which is still left, how will you be able to resist the storm that Satan and his followers will raise against the Master and His Doctrine? The day will come when you will be complete-

\* says, in: *Psalm 51, 5.*

ly bewildered and you will ask yourselves: “Why were we utterly overwhelmed, since we were with Him for three years? ”. The answer is within you, in your behaviour! He who strives more to become perfect in the time still left, will be more able to remain faithful. »

«Three years... So... Oh! my Lord!... So shall we be losing You next spring? »

«These trees have their little fruits and I will taste them when they are ripe. But after the fruit of this year, I shall not taste the new crop... Do not be distressed, Simon. Distress is sterile. Strengthen yourself in justice in order to be able to be faithful at the dreadful moment. »

«Yes, I will. With all my strength. Can I tell the others as well? So that they may be prepared, too? »

«Yes, you can. But only those with a strong will, will do it. »

«And what about the others? Will they be lost? »

«No. But they will be severely tried by their attitude. They will be like one who thought that he was strong and finds himself knocked down and defeated. They will be dumbfounded and humiliated. Humble, at last! Because, believe Me, Simon, if there is no humbleness, it is not possible to proceed. Pride is the stone on which Satan’s pedestal stands. Why keep it in your hearts? Is that dreadful being a pleasant master? »

«No, Master, he is not. »

«And yet you keep in your hearts the supporting point, the chair for his lessons. You are full of pride. You have it for everything and for every reason: You are even proud of being “My disciples”. But, how silly of you, does the comparison of what you are with Him Who chose you, not cure you? Not because I called you, you will be saints. It will depend on what you have become after My call. Holiness is a building that each one builds by himself. Wisdom can teach him the method and plan. But it is up to you to do the material work. »

«That is true. So, we shall not be lost. After the trial will we be more holy because we are humble?... »

«Yes. » A short severe «yes».

«Is that how You say it, Master? »

«Yes, that is how I say it. »

«You would like us to be holy before the trial... »

«Yes, I would, with regards to everybody. »

«Everybody! Shall we not be all equal in the trial? »

«Neither before it, nor during it, nor after it you will be equal.  
And yet I gave everyone the same word... »

«And the same love, Master. We are very guilty towards  
You... »

Jesus sighs...

4The Zealot, after a rather long silence, is about to speak. But <sup>366. 4</sup>  
the apostles and disciples who have met Marjiam at the lower  
slopes of Gethsemane, are hurrying towards them, and Simon  
is silent while Jesus replies to the greeting of everyone and then  
goes towards the olive-grove and the house, walking beside Pe-  
ter.

Peter informs Him that they have been on the look-out since  
dawn, that Eliza is still ill in Johanna's house, that some Phari-  
sees had come the previous evening, that... that... a bundle of  
rather confused news, and at last the question: «And what about  
Lazarus? », to which Jesus replies in detail. Peter, who is very cu-  
rious, cannot refrain from asking: «And... nothing, Lord? No...  
news? »

«Yes. You will be told in good time. Where is Marjiam with  
the woman? Already in the house? »

«Oh! no. The woman did not dare to go on. She is sitting on the  
roadside waiting for You. Marjiam... Marjiam... disappeared.  
Has he run to the house? »

«Let us quicken our steps. »

But no matter how much they hurry, they do not arrive at the  
house before Mary with Her sister-in-law, Salome, Porphirea,  
the wives of Bartholomew and Philip, have come out to venerate  
Him.

Jesus greets them from afar and turns His steps towards the  
place where Anastasica is sitting humbly, He takes her by the  
hand and leads her towards His Mother and the women. «Here is  
the flower of this Passover, Mother. One only this year. May it be  
pleasing to You because I brought it. »

The woman has knelt down. Mary bends and raises her say-  
ing: «Daughters are in the hearts not at the feet of their mothers.  
Come, My daughter. Let us become familiar with our faces, as  
our souls already know one another. Here are some of our sisters.

Some more will be coming. Let it be a kind family full of love for all its members and full of holiness for the glory of God. »

The women disciples kiss one another lovingly and exchange greetings. They enter the house and go up to the terrace, which is surrounded by the white blossoms of hundreds of olive-trees. The groups part: Jesus with the men, the women with the newcomer. Susanna, who had gone to town, comes back with her husband. Johanna arrives with the children. Annaleah appears with her angelical face; and Jairus, who was with the disciples while they were running towards Jesus, comes back with his daughter, who joins the group of the women, near Mary, Who caresses her.

There is peace and love in the gathering. Then the sun sets and before dismissing those who have to go back to their own houses or to the ones where they are guests, Jesus gathers them all together to pray and blesses them. He then dismisses them and remains with those who prefer to crowd in the house at Gethsemane or to spend the night under the olive-trees, rather than go away. So the women who remain are: Mary, Mary of Alphaeus, Salome, Anastasica, Porphirea; the men are: Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James and Judas of Alphaeus, James and John of Zebedee, Simon Zealot, Matthew and Marjiam.

<sup>366. 5</sup> <sup>5</sup>Supper is soon over. Then Jesus invites His Mother and Mary of Alphaeus to go with Him and the disciples into the silent olive-grove. Perhaps the other women would like to go as well. But Jesus does not invite them, on the contrary He says to Salome and Porphirea: «Entertain our new sister speaking of holy things and then go to bed without waiting for us. Peace be with you. » So the three women resign themselves to their destiny.

Peter is rather sulky and he becomes silent; all the others, instead, are talking while going in group towards the rock of Jesus' future agony. They sit on its edge, facing Jerusalem, which is slowly calming down, after the confusion of the day.

«Light some branches, Peter. »

«Why? »

«Because I want to read to you what John and Syntyche have written. Since you are dissatisfied, you had better know that that is the reason why I did not let the three women come. »

«But my wife was there that evening!... »

«But it would have been impolite to exclude Salome only of the old women disciples... In any case it will give you the opportunity to give vent to your desire to speak, as you will be able to tell your prudent wife what you are now going to hear. »

Peter, rejoicing at the praise of his wife and at the permission to inform her of the secret, is no longer sulky and he busies himself lighting a bright fire, from which flames rise straight and still in the calm air.

6Jesus takes out of His waist the two letters, He unfolds them and reads them in the middle of the circle of eleven attentive faces. 366. 6

«“To Jesus of Nazareth honour and blessings. To Mary of Nazareth blessings and peace. To my holy brothers peace and good health. To my beloved Marjiam peace and caresses.

Tears and smiles are in my heart and on my face as I sit down to write this letter to you all. Recollections, nostalgia, hope and peace for the duty I have accomplished, are with me. All the past, which is of value to me, that is, the past, which began twelve months ago, is before me and a psalm of gratitude to God rises from my heart, as He has been too merciful towards me, a culprit. May You be blessed and with You the Holy Mother Who gave birth to You in this world, and the other mother whom I remember as mercy incarnate. And with You may Peter, John, Simon, James and Judas, and the other James, and Andrew and Matthew be blessed. And last may my dearest Marjiam be blessed, and I have taken him on my heart to bless him. May you all be blessed for what you have given me, from the moment I met you until the moment I left you! Oh! not of my own will! May God forgive those who tore me away from you! May God forgive them. And may He increase in me the strength to do it. For the time being, through His help and with Him I can do, it. But alone, no, I would not yet be able to do it, because too scorching is the injury that they did to me by tearing me away from true Life, from You, Most Holy Jesus. It is still too scorching, notwithstanding Your consolation is a continuous balmy shower to me... ”»

7Jesus glances over several lines without reading them. And He resumes: «“My life... ”» but Peter, who to let the Master see, has taken a blazing branch and is holding it high, standing near Him and craning his neck to see what is written, says: «No, it is 366. 7



not so! Why are You not reading it, Master? You have left something out! I am an ass, but not to the extent that I cannot read slowly. I can read: “Your promises have exceeded my hope...”. »

«You are an awful bore! You are worse than a boy!» says Jesus smiling.

«Of course I am! I am almost old! So I am more cunning than a boy. »

«You also ought to be more prudent. »

«Prudence is good with enemies. Here we are with friends. John here says beautiful things about You. And I want to know. So that I will know which way to turn in the event You should send me elsewhere, like a bale of goods. Please, read everything! Mother, please tell Him that it is not fair to give selected news, as if it were little fish. Give us everything: seaweed, mud, small fish and exquisite fish, everything! Will you all help me! You look like dummies to me. And you make me angry! And you are laughing! »

It is almost impossible not to laugh seeing the excitement of Peter who is jumping about, like a restive colt, waving his blazing branch, heedless of the sparks falling on him.

Jesus has to give in, in order to calm him and continues to read.

«“Your promises have exceeded my hope in Your promises. Oh! Holy Master! When on that sad winter morning You promised me that You would come to comfort Your depressed disciple, I did not understand the true value of Your promise. Sorrow and man’s limitation were oppressing the power of my spirit, which was too dull to be able to understand the extent of Your promise.

May You be blessed, o spiritual Visitor of my nights, which thus are not desolation and grief as I foresaw, but expectation of You, or joyful meeting with You: Night, the dread of sick people, of exiles, of lonely people, of culprits, has become for me Felix, really happy to do Your will and serve You, the ‘waiting of the wise virgins for the arrival of the bridegroom’. My poor soul has even more. It has the blessing of being the bride awaiting her Love, who comes to the nuptial room to give her every time the joy of their first meeting and the fortifying ecstasy of their union.

Oh! my Master and Lord, while I bless You for giving me so

much, I beg You to remember the other two promises that You made me. The most important one, for the very weak man I am, is not to let me be alive at the hour of Your passion. You are aware of my weakness! Do not let him, who for Your sake despoiled himself of hatred, do not let him put on again the thorny scorching uniform of hatred, through his hatred for Your executioners. The other promise is for Your poor disciple, who is also too weak and imperfect: be near me, as You told me, at the hour of my death. Now that I know that there is no distance for You, and that seas, mountains, rivers and the will of men cannot prevent You from giving the comfort of Your tangible presence to those whom You love, I no longer doubt that I can have You when I take my last breath. Come, Lord Jesus! Come soon to lead me to peace.

<sup>8</sup>Now that I have spoken to You of my soul, I will inform You <sup>366. 8</sup> of my work.

I have many pupils, of every race and country. In order not to hurt any of them, I have divided them, and one day I teach the heathens and the next day the believers, with good profit, owing to the shortage of teachers here. I give the money I earn to the poor, whom I thus attract to the Lord. I have resumed my old, name, not because I am fond of it, but out of prudence. When I am in the world, I am 'Felix'. During the hours in which I belong to Jesus, I am 'John': the grace of God. I explained to Philip that my true name was Felix and that I was called John only to be distinguished from my brothers. And he was not amazed owing to the common habit of changing names or calling people by nicknames. I hope to do a good deal of work here, to prepare thus the road for my holy brothers. If I were stronger I would like to go into the country and make Your Name known there. Perhaps I will be able to do so in early summer or when it is cooler in autumn. If I am fit, I will do so. The pure air at Antigonea, the gardens, which are so placid and beautiful, the flowers, children, little hens the loving kindness of the gardeners and above all the deep, wise, filial fondness of Syntyche do me a lot of good. I would say that my health has improved. But Syntyche is not of the same opinion, although I only gather her opinion through the diligent continuous care she has for me, for my food, for my resting and to ensure that I do not get cold... But I do feel better. Is this perhaps not the sensation that comes from one's duty ac-

complished heroically? That is what Syntyche says. And I would like to know whether she is right. Because duty is a moral matter, whilst disease is a bodily matter. I would also like to know whether You come to me really or whether You just appear to my spiritual senses, but so perfectly that I cannot tell where the material reality of Your Presence ends. Dear blessed Master, Your John kneels down asking for Your blessing. Peace and blessings to Your Mother, to Mary and to the holy brothers. A kiss to Marjiam that he may remember to send me Your holy words, which are bread for the exiles working in the vineyard of the Lord”.

That is John’s letter... What do you think of it? »

They all exchange their impressions... But the outstanding point is with regards to Jesus’ Presence. They harass Him with questions... how it can be, whether it can be, and whether Syntyche sees, and so on...

<sup>366. 9</sup> ¶ Jesus beckons to them to be silent and He unfolds Syntyche’s roll. He reads:

«“Syntyche to the Lord Jesus with all the love of which she is capable. Veneration and praise to our Blessed Mother. Gratitude and blessings to my brothers in the Lord. The embrace of his far away sister to Marjiam.

John has told You about our life, Master. He has told You very synthetically what he does and what I do in a womanly way. My little school is full of girls and I make a good spiritual profit, because I lead them to You, my Lord, speaking of the true God while we work together. In this region where so many races have mingled, there is an intricate tangle of religions. It is so intricate that... that they are nothing but impracticable religions, shreds of religions of no further use. In the middle there is the rigid uncompromising faith of Israelites, which breaks with its weight the worn out threads of the other religions without achieving anything. As John has pupils, he must act wisely. I can proceed more freely with my girls. Women are always considered inferior beings, so much so that families of different religions do not care if the girls mix in one school. It is enough if they learn the fruitful art of embroidery. And blessed be the scornful concept the world has of us women, because it allows me to widen the field of my actions more and more. Our embroidery work is selling easily and rapidly, our renown is spreading, noblewomen come

from afar. I thus have the opportunity of speaking to all of them of God... Oh! how even threads, which become flowers, animals, stars on our looms and on the cloth, are useful to direct souls to the Truth, if one so wishes. As I know several languages I can speak Greek to Greeks, Latin to Romans, Hebrew to Hebrews. With John's assistance I am improving my knowledge of the last language.

Mary's ointment is another means of penetration. I have made a large fresh lot of it, with the essences we have here, and I added a particle of the original ointment, to sanctify it. Ulcers and sores, wounds and chest trouble simply disappear. It is true, however, that while I rub and bandage sore parts, I continuously mention the two holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Nay, playing on the Greek name of Christ, I have called the balm: 'Anointed Myrrh'. Is it not so? Is the healthy essence of the Myrrh of God, Whose begotten Son You are, not in it, o precious Oil, which makes us kings? I very often have to stay up to prepare more fresh ointment and I would ask our Holy Mother to make some more and send it to me for the Feast of the Tabernacles, so that I can mix it with what the humble servant of God has made. But if I am wrong in doing so, tell me, Lord and I will stop doing it.

<sup>10</sup>Dear John praises me a great deal. And what should I say about him? He endures bitter pain, but his strength is wonderful. If I did not know his secret, I would be amazed. But since that night, when coming back from a sick person, I found him in ecstasy and transfigured, and I heard his words, and I prostrated myself as I realized that You were present with Your servant, I can no longer be surprised. Perhaps some of my brothers will be amazed on hearing that I do not regret that I did not see, too. Why should I? Everything You give is good, and sufficient. And each of us receives what we deserve and what we need. It is therefore right that John has You visibly, while I have You in my soul only.

Am I happy? As a woman I regret the time I spent with You and Mary. But as a soul, I am very happy, because now only I serve You, my Lord. I consider that time is nothing. I consider that obedience is money to enter Your Kingdom. I consider that to help You is a grace that exceeds even what the poor slave could have dreamed in an hour of rapture and that You have granted

me to help You. I consider that although I am parted from You now, I will finally have You for all eternity. And I sing John's song as wood-larks do in springtime in the golden fields of Hellas. My girls sing it because they say that it is beautiful. I let them sing on the rhythm of the loom, which is so like the rhythm of the oar on that remote day, because I think that the mention of Your name, Mother, predisposes one to Grace.

John is asking me to add the information that he sent You a very good citizen from Antioch. His name is Nicolaus. He is his first conquest for Your flock. We sincerely hope that Nicolaus will not disappoint the high reputation we hold him in our hearts.

Bless Your servant, Lord. Bless her, Mother; bless me all, you saints, and you, too, blessed child, who are growing in wisdom near the Lord".

That is what Syntyche wrote. And she added a foot-note, unknown to John. She says: "John excels and becomes stronger only in his soul. The rest is declining notwithstanding cures. He relies much on early summer. I do not think that he will be able to do what he says. I am afraid that winter will chill his feeble life... But he is in peace. And he is sanctified by his deeds and his suffering. Support his strength with Your presence, my Lord! I ask You to subject me to every kind of pain in exchange for this gift for Your disciple. As we are sending these letters by Ptolmai to Lazarus, I beg You to tell him and his sisters that we remember their kindness to us and that we pray constantly and ardently for them". »

Once again they all exchange their impressions.

366. 11      11 Andrew bends to ask Mary something and he is amazed at seeing tears on Her face. «Are You weeping? » he asks Her.

«Why are You weeping, Mother» many of them ask.

«I know why She is weeping» says Marjiam.

«Why then? »

«Because John has mentioned the Lord's death. »

«Of course! Is that true? And how does he know, when he no longer was with us, when You predicted it? »

«Because I told him to comfort him. »

«H'm! Comfort!... »

«Yes comfort. The promise that he will not have to wait long to enter the Kingdom. He deserves it because he excelled you in

will and obedience. Let us go back to the house. We will prepare our replies to be given to Ptolmai and you will add your rolls, Marjiam. »

«Ah! I see! He was writing for them!... »

«Yes. Let us go. Tomorrow we will go to the Temple... »

### **367. Thursday before Easter. Preparations in Gethsemane.**

23<sup>rd</sup> January 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Dawn is breaking. Men are emulating birds, when they become active flying, working and singing in the early morning. The house at Gethsemane is awaking slowly, but it is forestalled by the Master, Who is coming back from the prayers He went out to say at daybreak, but He may have been out all night praying. 367. 1

The nearby camp of the Galileans on the tableland of the Mount of Olives is slowly awaking, and shouts and calls can be heard in the clear air and although they are dulled by distance, they are sufficiently distinct to make one understand that the pious pilgrims gathered there are about to resume the Passover ceremonies interrupted the previous evening.

The town awakes, and the clamour begins with which it is filled during these overcrowded days, with the braying of market-gardeners' donkeys, and the pressure of lamb vendors at the entrance gates, and with the touching bleating of hundreds of little lambs, which are carried on carts, pack-saddles or on shoulders to their tragic destiny, calling their mothers bleating plaintively, not knowing that they should weep because their lives have come so prematurely to an end. And the clamour increases more and more with the shuffling of feet in the streets and people calling one another from one terrace to another, or from terraces to streets and vice versa. And the noise, deadened by distance, reaches the calm valley of Gethsemane, like the roar of sea waves.

<sup>2</sup>An early sunbeam strikes one of the precious domes of the Temple and makes it shine as if it were a sun descended upon the earth, a little sun resting on a snow-white pedestal, so beautiful although so small. The men and women disciples look at 367. 2

the golden spot admiringly. It is the House of the Lord! It is the Temple! To understand what that place meant to Israelites it is enough to watch them staring at it. They seem to be seeing the Most Holy Face of God flashing in the glowing gold lit by the sun. Adoration and love for their country, holy pride of being Hebrews are more clearly expressed by their looks than they could possibly be revealed by their words.

Porphirea, who has not been to Jerusalem for many years, is moved to tears and unawares presses the arm of her husband, who is showing I do not know what to her, and she leans a little against him and like a bride, in love with her bridegroom, admires him and is happy to be instructed by him.

In the meantime the other women are talking in very low voices, in monosyllables, asking one another what is to be done during the day, and Anastasica, who feels like a lost stranger, is a little aside, engrossed in her thoughts.

<sup>367. 3</sup> Mary, Who was speaking to Marjiam, sees her and approaches her embracing her waist with Her arm. «Are you feeling rather lonely, My dear daughter? You will feel better today. See? My Son is telling the apostles to go to the houses of the women disciples to inform them that they are to gather and wait for Him at Johanna's house in the afternoon. He wants to speak to us women and before doing so He will certainly give you a mother. She is very good. I have known her since I was in the Temple. Even then she acted as a mother to the younger virgins. And she will understand your heart because she has suffered very much, too. My Son cured her last year of a deadly melancholy, with which she was affected after the death of her two sons. I am telling you this so that you may know who will be loving you from now on and whom you will love. But as last year I said to Simon Peter, who was receiving Marjiam as his son, I now say to you: "Do not let this affection weaken your heart in its will to serve Jesus". If that should happen, the gift of God would be more harmful than leprosy, because it would extinguish in you the goodwill that one day will give you the possession of the Kingdom. »

«Do not be afraid, Mother. As for me, I will turn this affection into a flame to excite myself more and more in the service of the Saviour. I will not grow heavier in it, neither will I make Eliza dull, on the contrary we will support each other and in a

holy competition, with the help of the Lord, we will fly along His way. »

<sup>4</sup>While they are speaking some old and new disciples arrive from the camp of the Galileans, from the town, from houses spread along the slopes of the Mount, from the hamlet or suburb, whichever it may be, just outside the town, on one of the two roads that from Jerusalem go to Bethany, and precisely on the longer one, which Jesus seldom takes. The last to arrive are Philip with his family, Thomas all alone and Bartholomew with his wife. 367. 4

«Where are the sons of Alphaeus, Simon and Matthew? » asks Thomas not seeing them.

«They have gone ahead. The last two to Bethany, to tell the sisters to be at Johanna's house in the afternoon. The first two have gone to Johanna and Annaleah, to tell Johanna that I will be at her house this afternoon. We will meet at the third hour at the Golden Gate. In the meantime let us go and give alms to beggars and lepers. Let Bartholomew and Andrew go ahead and buy foodstuffs for them. We will follow them slowly and will stop at the suburb of Ophel, near the Gate, and later we will go to the poor lepers. »

«All of us? » ask some, who are not very enthusiastic.

«All the disciples and all the women disciples. Passover has got us all together, as it was never possible before. Let us do together what will be future duties of men and women operating in My Name. <sup>5</sup>Here is Judas of Simon coming in a hurry. I am glad because I want him to be with us as well. » 367. 5

In fact Judas arrives panting. «Am I late, Master? It's my mother's fault. Contrary to her habit and to what I told her, she came. I found her yesterday evening in the house of a friend of ours. And this morning she kept me conversing... She wanted to come with me. But I did not let her come. »

«Why not? Does Mary of Simon perhaps not deserve to be where you are? She deserves so much more than you do. So run and get her and join us at the Temple, at the Golden Gate. »

Judas goes away without objecting. Jesus sets out, He is ahead with His apostles and disciples. The women, with Mary in the middle, are behind the men.



### **368. Thursday before Easter. The mother of Annaleah and other encounters in Jerusalem and in the Temple.**

24<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

368. 1 <sup>1</sup>I do not see food being distributed to the lepers of Hinnom, I only hear the apostles speak of them. But I do not think that any miracle has been worked among them, because Simon Peter says: «Cruel solitude has prevented them from believing and realizing where Health is. »

They then enter the town through the Gate leading to the noisy populated suburb of Ophel.

After a few steps, Annaleah runs out joyfully from a half-open door and venerates the Master saying: «My mother has given me permission to stay with You, Lord, until evening. »

«Will Samuel not be disappointed? »

«There is no Samuel in my life any longer, Lord. And may the Most High be thanked for that. May He grant me, however, that Samuel may not leave You, my God, as he left me. » A smile appears heroically on her young lips, while tears shine in her chaste eyes.

Jesus looks steadily at her and as a reply, He simply says: «Join the women disciples» and He resumes walking.

But Annaleah's old mother, who is older more because of her sorrows than because of her age, approaches Jesus too, stooping in a venerable but dispirited greeting, and she says: «Peace to You, Master. When can I speak to You? I am so worried!... »

«At once, woman. » And addressing those who are with Him, He says: «Remain here outside. I am going into this house for a moment» and He is about to follow the woman.

But Annaleah calls Him from the group of the women disciples, with one word only: «Master! », but how meaningful it is! And in uttering it she joins her hands, as if she were imploring...

«Be not afraid. Be in peace. Your case is in My hands and so is your secret» replies Jesus reassuringly. He then goes in quickly through the half-open door.

Outside both men and women comment curiously on the event, as they are all anxious to know...

368. 2 <sup>2</sup>Inside Jesus is listening to the old woman. Leaning with His

back against the door, which He Himself has closed after entering, with arms folded on His chest, He is listening to the weeping mother, who informs Him of the inconstancy of her daughter's fiancé, who has seized an opportunity to release himself completely from his bond... «So that Annaleah is as good as repudiated, and she will never get married now, because she stated that You do not approve of people getting married after being repudiated. But it is not so. She is still a girl! She is not giving herself to another man, because she has not been of any man. And he is guilty of cruelty. And even more. Because he wants to get married to another woman and my daughter will be considered the guilty one and the world will laugh at her. See to it, Lord, because all this is happening because of You. »

«Because of Me, woman? In what have I sinned? »

«Oh! You have not sinned. But he says that Annaleah is in love with You. And he feigns jealousy. He came here last night, but she was with You. He flew into a passion and swore that he would not marry her anymore and Annaleah who arrived just then, replied to him: "You are doing the right thing. I am only sorry that you are clothing the truth with falsehood and slander. You know that one loves Jesus only with one's soul. But it is your soul that is now corrupt and is leaving the Light to follow the flesh, whilst I am leaving the flesh to follow the Light. We can no longer be of one mind as a married couple ought to be. You may go then, and may God watch over you". She did not shed one tear, see? Nothing that would touch the man's heart! My expectations are disappointed! She... is causing her own ruin, through frivolity. <sup>3</sup>Call her, Lord and speak to her. Make her reason. Look for Samuel. He is staying with Abraham, his relative, at the third house after the Fountain of the fig-tree, Help me! But speak to her first, just now... »

368. 3

«As far as speaking is concerned, I will speak to her. But you ought to thank the Lord Who is undoing a human tie, which was not promising anything good. The man is inconstant and unjust towards God and towards his woman... »

«Yes, but it is dreadful that the world should consider her guilty and You as well, only because she is Your disciple. »

«The world accuses and then forgets. Heaven instead is eternal. Your daughter will be a flower of Heaven. »

«Why did You make her live then? She would have been a flower without being lashed with slander. Oh! As You are God, call her, make her reason and then make Samuel consider... »

«Remember, woman, that not even God can crush the will and freedom of man. Samuel and your daughter are entitled to follow what they feel is good for them. Annaleah in particular is entitled... »

«Why? »

«Because she is loved by God more than Samuel is. Because she loves God more than she loves Samuel. Your daughter belongs to God! »

«No. That does not apply in Israel. A woman must get married... She is my daughter... Her wedding was giving me peace for the future... »

«Your daughter would have been in her serious for one year if I had not cured her. Who am I, according to you? »

«The Master and God. »

«And as God and Master I tell you that the Most High is entitled to His children more than anybody else, and that much is about to change in Religion and that from now on it will be possible for virgins to remain such forever, out of love for God. <sup>368. 4</sup>Do not weep, mother. Leave your house and come with us, today. Come! My Mother is-out there with other heroic mothers who have given their children to the Lord. Join them... »

«Speak to Annaleah... Try, Lord! » moans the woman sobbing.

«All right. I will do as you wish» says Jesus. And He opens the door and calls: «Mother, come in with Annaleah. »

They go in at once.

«My child, your mother wants Me to tell you to reconsider the matter. She wants Me to speak to Samuel. What shall I do? What is your opinion? »

«You may speak to Samuel. Nay, I implore You to do so. But only because I would like him to become just upon hearing You. As far as I am concerned, You know. I beg You to give my mother the most truthful reply. »

«Have you heard, woman? »

«So which is the reply? » asks in a broken voice the old woman, who at the first words of her daughter had hoped in her re-

pentance, but then she realized that was not the case.

«The reply is that for one year your daughter has belonged to God and her vow will last as long as her life. »

«Oh! poor me! Which mother is more unhappy than I am?! »

Mary lets go the hand of the girl to take the woman in Her arms saying to her kindly: «Do not sin with your thought and your tongue. It is not unhappiness, but great glory to give a child to God. You told Me one day that you were sorry that you had but one daughter, because you would have loved to have a son sacred to the Lord. You do not have a son, but an angel who will precede the Saviour in His triumph. And you say that you are unhappy? My mother spontaneously consecrated Me to the Lord from the first moment she perceived Me in her womb, having conceived Me at an old age. And she had Me for three years only. And I had her but in My heart. And yet it gave her peace, at the moment of her death, that she had given Me to the Lord... Be good now... come to the Temple to sing the praise of Him Who loves you so much as to choose your daughter as His bride. Let your heart be really wise. And true wisdom consists in putting no limitations to our generosity towards the Lord. »

The woman no longer weeps. She listens... She then makes up her mind. She takes her mantle and wraps herself in it. But passing in front of her daughter she says with a sigh: «First your disease, then the Lord... Ah! I was not to have you!... »

«No, mother. Don't say that! You never had me as you do now. Both you and God. God and you. You two only... till my death... » and she embraces her kindly saying: «Your blessing, mother! Your blessing... because I have suffered so much having to make you suffer. But God wanted me thus... »

They kiss each other, weeping. They then go out preceded by Jesus and Mary and they close the door and join the women disciples...

<sup>5</sup>«Why are we going in here, Lord? Was it not better to go in on the other side? » asks James of Zebedee. <sup>368. 5</sup>

«Because, on entering here, we shall pass in front of the Antonia. »

«And You hope... Be careful, Master!... The Sanhedrin is spying upon You» says Thomas.

«How do you know? » Bartholomew asks him.

«It is sufficient to consider how anxious the Pharisees are to understand. I am told that they come continuously with many pretexts to watch what we do!... Why, if not to find fault with the Master? »

«You are right. So don't let us pass by the Antonia, Master. If the Romans do not see You, so much the better. »

«And the reason for that is not so much your concern for Me as your disgust for them, is that right, Bartolomai? How wise you would be if you removed such meanness from your heart! » replies Jesus, Who, however, proceeds on His way, without listening to anybody.

To go to the Antonia, they must pass through the Sixtus where the buildings of Johanna and Herod are, one close to the other. And Jonathan is at the door of Chuza's building and as soon as he sees Jesus, he informs the people in the house. Chuza comes out at once and bows to Jesus. Johanna follows him, and she is ready to join the group of the women disciples.

Chuza says: «I heard that You will be staying with us today. Grant Your servant to have You as his guest at a dinner-party. »

«Yes. Providing you will allow Me to make it a charity dinner-party for poor and unhappy people. »

«As You wish, my Lord. Give me Your orders and I will do what You wish. »

«Thank you. Peace be with you, Chuza. »

Johanna asks: «Have You any instructions for Jonathan? He is at Your disposal. »

«I will let him have them after I have been to the Temple. Let us go because they are waiting for us. »

Shortly afterwards they pass by the beautiful palace of cruel Herod. But it is closed, as if no one lived in it. They pass near the Antonia. The soldiers watch the little procession of the Nazarene.

<sup>368. 6</sup> «They go into the Temple; while the women stop in the lower part, the men proceed to the place allocated to them. They thus reach the place where children are presented and women are purified. There is a little group of people with a young mother, watching the ceremony of the rite.

«A little child sacred to the Lord, Master! » says Andrew watching the scene.

«If I am not mistaken, she is the woman\* from Caesarea Philippi, the woman of the castle. She passed in front of me while we were waiting for You at the Golden Gate» says James of Alphaeus.

«Yes. And her mother-in-law and Philip's superintendent are there too. They did not see us. But we saw them» adds Thaddeus.

And Matthew says: «Instead we saw Mary of Simon with an old man. But Judas was not there. The woman looked very sad. She looked around worriedly. »

«We will look for her later. Let us pray now. And you, Simon of Jonah, make the offer at the treasury on behalf of everybody. »

They pray for a long time, while people watch them and point the Master out to one another.

<sup>7</sup>A short dispute, in which the shrill voice of a woman stands out makes those who are not engrossed in prayer turn their heads around. 368. 7

«If I came here to offer my son to God, I can remain a little longer to offer him to Him Who saved him for the Lord» says the shrill voice.

And nasal voices of men insist: «Women are not allowed to stop here after the rite. Go away. »

«I will, but after Him. »

«Call Him, then, and go away with Him. »

«Just a moment! Let the woman speak and explain how she can say that the Nazarene saved the child for God» says the drawling voice of a man.

«What does it matter, Jonathan of Uziel? »

«What does it matter!? There is certainly another sin here. Fresh evidence. Listen to me, woman. How did that man save your son? Will you tell us, the persevering seekers of truth? » asks mellifluously this Pharisee, who is not new to me\*\*.

«I certainly will, and with gratitude. I was in despair because the baby was born dead. I am a widow and this child is everything to me. He came and brought him back to life. »

«When? Where? »

«At Caesarea Philippi. I come from the castle of Caesarea. »

«Back to life! It was probably only a fainting-fit on the part of

\* **woman**, Dorca, met in 345. 3/5.

\*\* **who is not new to me**, because already encountered in 207. 2/4.

the child... »

«No. He was dead. My mother can tell you. And the superintendent of the castle can tell you as well. The Nazarene came and breathed into his mouth and the baby seethed and cried. »

«And where were you? »

«In bed, sir. I had just given birth to the child. »

«Oh, how horrible! »

«Ah! Anathema! »

«Impure! »

«Sacrilegious! »

«See? I was right in interrogating her. »

«You are wise, Jonathan of Uziel! How did you know? »

«I know the man. I saw Him desecrate the Sabbath in my property in the plain to satisfy His hunger... »

«Let us drive Him away from here! »

«Let us report the matter to the Princes of priests. »

«No, let us ask Him whether He has purified Himself. We cannot accuse without knowing... »

«Be quiet, Eleazar. Do not soil yourself with a silly defence. »

Young Dorcas, as she is caught in the middle of so much turmoil, bursts into tears and shouts: «Oh! do not injure Him because of me! »

<sup>8</sup>But some hot-headed men have traced the Lord and they imperiously say to Him: «Come here and reply to us. »

The apostles and disciples are seized with anger and fear. Jesus follows calmly and solemnly those who have called Him.

«Do You recognize this woman? » they shout pushing Him into the middle of the circle which has formed around Dorcas and pointing at her as if she were a leper.

«Yes, I do. She is a young widow and mother from Caesarea Philippi. And that is her mother-in-law. And that is the superintendent of the castle. So? »

«She is accusing You of going into her room while she was still being delivered of her child. »

«That is not true, Lord! I did not say that. I said that You revived my son. And nothing else! I wanted to honour You, instead I am injuring You. Oh! Forgive me! »

Philip's superintendent intervenes to help her and he says: «It is not true. You are lying. The woman did not say that and I am

witness to it, and I am ready to swear to it, and also that the Rabbi did not go into the room, but He worked the miracle standing at the door. »

«You be silent, you servant. »

«No. I will not. And I will tell Philip who respects the Rabbi more than you do, you false devotees of the Most High God. »

The subject of the dispute changes from the woman to politics and religion. Jesus is silent. Dorcas is weeping.

Eleazar, the honest guest at the banquet in the house of Ishmael, says: «I think that the doubt has been cleared and that the charge no longer stands, thus the Rabbi is free to go. » 368. 9

«No. I want to know whether He has purified Himself after touching the corpse. Let Him swear to it on Jehovah! » shouts Jonathan of Uziel.

«I did not purify Myself because the child was not dead, he had difficulty only in breathing. »

«Ah! It now suits You to say that he was not revived, eh? » shouts another Pharisee.

«Why do You not boast about it as You did at Kedesh? » asks another one.

«Don't let us waste time! Let us drive Him away and take the new charge to the Sanhedrin. A bunch of charges! »

«Which are the others? » asks Jesus.

«Which? That You touched the woman-leper and did not purify Yourself. Can You deny it? That You swore at Capernaum, so much so that Your more honest disciples abandoned You. Can You deny it? »

«I deny nothing. But I am without sin, because you, Sadoc, who are now accusing Me, were told by Anastasica's husband that she is not a leper, and you know, you matchmaker of Samuel's adultery, and you lied before the world with him, to foster the lust of the filthy man, calling leprosy what was not such and condemning a woman to the torture of being called a "leper" in Israel, only because you are the accomplice of her guilty husband. »

Sadoc, the scribe, one of those who were at Giscala and later at Kedesh, is struck home by Jesus' statements and slips away without any further remark, while the crowds shout at him mockingly.



«Be silent! This place is sacred» says Jesus. And He says to the woman and to those who are with her: «Let us go. Come with Me where they are waiting for Me. » And He sets out seriously and stately, followed by His disciples.

368. 10 <sup>10</sup>The woman, who in the meantime is questioned by many people, tells her story, repeating each time: «My son belongs to Him and I will consecrate him to Him. »

The superintendent, instead, approaches Jesus and says: «Master, I informed Philip of the miracle. He sent me to inform You that he likes You. Bear it in mind with regards to the snares of Herod... and of other people. But he would like to hear You, too, and see You. Would You come to His house today? He would be happy to welcome You, also in the Tetrarchy. »

«I am neither a histrionic nor a wizard. I am the Master of Truth. Let him come to the Truth and I will not reject him. »

They are in the Women's Court. «Here He is! » exclaim the women disciples informing Mary who is anxious about the delay.

They all gather together and Jesus would like to dismiss the people from Caesarea to go and look for Mary, Judas' mother, but Dorcas kneels down and says: «I have been looking for You before this woman, whom You want to find, and who is the mother of one of Your disciples. I was looking for You to say to You: "This son is Yours. He is my only son and I consecrate him to You. You are the Living God. Accept him as Your servant". »

«Do you know what that means? It means that you are consecrating your son to sorrow, that you will lose him as a mother and you will gain him back as a martyr in Heaven. Do you feel you can be a martyr through your child? »

«Yes, my Lord. I would have been a martyr through his death, and I would have suffered the martyrdom of a poor mother. For Your sake I will be a more perfect martyr, pleasing to the Lord. »

368. 11 «Let it be so!... <sup>11</sup>Oh! Mary of Simon, when did you come? »

«Just now. With my relative Ananias... I was looking for You, too, Lord... »

«I know. I sent Judas to tell you to come. Did he not come? »

Judas' mother lowers her head and whispers: «I left the house immediately after him and I went to Gethsemane. But You had already gone away from there!... I ran to the Temple... And now I have found You... In time to hear this girl, who is already a

mother and so happy!... Oh! I wish I could speak to You as she did, Lord, of a newly-born Judas... so meek... like one of these little lambs... » and weeping she points at the bleating lambs that are going to be sacrificed. She wraps herself in her mantle to conceal her tears.

«Come with Me, mother. We will talk in Johanna's house. This is not the right place. »

The women disciples take Judas' mother into the middle of their group, while her relative Ananias mixes with the disciples. Dorcas and her mother-in-law also go with the women disciples, and Mary of Alphaeus and Salome are enraptured while fondling the child.

They go towards the exit. But before they arrive there, a Roman slave brings a waxed tablet to Johanna, who reads it and replies: «Say that it is all right. This afternoon in my house. »

Then it is the joyful cry of Jaia and his mother when they see the Saviour: «Here He is, here is the Giver of light! May You be blessed, Light of God! » and they prostrate themselves, beaming with happiness. People gather, wonder, understand, praise.

Then there is old Matthias, the man who gave Jesus and His disciples hospitality in the stormy night near Jabesh-Gilead, and he venerates and blesses the Master.

And there is Marjiam's grandfather and the other peasants, to whom Jesus says, after speaking to Johanna: «Come with Me» as He already said to Dorcas, Jaia and Matthias.

<sup>12</sup>But near the Golden Gate they meet Mark of Josiah, the faithless disciple, who is speaking animatedly to Judas Iscariot. Judas sees the Master coming and he tells his companion, who turns around when Jesus is already behind him. Their eyes meet. What a glance Jesus casts at him! But he is now deaf to all holy power. In order to run away at once, he almost pushes Jesus against a column. And Jesus reacts only by saying: «Mark, stop. Have mercy on your soul and on your mother! »

«Satan! » shouts the other. And he goes away.

«How horrible! » shout the disciples. «Curse him, Lord! » and the Iscariot is the first to say so.

«No. I would no longer be Jesus, if I did... Let us go. »

«But how has he become like that? He was so good! » says Isaac, who is so depressed by Mark's change, that he looks as if

he were pierced by an arrow.

«It's a mystery. It cannot be explained!» say many of them.

And Judas of Kerioth says: «I made him speak. Everything he said was heresy, but he said things in such a way that he almost convinced you. He was not so wise when he was a just man.»

«You should say that he was not so foolish when he was possessed near Gamala!» says James of Zebedee.

And John asks: «Why, Lord, did he not injure You so much when he was possessed? Could You not cure him so that he may not injure You?»

«Because he has now accepted an intelligent demon in himself.

Formerly he was the abode of a legion of demons, who had occupied it through violence. But he did not consent to having them. Now his intelligence wanted Satan and Satan has placed an intelligent demoniacal strength in him. And I can do nothing against this latter possession. I would have to do violence to the free will of man.»

«Does it grieve You, Master?!»

«Yes, it does. It is My anguish... My defeat... And it distresses Me, because such souls are lost. Only because of that. Not because of the harm they do Me.»

<sup>368.13</sup> <sup>13</sup>They are now all standing in one group, waiting for the road to be cleared of a jam of people and mounts. And Judas' mother looks at her son so intently that the latter asks her: «Well? What is the matter with you? Is it the first time you see my face? You are really ill and I must have you treated...»

«I am not ill, son! And it is not the first time that I see you!»

«So?»

«So... nothing. I only wish you did not deserve such words of the Master.»

«I am not forsaking Him and I am not accusing Him. I am His apostle!»

They resume walking until Jesus stops to greet Johanna and the women disciples who are going to Johanna's house with her. All the men, instead, go to Gethsemane.

«We could have all gone there. I would have liked to hear what Eliza says.»

«You will see her. Because only today she will be told, and by

Me, that I am entrusting Anastasica to her. »

«And is there a banquet this evening? »

«Yes, I told Johanna what to do. »

«What has she to do? When did You tell her? »

«You will see. I told her before she left us, while I was saying goodbye to her. Let us go quickly in order to be in Johanna's garden in good time. »

### **369. Thursday before Easter. The parable of the leprosy of houses and other instructions to the apostles for the future.**

25<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>369. 1</sup>On their way back to Johanna's house, while they are spread out among the people crowding the streets and separating from one another the many disciples who are following Jesus, Peter, who is with the Master and the two sons of Alphaeus, asks: «Lord, now that we can speak a little to each other, will You tell me something, about which I have been thinking since last night? »

«Of course, Simon. Tell Me, and I will answer you. »

«Since last night I have been thinking of the great grace that You grant John at Antigonea. You know, it's really a great grace! Something unique. Granted to him only! And yet Syntyche also deserves as much... And there are many good people... who would deserve to see You... but they only see You when they are close to You. For instance, what a comfort it would have been to us, when You sent us out into the world! And there have been times when a word of Yours would have cleared up doubtful points for us... But You never appear to us... Why this difference? »

«In conclusion, My dear Simon, are you perhaps a little jealous?... »

«No! But... Well, I would like to know three things: why is it granted to John of Endor; whether it is granted to him only; and whether one day it should happen to us as well, for instance to me, to see You miraculously and be informed by You how I should behave. »

«And this is My reply. The grace is granted to John because he is a most willing spirit, but he, because of his past adventures, has some weaknesses, which are more physical than anything else, and might spoil the edifice of his elevation to God, which

369. 2 he built. <sup>2</sup>See, My dear friend? Our past, which has been upon us for a long time like a deeply rooted crust, not only cuts indelible signs, but leaves also everlasting inclinations in every man. Look, for instance, at that little house built at the foot of the mountain. The water, which runs down the mountain side when it rains, has slowly penetrated into it. At present there is warm sunshine, which will last for months. But the mould that has penetrated the mortar will always be present like blotches of leprosy. The house has been abandoned because it has been declared infected. In more severe days the house would have been demolished completely, according to the Law. Why did such a disaster happen to the poor house? Because its owners did not have little ditches dug around it to prevent water from stagnating at its foundations and to keep away from the side facing the mountain the water descending from it. The house is now not only ugly looking, but it is also undermined by dampness. If a man with goodwill saw to those expedients and then cleaned it, scraping the walls and replacing the infected bricks with new ones, it could be used once again. But it would always be affected by such weaknesses, that in the event of an earthquake it would be the first to collapse. John was penetrated for years by the poisonous evil of the world. Through his willpower he had it cut off from his soul, when it became alive again. But there are weaknesses still left, hidden in his flesh, in his inferior part... His spirit is strong, but his body is weak and the flesh causes storms when its incentives link up with elements of the world, capable of shaking one's ego. John!... How many particles of his past have been removed by what happened! I help his resistance, his purification, his victory over his resurgent past. I give solace to his too bitter suffering, as best I can. Because he deserves it. Because it is just to help a holy will when all the wickedness of the

369. 3 world attacks it. <sup>3</sup>Are you convinced? »

«Yes, Master, I am... And do You appear to him only? »

Jesus smiles looking at Peter who is gazing at Him from below like a child watching the face of his father. He replies: «Not

to him only. To others also, who are far away, building up their holiness, laboriously and all alone. »

«Who are they? »

«There is no need to know that. »

James of Alphaeus asks: «And what about us, for instance, when we shall be alone and, who knows, how we shall be tortured by the world?... Will You not help us with Your presence? »

«You will have the Paraclete with His light. »

«All right... But I... I do not know Him... and... I think that I will never succeed in understanding Him. You instead... I will say: “Oh! Here is the Master” and I will ask You what I must do knowing for sure that it is You... » says Peter. And he concludes: «The Paraclete! Too high for a poor fisherman! I wonder how difficult His language is and how light He is: a passing whiff... Who will perceive it? I need a violent shaking, a shout, so that, blockheaded as I am, I may awake and understand. But if You appear to me, I will see You, so!... Promise me, nay, promise us, promise that You will appear to us, too. But as You are! In flesh and blood. So that one may see You well and hear You better. »

«And if I came to reproach you? »

«It does not matter! At least - you two agree, don't you? - we shall at least know what is to be done! »

Alphaeus' two sons nod assent.

«Well, I do promise you. However, believe Me the Paraclete will make Himself understood by your souls. But I will come and say to you: “James, do this and that. Simon Peter, it is not right for you to do that. Judas, fortify yourself to be ready for this or that”. »

«Oh! very good. I feel better now. And come often, mind You! Because I shall be like a poor lost child, who does nothing but weep and... do the wrong thing... » And Peter almost begins to weep now...

<sup>4</sup>Judas Thaddeus asks: «Could You not do so for everybody, even now? I mean: for those who are doubtful, guilty, abjurers. Perhaps a miracle... » 369. 4

«No, brother. A miracle does a lot of good, particularly that kind of miracle, when it is granted at the right time and in the right place, to people who are not mischievously guilty. When, instead, it is granted to people mischievously guilty, it increases

their guilt, because it increases their pride. They mistake the gift of God for weakness of God, as if God implored such proud people to allow Him to love them. They consider the gift of God the result of their great merits. They say: “God humbles Himself before me, because I am holy”. Then the ruin is complete. The ruin of Mark of Josiah, for instance, and of other people with him... Woe to those who take that Satanic road. The gift of God changes in them into poison of Satan. To be blessed with unusual gifts is the greatest and safest test of the degree of elevation and holy will in man. Very often man becomes humanly exhilarated with them, and from spiritual he becomes entirely human, he then descends lower and becomes a demon. »

«Why does God grant them then? It would be better if He did not! »

«Simon of Jonah, when your mother wanted you to learn to walk, did she keep you in swaddling-clothes and in her arms all the time? »

«No. She put me on the floor with my legs free. »

«Did you ever fall? »

«Innumerable times! Also because I was very... Well, since I was a child, I wanted to do things by myself and I maintained that I did everything well. »

«But you no longer fall now! »

«Of course not! Now I know that it is dangerous to climb on the back of a chair, that it is wrong to make use of rain-pipes to descend from the roof to the ground and that it would be foolish to try to fly from the fig-tree into the house, just like a bird. But when a child, I did not know. And if I did not get killed it is a real mystery. But little by little I learned to make the right use of my legs and also of my brains. »

«So God did a good thing in giving you legs and brains, and your mother also did a good thing in letting you learn at your own expense? »

«Most certainly! »

«And God does likewise with souls. He gives them gifts, and like a good mother He warns and teaches them. But then everybody must consider by himself how to use them. »

«And if one is a blockhead? »

«God does not give gifts to blockheads. He loves them, be-

cause they are unhappy, but He does not give them what they could not appreciate. »

«But supposing He did give them, and they used them wrongly? »

«God would treat them for what they are: disabled people, and consequently not responsible. He would not judge them. »

«And if one is intelligent when one receives them, and later becomes silly or mad? »

«If the change is due to disease, one is not guilty of not using the gift. »

«But... one of us, for instance? Mark of Josiah... or... somebody else, then? »

«Oh! In that case it would be better for him not to be born! But that is how the good are separated from the wicked... A painful but just operation. »

<sup>5</sup>«Which is the interesting subject of your conversation? Does it not concern us? » ask the other apostles who, thanks to the width of the street, have been able to join Jesus. 369. 5

«We were speaking of many things. Jesus told me a parable on the leprosy of houses. I will repeat it to you later» replies Peter.

«What superstition, however! Really worthy of those days. Walls are not affected by leprosy. Foolish ancient people applied animal characteristics to clothes and walls. Absurd theories which make us ridiculous» remarks the Iscariot displaying his learning.

«Not quite as you say, Judas. Under an apparent fiction, suited to the mentality of those days, they achieved an important objective, which corresponded to holy foresight. Just like many other precepts of old Israel. Precepts safeguarding the health of the people. It is the duty of legislators to keep people healthy, it honours and serves God because people are creatures of God. Therefore they are not to be neglected, as we do not neglect animals and plants. It is true that the houses that are called leprous, do not have the physical disease of leprosy. But they have position and construction faults, which make them unhealthy and are revealed by stains called “leprosy of the walls”. In the long run they are not only unhealthy for man, but they become dangerous because they can easily fall. Thus the Law prescribes what is right and orders the houses to be abandoned and restored and



even to be pulled down, if after being repaired, they still show signs of the disease. »

«Oh! What harm can a little dampness do? It can be dried with braziers. »

«Then the dampness will not show externally and the deception is greater. The dampness will grow in depth and corrode, and one fine day the house collapses burying those who are in it. Judas, Judas! It is better to be exceedingly watchful than imprudent. »

«I am not a house. »

«You are the house of your soul. Do not let evil filter into your house and crush it to pieces... Watch over the safety of your soul. You must all be watchful. »

«I will watch, Master. But tell me the truth, have my mother's words made a deep impression on You? She is ill. She imagines things. I must have her treated. Cure her for me, Master. »

«I will comfort her. But you are the only one who can cure her, relieving her anxiety. »

«She is anxious about nothing. Believe me, Lord. »

«Better so, Judas. Better so. But try to remove her anxiety completely, through a more and more just behaviour. If it is there, there must be a reason for it. Cancel the very memory of it, and your mother and I will bless you. »

369. 6 «Master, are You afraid that I should come to terms with Mark of Josiah? »

«I am afraid of nothing. »

«Ah! Good! Because I was really trying to convince him. And I think it was my duty to do so. No one does it! But I am zealous for souls, I really am! »

«Be careful that no harm befalls you» says Peter, good-naturedly.

«What do you mean? » asks Judas aggressively.

«Just this: to handle what is burning you must use something which is fireproof. »

«What, in our case? »

«What? Great holiness. »

«And I have none, have I? »

«Neither you, nor I, nor anyone among us. So... we might burn ourselves and be left with scorch marks. »

«So, who will take care of souls? »

«The Master, for the time being. Later, when we have the means to do so, according to His promise, we will. »

«But I want to do so now. One never works too early for the Lord. »

«Yes, I think that you are right. But the first work for the Lord is to be done within ourselves. To go preaching holiness to other people before preaching it to ourselves, is... »

«You are selfish. »

«Not at all. »

«Yes, you are. »

«No, I'm not. »

The dispute begins. Jesus intervenes: «Most of what Peter says is right. There is also some truth in what you say. Because preaching is to be based on facts. So you must sanctify yourselves in order to be able to say: "Do what I do because it is right". And that corroborates what Peter says. But to work on other souls also helps to perfect our own, because we are compelled to improve ourselves, lest those to be converted should criticise us. But here we are at Johanna's house... Let us go in and enjoy being among workers of the Lord, and preach, through facts, future times. »

### **370. Thursday before Easter. The banquet with the poor in the palace of Chuza. The insolence of Salome.**

26<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>1</sup>«Peace to this house and all the people in it» is the greeting from Jesus as He enters the magnificent wide entrance hall, all lit up, notwithstanding it is daytime. And the lamps are not unnecessary. Because while it is true that it is daytime and that the sun is dazzling outside, in the streets, and on the whitewashed facades, it is also true that in here the light must be normally dim. In fact the entrance hall is like a corridor, the length of the house, running from the massive front door to the garden, the greenery of which can be seen at the other end of the corridor, in the bright sunshine. And the garden looks remote, because of the play of perspective. Thus the dim light in the hall must be like a

370. 1

real shadow, particularly for people coming from outside, whose eyes are dazzled by the bright sunshine. Chuza has therefore arranged for the many wide embossed copper pans, fixed on the two walls of the hall at regular intervals, to be fully lit, as well as the central light, a large vessel of pink alabaster with embedded jaspers and other many-coloured precious scales, which, because of the light, coming from inside the transparent alabaster, shine like stars, casting rainbows on the deep-blue walls, on people's faces and on the cipolin floor. And tiny mobile many-coloured stars seem to alight on walls and faces, because the lamp sways gently in the draught of the long hall and thus the facets of the precious scales change position continuously.

«Peace to this house» repeats Jesus, while He proceeds, blessing incessantly servants prostrated to the floor and the guests who are astonished at being gathered in a princely palace, so close to the Master...

<sup>2</sup>The guests! Jesus' idea appears now clearly. The banquet of love, which He wanted to have in the house of the good woman disciple, is a page of the Gospel put into action. There are beggars, lame, blind, old people, orphans, young widows with their little ones hanging on to their skirts or sucking the scanty milk of their undernourished mothers. Johanna's wealth has already taken care of the replacement of their ragged clothes with simple ones, which are, however, new and clean. But if their hair, which has been tidied as a providential step for cleanliness, and their clean clothes make these poor wretches, whom the servants are lining up or helping to reach their seats, look less miserable than they did, when Johanna had them brought to her house from lanes, cross-roads and cart-roads leading to Jerusalem, where their misery was either concealed shamefully or displayed in order to receive alms, there are still visible signs of hardships on their faces, as well as diseases on their bodies, and misfortune and solitude in their eyes...

Jesus passes and blesses them. Each unhappy person receives a blessing, and if Jesus' right hand is raised to bless, His left one is lowered to caress the trembling white heads of old people or the innocent heads of children. He thus goes up and down the hall, blessing everybody, also those who come in while He is already blessing and who, being dressed in rags, hide timorously

and shyly in a corner, until the servants kindly take them elsewhere, to be washed and clad with clean clothes, like those who have preceded them.

<sup>3</sup>A young widow passes by with her little group of children... 370. 3  
What a pitiful sight! The youngest is completely naked, covered by the worn veil of his mother... the bigger ones have on only what is necessary to be decent. Only the oldest son, a lean tall boy, is wearing a suit worthy of that name, but he is bare-footed.

Jesus watches the woman, then He calls her saying: «Where have you come from? »

«From the plain of Sharron, Lord. Levi has become of age... And I had to take him to the Temple... because his father is dead» and the woman weeps silently, the silent weeping of a woman who has shed too many tears.

«When did your husband die? »

«A year last Shebat. I had been pregnant for two months... » and she swallows her sobs, not to annoy Jesus, bending over her little one.

«So the baby is eight months old? »

«Yes, Lord. »

«What was your husband? »

The woman whispers something in such a low voice, that Jesus does not understand. He bends to hear her and says: «Tell Me, and do not be afraid. »

«He was a farrier in a forge... But he was very ill... he suffered from sores that festered. » And she ends in a very low voice: «He was a Roman soldier. »

«But you are an Israelite? »

«Yes, Lord. But do not reject me as unclean. That is what my brothers did when I went and implored them to have mercy on us when Cornelius died... »

«Be not afraid of that! What do you do now? »

«I work as a servant if anyone wants me, as a gleaner, a fuller, a hemp-beater... I do anything... to feed the children. Levi will now work as a peasant... if they will take him on... because he is of mixed race. »

«Trust in the Lord! »

«If I had not trusted, I would have killed myself with all my children, Lord! »

«Go, woman. We shall meet again» and He dismisses her.  
370. 4 <sup>4</sup>Johanna in the meantime has come and she is on her knees, waiting for the Master to see her.

He in fact turns around and sees her. «Peace to you, Johanna. You have obeyed Me to perfection. »

«It is my joy to obey You. But I have not been the only one to assemble the “court” that You wanted. Chuza helped me in every way and so did Martha and Mary. And Eliza, too. Some sent their servants to get what was necessary and to help my servants to gather the guests, some helped the maidservants and servants at the baths to wash “the beloved ones”, as You call them. Now, if You will allow me, I will give everybody a snack, so that they may not starve waiting for their meal. »

«Of course, do. Where are the women disciples? »

«On the upper terrace where I have prepared the tables. Have I done the right thing? »

«Yes, Johanna, you have. We shall all have peace up there. »

«Yes, that is what I thought. In any case, in none of the halls I could have laid tables for so many people... And I did not want to separate them, to avoid jealousy and suffering. Unhappy people are so sensitive and so easily upset... They are one big sore and a glance is enough to make them suffer... »

370. 5 «Yes, Johanna. You have a heart full of pity and you understand. May God bless you for your sympathy. <sup>5</sup>Are there many women disciples. »

«Oh! All those who are in Jerusalem!... But, Lord... perhaps I have done something wrong... I would like to speak to You privately. »

«Take Me where we can be alone. »

They go into a room, which one understands is Mary and Matthias' play-room, as there are toys scattered everywhere.

«Well, Johanna? »

«O my Lord, I have certainly been thoughtless... But I acted so spontaneously, so impetuously! Chuza has reproached me. But now... One of Plautina's slaves came to the Temple with a tablet. Plautina and her companions were asking whether they could see You. I replied: “Yes, this afternoon in my house”. And they will come... Did I do the wrong thing? Oh! Not with regards to You!... But because of the others, because of those who are all

Israel... and they are not love as You are. If I made a mistake, I will see that the situation is rectified... But I am so anxious that the world, the whole world, should love You, that... that I did not consider that You alone are Perfect in the world and that too few people try to imitate You. »

«You did the right thing. Today I will preach to you through deeds. And the presence of Gentiles among the believers in Jesus Saviour will be one of the things to be done in future by those who believe in Me. Where are the children? »

«They are everywhere, Lord» replies Johanna smiling, as she is now reassured, and she concludes: «They are excited by the entertainment and are running everywhere like little happy birds. »

Jesus leaves her, He goes back into the hall, beckons to the men who were with Him, and He sets out towards the garden to go up to the wide terrace.

¶A joyful activity has filled the house from the underground cellars to the roof. Some people go to and fro with foodstuffs and household goods, with bundles of clothes, with chairs, accompanying guests, replying to those who ask questions, and they are all full of love and joy. Jonathan supervises, watches and advises and he is indefatigable and solemn in his office of superintendent. 370. 6

Old Esther, who is happy to see Johanna so lively and healthy, is laughing in the middle of a circle of poor children, to whom she gives cakes, while telling them wonderful stories. Jesus stops a moment to listen to the magnificent conclusion of one of them, which says «that God granted much help to good Dawn of May, who never rebelled against the Lord because of the trouble that had come to her house, so that Dawn of May was the salvation and wealth also of her little brothers. Angels used to fill her little bread-bin, and finish the work on the loom to help the good girl, saying: “She is our sister because she loves the Lord and her neighbour. She is to be helped by us”. »

«May God bless you, Esther! I would almost like to stop Myself and listen to your parables! Will you let Me? » says Jesus smiling.

«Oh! My Lord! I must listen to You! But for these little ones I am good enough, although I am a poor old foolish woman! »

«Your just soul is useful also to adults. Go on, Esther, go on... » and He smiles at her while going away.

370. 7 <sup>7</sup>The guests are by now scattered through the large garden and are having their snack, looking around and at one another with astonishment. They speak exchanging comments on their unexpected good fortune. When they see Jesus pass by, they stand up, if they can do so, or they bow respectfully.

«Eat up in full freedom and bless the Lord» says Jesus passing by on His way to the gardeners' rooms, where the outside staircase begins, leading to the large terrace.

370. 8 <sup>8</sup>«Oh! My Rabboni! » shouts the Magdalene running out of a room with her arms full of swaddling clothes and little vests for babies. Her voice is as soft as a golden organ and fills the shady avenue full of festoons of roses.

«Mary, God be with you. Where are you going in such a hurry? »

«Oh! I have ten babies to dress! I have washed them and I am now going to dress them. I will then bring them to You, as fresh as flowers. I must run, Master, because... Can You hear them? They are like ten little bleating lambs... » and she runs away laughing. She looks splendid and serene in her simple refined dress of white linen, tightened at her waist by a thin silver belt and her hair fastened in a simple knot on the nape of her neck, supported by a white ribbon, which is tied in a knot on her forehead.

«How different she is from what she was on the Mountain of Beatitudes! » exclaims Simon Zealot.

370. 9 <sup>9</sup>In the first flight of steps they meet Jairus' daughter and Annaleah, who are coming down so fast that they seem to be flying.

«Master! », «Lord! » they exclaim.

«God be with you. Where are you going? »

«To get some tablecloths. Johanna's handmaid sent us. Will You be speaking, Master? »

«Certainly! »

«Oh! run, then, Mirjiam! Let us be quick! » says Annaleah.

«You have all the time you need to do what you have to do. I am waiting for other people. But when did you change your name to Mirjiam? » He says looking at Jairus' daughter.

«Today. Just now. Your Mother gave me that name. Because...

is that right, Annaleah? This is a great day for four virgins... »

«Yes, it is! Shall we tell the Lord, or shall we let Mary tell Him? »

«Let Mary tell Him. Go, my Lord. Your Mother will tell You» and they run away nimbly, in the prime of youth; they are human in their beautiful figures, but look like angels because of their bright eyes...

<sup>10</sup>On the third flight they meet Eliza of Bethzur, who is coming down, looking very serious, with Philip's wife. 370. 10

«Ah! Lord! » exclaims the latter. «You give to some people, but You take away from others!... But may You be blessed just the same! »

«What are you talking about, woman? »

«You will soon know... How grievous and how glorious, Lord! You are crippling me and crowning me. »

Philip, who is close to Jesus, says: «What are you saying? What are you talking about? You are my wife and I am entitled to know what is happening... »

«Oh! You will be told, Philip. Go with the Master now. »

Jesus in the meantime asks Eliza whether she has recovered completely. And the woman, whom deep past sorrows have given the stateliness of a sorrowful queen, replies: «Yes, my Lord. But to suffer with peace in one's heart is no pang. And I now have peace in my heart. »

«And you will soon have more. »

«What, Lord? »

«Go and when you come back you will be told. »

<sup>n</sup>«Jesus is here! Jesus is here! » shout the two children, whose faces are leaning against the railings ornamented with arabesques bordering the terrace on the two sides overlooking the garden, and from which branches of roses and jasmine in bloom are hanging. It is, in fact, a large hanging garden over which a multi-coloured velarium has been spread as a protection against the sunshine. 370. 11

All the people on the terrace who are busy preparing the tables turn around at the shouts of Mary and Matthias, and leaving their work unfinished, they come towards Jesus, to Whose knees the two children are clinging.

Jesus greets the many women who crowd around Him. Among



the true and proper disciples or wives, sisters, daughters of the apostles and disciples, there are some less known and familiar, such as the wife of His cousin Simon, the mothers of the donkey-drivers of Nazareth, the mother of Abel from Bethlehem in Galilee Anne of Judas (from the house near lake Merom), Mary of Simon the mother of Judas of Kerioth, Naomi from Ephesus, Sarah and Marcella from Bethany (Sarah is the woman whom Jesus cured on the Mountain of Beatitudes and sent to Lazarus with old Ishmael; I think she is now the handmaid of Mary of Lazarus), then there is the mother of Jaia, the mother of Philip of Arbela, Dorcas, the young mother from Caesarea Philippi and her mother-in-law, Annaleah's mother, Mary of Bozrah, the woman cured of leprosy who has come to Jerusalem with her husband, and many more whose faces are not new to me, but whose names I cannot remember.

Jesus proceeds along the large rectangular terrace, one side of which overlooks the Sixtus and He stops near the low cube-shaped room on the northern side of the terrace, where I think the internal staircase ends. The whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings are visible. It is a magnificent view. All the women disciples and the other women stop laying the tables and have gathered around Him. The servants go on with their work.

<sup>12</sup>Mary is near Her Son. In the golden light filtering through the large velarium spread over most of the terrace and which becomes a delicate emerald light where it reaches faces, after filtering through entangled rose bushes and jasmines forming a pergola, She looks even younger and slimmer; a sister of the younger women disciples, just a little older and as beautiful as the most beautiful of the roses blooming in the hanging garden or in the large flower pots placed around it and containing roses, jasmines, lilies of the valley and other delicate plants.

«Mother, my wife has spoken in such a way!... What happened, why did she say that she is crippled and crowned at the same time? » asks Philip, who is anxious to know.

Mary smiles kindly looking at him, and although She is averse to familiarities, She takes his hand saying: «Would you be able to give My Jesus what is dearest to you? You really ought to... because He gives you Heaven and the Way to get there. »

«Of course I would, Mother... particularly if what I gave Him

would make Him happy. »

«It would. Philip, your other daughter is also\* consecrating herself to the Lord. She told Me and her mother a little while ago, in the presence of many women disciples... »

«What? You! » exclaims Philip dumbfounded pointing his finger at the gentle girl, who clings to Mary as if she wished to be protected. The apostle swallows with difficulty this second blow that deprives him for good of the hope of having grandchildren. He wipes the sudden flow of perspiration caused by the news... and looks at the people around him. He is struggling and suffering.

His daughter moans: «Father... forgive me... and bless me» and she throws herself at his feet.

Philip caresses her brown hair mechanically and clears his throat. At last he speaks: «One forgives children who commit sins... By consecrating yourself to the Master you are not committing a sin... and your poor father can but say to you: “May you be blessed”... Ah! my daughter!... How sweet and terrible is the will of God! » and he bends, lifts his daughter, embraces her, kissing her forehead and hair. He then moves towards Jesus and says to Him: «Here. I am her father. But You are her God! Your right is stronger than mine... Thank You, Lord, for... for the joy that... » and he cannot go on... He kneels at Jesus’ feet and bends to kiss them moaning: «No grandchildren... never... My dream!... The smile of my old age!... Forgive my tears, my Lord... I am a poor man... »

«Stand up, My dear friend. And be happy because you are giving the early flowers to the angelical flowerbeds. <sup>13</sup>Come. Come here, between Me and My Mother. Let us hear from Her how this happened, because I can assure you that I am neither to be blamed or praised for it. » 370. 13

Mary explains: «I know very little Myself. We women were speaking to one another, and as often is the case, they were asking Me about My virginal vow. They were also asking Me what future virgins will be like, which work and which glory I foresaw for them. And I was replying as best I could... And I foresaw for them a life of prayer and of relief to the suffering caused

\* your other daughter is also, as the first in 241. 2/3.

to My Jesus by the world. I said: "It will be the virgins who will support the apostles and will purify the foul world, clothing and scenting it with their purity; they will be the angels singing praises to cover up the blasphemy of the world. And Jesus will be happy, and will grant graces to the world and will have mercy on it, thanks to these lambs spread among wolves..." and I was saying other things. Jairus' daughter then said to Me: "Give me a name, Mother, for my future as a virgin, because I cannot allow any man to have pleasure out of my body, which was revived by Jesus. This body of mine belongs to Him only until its flesh will be in the grave and its soul in Heaven", and Annaleah said: "That is what I also felt I should do. And now I feel happier than a swallow, because all ties are broken". It was then that your daughter, Philip, said: "I will be like you, too: a virgin forever!". Her mother - there she is coming - pointed out to her that one cannot take such a decision just like that. But she would not change her mind. And when she was asked whether it was an old idea she had, she replied "no" and to those who asked how she got it, she said: "I do not know. It was as if a beam of light had pierced my heart and I understood of what love I love Jesus". »

Philip's wife asks him: «Have you heard that? »

«Yes, woman. Our flesh moans... whereas it should rejoice because this is its glorification. Our heavy flesh has procreated two angels. Do not weep, woman. You said yourself that He has crowned you... A queen does not weep when she receives her crown... »

370.14 But Philip is weeping as well, <sup>14</sup>and many more, both men and women, are weeping, now that they are all gathered on the terrace. Mary of Simon has burst into unrestrained weeping in a corner. Mary of Magdala is weeping in another corner, pulling and twisting her linen dress, from which she mechanically tears off the threads trimming the hem. Anastasica is weeping and she tries to conceal her sorrowful face with her hand.

«Why are you weeping? » asks Jesus.

No one replies.

Jesus calls Anastasica and asks her once again. She replies: «Because, Lord, for the nauseating pleasure of one night only, I lost the possibility of being one of Your virgins. »

*«Every condition is good, if one serves the Lord in it. In the*

future Church both virgins and matrons will be required. They are both useful for the triumph of the Kingdom of God in the world and for the work of their brother priests. <sup>15</sup>Eliza of Bethzur, come here. Comfort this very young woman... » And with His own hands He places Anastasica between Eliza's arms. 370. 15

He watches them while Eliza caresses Anastasica, who relaxes in her motherly arms and He then asks: «Eliza, do you know her story? »

«Yes, Lord. I do. And I feel sorry for her, for she is like a dove without a nest. »

«Eliza, do you love this sister? »

«Do I love her? Yes, I do, very much. But not as a sister. She could be my daughter. And now that I am holding her in my arms, I feel as if I were becoming the happy mother of days gone by. To whom are You going to entrust this gentle gazelle? »

«To you, Eliza. »

«To me? » The woman unfastens her arms to look at the Lord incredulously.

«To you. Do you not want her? »

«Oh! Lord! My Lord! »... Eliza crawls on her knees towards Jesus and she does not know what to say or how to express her joy.

«Stand up and be a holy mother to her and let her be a holy daughter to you, and may you both proceed in the way of the Lord. <sup>16</sup>Mary of Lazarus, you were so cheerful a little while ago, why are you weeping now? Where are the ten flowers you were going to bring Me?... » 370. 16

«They are sated with food and are sleeping in their purity, Master... And I am weeping because I shall never have the purity of virgins and my soul will weep forever, without ever being sated... because I have sinned... »

«My forgiveness and your tears make you purer than they are. Come here and weep no more. Leave tears to those who have something of which they are ashamed. Come on. Go and get your flowers; and you may go as well, you mothers and virgins. Go and tell the guests of God to come up here. We will have to dismiss them before the Gates close, because many of them live out in the country. »

They all obey and depart, so that on the terrace there is only Jesus left, Who is caressing Mary and Matthias, Eliza and Ana-

stasica, who a little farther off are holding each other's hands looking at each other, smiling and weeping for joy, Mary of Simon over whom Mary bends in pity, and Johanna, who is standing at the door of the room, looking towards Jesus in an uncertain attitude. The apostles and disciples have gone downstairs with the women to help the servants bring up the long staircase the crippled, blind, lame and old people bent with age.

370. 17 <sup>17</sup>Jesus raises His head, which was bent over the two children and sees Mary stooped over Judas' mother. He gets up and goes towards them. He lays His hand on the grey head of Mary of Simon and asks: «Why are you weeping, woman? »

«Oh! Lord! I gave birth to a demon! No mother in Israel will be as grieved as I am! »

«Mary, another mother\* and for the same reason as yours, said to Me and still says those words. Poor mothers!... »

«Oh! My Lord, is there therefore another man, who, like my Judas, is wicked and cruel to You? Oh! It cannot be! He has You, and yet he is addicted to foul practices. Although he lives in Your atmosphere, he is lustful and a thief and he will perhaps become a homicide. He... oh! His mind is deceitful! He lives in agitation. Make him die, Lord, out of pity! Make him die! »

«Mary, your heart makes him worse than he is. Fear is driving you insane. But you must be calm and reasonable. What proof have you of his behaviour? »

«I have no proof of anything against You. But it is an avalanche which is about to fall. I caught him and he could not deny the evidence that... Here he is... For pity's sake, be quiet! He is looking at me. He suspects. He is my grief. There is no mother in Israel more unhappy than I am!... »

Mary whispers: «I am... because I add the sorrows of all unhappy mothers to My own... Because My sorrow is caused by the hatred of the whole world, not of one man only. »

370. 18 <sup>18</sup>Johanna calls Jesus and He goes towards her; in the meantime Judas approaches his mother, who is still being comforted by Mary, and he lashes her: «Have you been able to show your frenzy and calumniate me? Are you happy now? »

«Judas! Is that how you speak to your mother? » asks Mary se-

\* another mother, the mother of Mark of Joshua in 358. 7/8.

verely. It is the first time I see Her thus...

«Yes. Because I am tired of her persecution. »

«Oh! My son, it is not persecution! It is love! You say that I am ill. But it is you who are ill! You say that I calumniate you and I listen to your enemies. But you are wronging yourself, because you follow and are friendly with wicked people who will ruin you. Because you are weak, son, and they are aware of your weakness... Listen to your mother. Listen to Ananias, who is old and wise. Judas! Have mercy on me! Judas!!! Where are you going, Judas?! »

Judas, who is almost running across the terrace, turns around and shouts: «Where I am useful and respected» and he rushes down the staircase, while the unhappy mother, leaning over the parapet, shouts to him: «Don't go! Don't go! They want to ruin you! Son! My son!... »

Judas has arrived downstairs where the trees prevent his mother from seeing him. He reappears for a moment in an empty space before entering the hall.

«He has gone!... Pride devours him! » moans his mother.

«Let us pray for him, Mary. Let us pray together, the two of us... » says the Blessed Virgin holding the hand of the sad mother of the future deicide.

<sup>19</sup>Meanwhile the guests begin to come up... and Jesus is speaking to Johanna. «All right. Let them come. It is much better if they have put on Jewish clothes, to avoid rousing the prejudices of many people. I will wait for them here. Go and call them» and leaning against the doorpost He watches the arrival of the guests, whom apostles and disciples of both sexes kindly lead to the tables according to a pre-arranged order. In the centre there is a low table for children, parallel to which on both sides are all the other tables.

And while the blind, lame, crippled and old people bent with age, and the widows take seats, with the stories of their sorrows impressed on their faces, large baskets and small chests, which have been turned into cradles and look as pretty as flower baskets, are brought in, with the babies of poor mothers sleeping in them. And Mary of Magdala, who is now in better spirits, approaches Jesus saying: «The flowers have arrived. Come and bless them, my Lord. »

At the same time Johanna appears at the top of the inside staircase saying: «Master, here are the heathen women disciples. » They are seven women, wearing plain dark clothes like those of Jewish women. Each has a veil over her face and a mantle reaching down to her feet. Two of them are tall and stately, the others are of middle height. But when they take their mantles off, after greeting the Master reverently, Plautina, Lydia and Valeria are easily recognised, as well as Flavia, the freed woman who wrote Jesus' words in Lazarus' garden; then there are three strangers. One of them, who looks as if she were accustomed to giving orders, kneels down saying to the Lord: «And may Rome prostrate itself at Your feet with me. » One is a buxom matron about fifty years old. The last one is a girl who is as slim and beautiful as a wild flower.

Although the Roman ladies are dressed like Jewesses, Mary of Magdala recognizes them and she whispers: «Claudia!!! » and looks at her with wide-open eyes.

«It is I. I am tired of hearing His words from other people. Truth and Wisdom are to be drawn straight from their source. »

«Do you think that they will recognize us? » Valeria asks Mary of Magdala.

«I do not think so, unless you betray your identities by calling one another by name. In any case I will put you in a safe place. »

«No, Mary. Let them be at the tables, serving the beggars. No one will think that patrician ladies are serving the poor and lowest people in the Jewish world» says Jesus.

«Your sentence is a wise one, Master. Because pride is inborn in us. »

«And humbleness is the clearest sign of My doctrine. Those who want to follow Me must love Truth, Purity and Humbleness, they must be charitable to everybody and heroic in defying the opinion of men and the violence of tyrants. Let us go. »

«Forgive me, Rabbi. This girl is a slave and the daughter of slaves. I ransomed her because she is of Jewish extraction and Plautina is keeping her in her own house. But I wish to offer her to You, because I think that it is the right thing to do. Her name is Eglah. She belongs to You. »

«Take her, Mary. Later we will decide what to do... Thank you, woman. »

<sup>20</sup>Jesus goes on the terrace to bless the children. The ladies 370. 20 arouse much curiosity. But dressed in almost poor garments and combed in Jewish style, they do not arouse suspicion. Jesus goes to the centre of the terrace, to the children's table and He prays, offering the food to the Lord on behalf of everybody, He blesses it and tells them to begin eating.

The apostles, disciples, women disciples and ladies are the servants of the poor, and Jesus sets the example turning up the wide sleeves of His red tunic and looking after the children with the help of Mirjiam of Jairus and John. The mouths of so many undernourished people are very busy but their eyes are all turned towards the Lord. When it begins to get dark, the large velarium is removed and servants bring lamps, although they are not yet necessary.

Jesus moves about the tables. He encourages everybody with words and with His own help. He passes several times near the two stately ladies, Claudia and Plautina, who humbly break bread for guests who are blind, paralytic or maimed or they help them to drink wine; He smiles at His virgins who are looking after the women, and at the mother-disciples who kindly assist the unhappy people; He smiles at Mary of Magdala who is doing her very best at the table of some old men, the most sad of all the tables, as it is full of coughing and trembling people, whose toothless mouths chew food with their gums and slaver. He assists Matthew who is shaking a child, as a crumb of a cake, which he was sucking and biting with his new teeth, has gone down the wrong way. And He congratulates Chuza, who arrived at the beginning of the meal and is now carving meat and serving it like an expert waiter.

The meal is over. The more colourful faces and the brighter eyes of the poor people clearly show their satisfaction.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus bends over an old trembling man and asks him: «What 370. 21 thought is making you smile, father? »

«I was just thinking that it is not a dream. Up to a little while ago I thought I was sleeping and dreaming. But now I feel that it is really true. But who makes You so good, that You make Your disciples so kind? Long live Jesus! » he shouts finally.

And all the voices of the poor wretches, and they are hundreds, shout: «Long live Jesus! »



Jesus goes once again towards the centre of the terrace and He opens His arms wide, beckoning to them to be quiet and still and He begins to speak, sitting down with a child on His knees.

«Yes, long live Jesus, not because I am Jesus. But because Jesus means the love of God, Who became flesh and descended among men to be known and to make known the love that will be the sign of the new era. Long live Jesus, because Jesus means “Saviour”. And I will save you. I will save everybody, rich and poor, children and old people, Israelites and heathens, everybody, provided that you give Me your will to be saved. Jesus is for everybody, not just for this one or that one. Jesus belongs to everybody. He belongs to all men and is for all men. I am merciful Love and sure Salvation. What must one do to belong to Jesus and thus be saved? Few things. But great things. Not great in the sense that they are difficult, like things accomplished by kings. They are great because they help man to put new vigour and faith into his life to do them and to belong to Jesus. Thus love, humbleness, faith, resignation, pity are required. Now, you disciples, what great thing have you done today? You may say: “Nothing. We served a meal”. No. You have served love. You have humbled yourselves. You have treated as brothers unknown people of all races, without asking them who they are, whether they are healthy or good. And you have done that in the name of the Lord. Perhaps you were expecting great words from Me, for your education. I made you do great things. We began the day with prayer, we have helped lepers and beggars, we have worshipped the Most High in His House, we have begun brotherly agapes and we have taken care of pilgrims and poor people, we have served because to serve for love is to be like Me, Who am the Servant of the servants of God, a Servant to the extent of being destroyed by death in order to serve you with salvation... »

<sup>22</sup>Jesus is interrupted by shouting and shuffling of feet. A group of excited Israelites run up the staircase. The Roman ladies who are best known, that is, Plautina, Claudia, Valeria and Lydia, withdraw cautiously covering their faces with their veils. The disturbers rush onto the terrace and seem to be looking for I wonder what.

Chuza, who feels offended, faces them and asks: «What do you want? »

«Nothing concerning you. We are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, not for you. »

«Here I am. Can you not see Me? » asks Jesus putting down the child and standing up imposingly.

«What are You doing here? »

«You can see for yourselves. I am doing what I teach, and I teach what is to be done: to love the poor. What have you been told? »

«We heard shouts of sedition. And as there is sedition wherever You are, we came to see. »

«There is peace where I am. The shout was: “Long live Jesus”. »

«Exactly. And both at the Temple and at Herod’s palace they thought that people were conspiring here against... »

«Against whom? Who is the king of Israel? Neither the Temple, nor Herod. Rome rules here and whoever thinks of becoming king where Rome rules, must be mad. »

«You say that You are a king. »

«Yes, I am a king. But not of this kingdom. It is too trivial for Me! Also the Empire is too trivial. I am the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, of the Kingdom of Love and of the Spirit. Go in peace. Or you may stay, if you so wish, and learn how one reaches My Kingdom. Here are My subjects: the poor, the unhappy, the oppressed; and the good, the humble, the charitable. Stay here and join them. »

«But You always feast in splendid houses, among beautiful women and... »

«That’s enough! You cannot throw out innuendos against the Rabbi and insult Him in my house. Go out! » thunders Chuza.

<sup>23</sup>But the slender figure of a veiled girl jumps onto the terrace from the inside staircase. She runs as lightly as a butterfly as far as Jesus, where she drops her veil and mantle, throwing herself at His feet and trying to kiss them. 370. 23

«Salome! » shouts Chuza and other people do likewise.

Jesus has withdrawn so vigorously to avoid her contact, that overturns His seat and He takes advantage of the situation to put it between Himself and Salome as a partition. His eyes are so phosphorescent and dreadful that they rouse fear in everybody.

Salome smirking impudently says: «Yes, it is I. The acclama-

tion was heard in the Palace. Herod has sent word to tell You that he wants to see You. But I have forestalled his messenger. Come with me, Lord. I love You so much and I am so anxious to have You! I am flesh of Israel, too. »

«Go back to your house. »

«The Court is waiting for You to honour You. »

«This is My Court. I do not know any other Court or other honours» and with His hand He points at the poor people sitting at the tables.

«I have brought You gifts for it. Here are my jewels. »

«I do not want them. »

«Why are You refusing them? »

«Because they are filthy and offered for a filthy purpose. Go away! »

Salome stands up, she is dumbfounded. She casts a quick glance at the Terrible Most Pure One, Who fulminates her with His arm stretched out and eyes flashing fire. She looks furtively at everybody and sees derision or disgust on everybody's face. The Pharisees are petrified watching the potent scene. The Roman ladies dare come forward to have a better view.

Salome makes a last attempt: «You approach even lepers... » she says submissively and imploringly.

«They are diseased. You are a wanton girl. Go away! »

This last «go away! » is so powerful that Salome picks up her veil and mantle and stooping and crawling she goes towards the staircase.

«Be careful, Lord!... She is powerful... She might be harmful to You» whispers Chuzza in a low voice.

But Jesus replies in a very loud voice, so that everybody, and the expelled girl first of all, may hear: «It does not matter. I would rather be killed than be allied with vice. The perspiration of a lewd woman and the gold of a prostitute are poisons of hell. A cowardly alliance with the mighty ones is sinful. I am Truth, Purity and Redemption. And I will not change. Go. Show her out... »

«I will punish the servants who let her in. »

«Do not punish anybody. One only is to be punished: the girl. And she is punished. And she should know, and you all should know that I am aware of her intentions, which make Me sick. Let

the snake go back to her hole. The Lamb is going back to His gardens. »

He sits down. He is perspiring. <sup>24</sup>He then says: «Johanna, give <sup>370. 24</sup> an offering to each of them, so that their life may not be so sad for a few days... What else can I do for you, o children of sorrow? What do you want Me to give you? I can read your hearts. Peace and health to the sick ones who can believe! »

There is a short pause, then a cry... and many stand up completely cured. The Jews who had come to catch Him are amazed and in the general enthusiasm for the miracle and for Jesus' purity no one pays any attention to them, when they go away.

Jesus smiles kissing the children. He then dismisses the guests, but He holds back the widows and speaks to Johanna on their behalf. Johanna takes note and invites them for the following day. They go away, too. The last to go are the old people...

The apostles, the disciples of both sexes and the Roman ladies remain with Jesus, Who says: «That is how future meetings must be. Words are not needed. Let the evidence of facts speak to spirits and minds. Peace be with you. »

He goes towards the inside staircase and disappears followed by Johanna and the others.

<sup>25</sup>At the foot of the staircase He meets Judas, who says: «Mas- <sup>370. 25</sup> ter, do not go to Gethsemane! Your enemies are looking for You there. Well, mother, what do you say now? You accuse me, but if I had not gone, I would not have found out about the snare that has been laid for the Master. Let us go to another house! »

«Come to ours, then. Only the friends of God enter Lazarus' house» says Mary of Magdala.

«Yes. Let those who were at Gethsemane yesterday come to Lazarus' house with his sisters. Tomorrow we will take the necessary measures. »

### **371. Thursday before Easter. Protection of Claudia and shelter in Lazzaro's palace. The charter of the Kingdom.**

27<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>1</sup>The followers of Jesus certainly do not stand out for their <sup>371. 1</sup> courage! The news brought by Judas has the same effect as the

apparition of a hawk over a threshing-floor crowded with chicks or the presence of a wolf on the edge of a cliff close to a flock of sheep! The faces of most of them, particularly of the men, show signs of fear or at least of anxiety. I think that many of them are under the impression that a sword or a lash is already pressing against their skin or that they will be thrown into dungeons awaiting trial and that is probably the least penalty of which they are thinking. The women are not so excited. More than anything else they are worried about their sons or husbands, whom they advise to steal away in little groups through the country.

Mary of Magdala rebels against such waves of exaggerated fear: «Oh! How many gazelles there are in Israel! Are you not ashamed of trembling thus? I told you that in my house you will be safer than in a stronghold. So come! And upon my word I can assure you that nothing will happen to you. If in addition to those mentioned by Jesus there are other people who feel that they will be safer in my house, let them come. There are enough beds for a century. Come on, make up your minds, instead of fainting with fear! I only ask Johanna to send her servants after us with foodstuffs. Because there is not enough in the house for everybody, and it is now evening. A good meal is the best cure for a faint-heart. » She is not only imposing in her white dress, but her beautiful eyes are also quite ironical and she looks down on the frightened group crowding into Johanna's hall.

«I will send them at once. You may go, Jonathan will follow you with the servants, and I will come as well, because I want to have the pleasure of following the Master, without being afraid, I can assure you, so much so, that I will bring the children with me» says Johanna. She withdraws to give the necessary instructions while the vanguard of the frightened army look cautiously out of the main door, and when they see that there is nothing to be afraid of, they dare go out into the street and set out, followed by the others.

The group of the virgins is in the centre, immediately after Jesus, Who is in the first lines. The women are behind the virgins... and then the less brave ones, whose backs are protected by Mary of Lazarus, who has joined the Roman ladies, as they have decided not to part from the Master so early. Then Mary of Lazarus runs ahead to say something to her sister and the seven

Roman ladies are left with Sarah and Marcella, who are also in the rearguard by order of Mary, also with a view to letting the seven Roman ladies pass unnoticed.

Johanna arrives quickly holding the children by the hand, and behind her there is Jonathan and some servants laden with bags and baskets. They bring up the rear, but no one pays attention to the little group, as the streets are crowded with people going home or to their camps and in the faint light faces are not easily recognized. Mary of Magdala is now in the first line with Johanna, Anastasica and Eliza, and she leads the guests to her house through narrow side-streets.

Jonathan is walking quite close to the Roman ladies, to whom he speaks as if they were the servants of the richest women disciples. Claudia takes advantage of the situation to say to him: «Man, please go and call the disciple who brought the news. Tell him to come here. But speak to him in such a way as not to draw the attention of other people. Go! » Her dress is a plain one, but her attitude is unintentionally imposing, typical of a person accustomed to giving orders. Jonathan opens his eyes wide, trying to see, through her lowered veil, who is the woman speaking to him thus. But he cannot see the flashing eyes of the imperious woman. He must realize that the woman who has spoken to him is not a servant, and he bows to her before departing.

He reaches Judas of Kerioth who is talking animatedly to Stephen and Timoteus, and he pulls his sleeve.

«What do you want? »

«I have something to tell you. »

«Tell me. »

«No. Come with me. You are wanted, for alms, I think... »

The excuse is a good one and it is accepted peacefully by Judas' companions and enthusiastically by Judas himself, who goes back quickly with Jonathan.

He is now at the rear line. «Woman, this is the man you wanted» says Jonathan to Claudia.

«Thank you for serving me» she replies with her veil still lowered. She then addresses Judas: «Please stop for a moment and listen to me. »

Judas, who has heard her refined way of speaking and has seen two wonderful eyes through her thin veil and perhaps feels

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there is the prospect of a great adventure, agrees without any objection.

371.3 <sup>3</sup>The group of the Roman ladies parts. Plautina and Valeria remain with Claudia, the others go on. Claudia looks around. She sees the lonely little street in which they have stopped, and with her beautiful hand she removes her veil, uncovering her face.

Judas recognizes her and after a moment's astonishment, he bows greeting her with a mixture of Jewish gestures and a Roman word: «Domina! »

«Yes, it is I. Stand up and listen. You love the Nazarene. You are anxious about His welfare. You are right. He is a virtuous man and must be defended. We respect Him as a great just man. The Jews do not respect Him. They hate Him. I know. Listen. Understand properly what I say, remember it well and act accordingly. I want to protect Him. Not like the lewd girl of a little while ago, but honestly and virtuously. When your love and your shrewdness make you understand that there is a danger for Him, come or send someone. Claudia dominates over Pontius. Claudia will obtain protection for the Just One. Is that clear? »

«Perfectly clear, Domina. May our God protect you. If at all possible, I will come myself. But how can I get to you? »

«Always ask for Albula Domitilla. That is another name I use, but no one is amazed if she speaks to Jews, because she takes care of my liberality. They will think that you are a client. Will that humiliate you? »

«No, Domina. It is an honour to serve the Master and have your protection. »

«Yes, I will protect you. I am a woman but I belong to the Claudi family. I am more powerful than all the mighty ones in Israel, because Rome is behind me. In the meantime take this. It's our offering for the poor of the Christ. But... I would like to remain among the disciples this evening. Arrange that for me and you will be protected by Claudia. »

The words of the patrician have a miraculous effect on a man like the Iscariot. He is in his seventh heaven!... He dares to ask her: «But will you really help Him? »

«Yes, I will. His Kingdom deserves to be established, because it is a kingdom of virtue. It is welcome, against the foul waves

that cover present kingdoms and disgust me. Rome is great, but the Rabbi is by far greater than Rome. We have eagles on our banners and the proud monogram. But He will have Genii and His holy Name on His. Rome and the Earth will be really great when they put that Name on their banners, and His sign will be on standards, temples, arches and columns. »

Judas is astonished, ecstatic, in a dream. He tosses the heavy purse given to him, and does so mechanically, nodding assent all the time.

«Now let us go and join them. We are allies, are we not? Allied to protect your Master and the King of honest souls. »

She lowers her veil and nimbly runs off to reach the group ahead of her, followed by the other ladies and by Judas, who is panting not so much because of his physical effort as for what he has heard. The last disciples are entering Lazarus' building when they reach them. They go in quickly and the heavy iron door is closed with a loud noise of latches bolted by the keeper.

<sup>4</sup> A solitary lamp, held by the keeper's wife, hardly lights up <sup>3714</sup> the white square hall of Lazarus' house. The house is obviously uninhabited, although it is well kept and tidy. Mary and Martha lead the guests into a large room, certainly used for banquets, the walls of which are covered with precious cloths showing their arabesque decorations as chandeliers are lit and lamps are placed on sideboards, on precious chests laid around the walls, or on the tables, which are on one side, ready to be used, but which have not been used for a long time. Mary orders them to be brought to the centre of the room and laid for supper with the foodstuff that Johanna's servants are taking out of bags and baskets and putting on the sideboards.

Judas takes Peter to one side and whispers something in his ear. I see Peter open his eyes wide and shake his hand as if he had burned his fingers, while he exclaims: «By thunders! What are you saying? »

«Yes, look. Just imagine! We no longer need be afraid! There is no longer any reason to be so depressed! »

«But that's too much! But what did she say? That she will really protect us? May God bless her! But which one is she? »

«The tall slender one, wearing a turtle-dove dress. She is looking at us... »



Peter looks at the tall woman, whose face is regular and serious, and whose eyes are kind but imperious.

«And... how did you manage to speak to her? Did you not feel... »

«No, not at all. »

«And yet you hated their contact! Like me, like everybody... »

«Yes, but I overcame that feeling for the Master's sake. As I overcame my desire to part company with my old companions of the Temple... Oh! Everything for the Master! My mother and you all think that I am shady. You recently blamed me for the friends I have. But if I did not cultivate their friendship, which is very painful to me, I would not learn many things. There is no sense in closing our eyes or sealing our ears with wax lest the world should come into us through our eyes or ears. When one is in an enterprise like ours, one's eyes and ears must be absolutely free and watchful. We must watch over Him, His wealth, His mission, and the foundation of this blessed kingdom... »

Many of the apostles and some disciples have approached them and are listening, nodding assent. In fact no one can say that Judas is wrong in what he is saying!

Peter, being honest and humble, admits it and says: «You are quite right! Forgive me for my reproaches. You are worth more than I am and you know what to do. Oh! Let us go and tell the Master, His Mother and yours! She was so worried! »

«Because evil tongues have hinted... But be silent for the time being. Later... See? They are sitting at the table and the Master is beckoning to us to go... »

371. 5 <sup>5</sup>... It is a quick meal. Also the Roman ladies, sitting at the table of the women and mixed with them, so that Claudia is between Porphirea and Dorcas, are eating in silence what is put before them. They exchange mysterious smiles and meaningful nods with Johanna and Mary of Magdala. They look like school-children on holiday.

When supper is over Jesus tells them to form a square with their seats and sit down in order to listen to Him. He stands in the centre and begins to speak in the middle of a square of attentive faces, where only the little innocent eyes of Dorcas' baby, who is sleeping in his mother's lap, are closed, while the eyes of Mary, sitting on Johanna's knees, and those of Matthias, cuddled

on Jonathan's, are becoming heavy with sleep.

«0 disciples gathered here in the Name of the Lord, or attracted here by the desire of Truth, a desire that still comes from God, Who wants light and truth to be in all hearts, listen.

This evening we have been allowed to be all together, and this has been caused by wicked people who wanted to have us scattered. Owing to the limitations of one's senses, one is not in a position to realize how deep and vast this union is, true dawn of the future unions that will take place when the Master is no longer among you in His body, but will be with you with His spirit. You will then know how to love, and how to practice My doctrine.

For the time being you are like babies who are breast-fed. You will then be like adults and will be able to take all kinds of food without any harm. And then you will be able to say, as I say now: "Come to me, all of you, because we are all brothers and because He sacrificed Himself for us all".

6There are too many prejudices in Israel! And they are like <sup>3716</sup>arrows injuring charity. I am speaking openly to you, loyal followers, because there are no traitors among you, or people with prejudicial ideas, which separate or lead to misunderstanding, obstinacy and hatred against Me, Who points out to you the ways of future times. I cannot speak in a different way. And from now on I will speak less, because I see that words are useless or almost useless. You have heard enough to become perfectly holy and learned. But you have made little progress, you brother-men particularly, because you like My words but you do not practise them. From now on, in a more and more pressing manner, I will make you do what you will have to do when the Master has gone back to Heaven, from which He came. I will let you watch what the future Priest is. Rather than My words, you must pay attention to My deeds, repeat them, learn them, add them to My teaching. You will thus become perfect disciples.

What has the Master done and what has He made you do and practise to day? Charity in its multiform ways. Charity towards God. Not just the charity of vocal ritual prayer. But active charity, which renews you in the Lord, despoiling you of the spirit of the world and of the heresies of heathenism, which is to be found not only in heathens, but also in Israel, in the many customary practices that have replaced the true holy Religion, as open and

simple as all things coming from God. Not good deeds, or apparently good to be praised by men, but holy deeds to deserve the praise of God.

Every man who was born will die. You are aware of that. But life does not end with death. It continues in a different form and lasts forever with a reward for those who were just, and a punishment for those who were wicked. The knowledge of a definite judgement must not paralyze you during your lifetime or at the hour of your death. It must be a spur and a restraint, a spur urging you to do good, a restraint deterring you from evil passions. So be true lovers of the true God, always operating with the aim of deserving Him in the future life.

You men, who love grandeur, which grandeur is greater than to become children of God, that is, gods? And you who shun pain, which certainty of suffering no longer is there as that awaiting you in Heaven? Be holy. Do you want to establish a kingdom on the Earth? Do you feel that snares are laid for you and are you afraid that you may not succeed? If you behave as holy people, you will succeed. Because the very authority ruling over us will not be able to stop you, notwithstanding all its cohorts, because you will convince the cohorts to follow My holy doctrine as I, without any violence, have convinced the women of Rome that the Truth is here... »

«Lord!... » exclaim the Roman ladies seeing that their presence has been disclosed.

«Yes, women. 'Listen and remember. I tell My followers from Israel and I tell you, who are not from Israel but whose souls are just, what is the statute of My Kingdom.

No rebellions. They are of no use. We are to sanctify the authorities imbuing them with our holiness. It will be a long but successful work. With meekness and patience, without foolish haste or human deviations, by obeying when obedience is not noxious to your own souls, you will succeed in turning the authorities, now ruling over us in a pagan way, into Christian authorities protecting us. Do your duty as subjects towards authorities, as you do your duty as believers towards God. You must consider each authority a means of elevation, not of oppression, because it gives you the opportunity to sanctify it and yourselves, through examples and heroism.

And as you are faithful believers and good citizens, be also good husbands and wives; be holy, chaste, obedient, fond of each other, united to bring up your children in the Lord. Be fatherly and motherly to your servants and slaves, because they also have bodies and souls, feelings and affections like yourselves. If death deprives you of your husband or wife, if possible, do not be anxious to get married again. Love orphans, also on behalf of your deceased companion. You, servants, be subject to your masters, and if they are faulty, sanctify them through your own example. You will have great merit in the eyes of the Lord. In the future, in My Name, there will be no more servants and masters, but brothers. There will be no different races, but brothers. There will be no more oppressors and oppressed, hating one another, because those who are oppressed will call their oppressors brothers.

And you, who are of the same faith, love one another, helping one another, as I made you do today. But do not confine your help to the poor, to the pilgrims, to the sick people of your own race. Open your arms to everybody, as Mercy opens them to you. Let those who have more, help those who have little or nothing. Let those who are more learned teach those who do not know or know little, and let them teach patiently and humbly, remembering that you really knew nothing before I taught you. Seek Wisdom not to add lustre to your names, but to obtain assistance in proceeding in the way of the Lord.

Let married women love virgins, and the latter love the former, and both love widows. You are all useful in the Kingdom of the Lord. The poor must not envy the rich and the rich must not cause hatred through display of wealth and hardness of heart. Take care of orphans, sick and homeless people. Open your hearts, before opening your purses and your homes, because if you give assistance ungainly, you do not honour but you offend God, Who is present in every unhappy person.

I solemnly tell you that it is not difficult to serve the Lord. It is enough to love the true God and your neighbour, whoever that may be. I will be present every time you cure a sore or a disease. And everything you do for Me in the future, if it is good, it will be done to Me; if it is bad, it will still be done to Me. Do you want to make Me suffer? Do you want to lose the Kingdom of peace, do you want to miss the opportunity of becoming gods, just by not

being good to your neighbour?

371. 8 <sup>8</sup>Never again shall we be all united as we are now. More Passovers will come... but it will not be possible for us to be together for many reasons, first because of partly holy and partly excessive caution, and every excess is faulty, so that we will have to be separated; secondly because I shall not be with you in future Passovers... But remember this day. In the future you are to do, not only at Passover, but always, what I made you do today.

I have never deceived you, stating that it is easy to belong to Me. To belong to Me means not only living in the Light and Truth, but it also implies eating the bread of conflict and persecution. But the stronger you are in love, the stronger you will be in struggles and persecutions.

Believe in Me. For what I really am: Jesus Christ, the Saviour, Whose Kingdom is not of this world, Whose coming means peace to good people, Whose possession means knowledge and possession of God, because he who has Me in himself and has himself in Me is in God, and has God in his spirit now, and will have Him later in the celestial Kingdom forever.

Night has fallen. Tomorrow is Preparation Day. Go. Purify yourselves, meditate, celebrate a holy Passover.

And you women of a different race, but whose spirits are righteous, go. May the goodwill by which you are animated be for you the way to come to the Light. In the name of the poor, as I am poor Myself, I bless you for your generous alms, and I bless you for your kind intentions to the Man Who has come to bring love and peace to the Earth. Go! And you, Johanna, and anybody else who is not afraid of snares, may go. »

371. 9 <sup>9</sup>A whispering of astonishment runs through the meeting while the Roman ladies, who are now only six as Eglah is staying with Mary of Magdala, put into a bag the waxed tablets written by Flavia while Jesus was speaking, and go out after bidding goodbye to everybody collectively. The astonishment is such that no one moves, with the exception of Johanna, Jonathan and Johanna's servants, who are carrying the sleeping children in their arms. But after the hollow noise of the main door being closed tells the rest that the Roman ladies have gone, the whispering becomes a clamour.

«Who are they? »

«Why were they here? »

«What have they done? »

And above all Judas shouts: «Lord, how do You know about the rich offering they gave me? »

Jesus calms the uproar with a gesture and He says: «They were Claudia and her lady companions. And while the other ladies of Israel, fearing the wrath of their husbands, or having the same minds and hearts of their husbands, dare not become My followers, the despised pagan ladies, with holy astuteness know how to come to learn the Doctrine which, even if for the time being it is accepted in a human way, still serves to elevate... And this girl, previously a slave, but of Jewish extraction, is the flower offered by Claudia to Christ's followers, as she has been made free and entrusted to the faith of Christ. With regards to My knowing about their offering... Oh! Judas! Everybody but you should ask Me that question! You know that I see in men's hearts. »

«So You know that I spoke the truth when I said that they were laying snares and that I baffled them when I went to make... guilty people speak? »

«That is true. »

«Please say that in a loud voice, that my mother may hear... Mother, I am a boy, but not a scoundrel... Mother, let us make peace. Let us love and understand each other, united in serving our Jesus. »

And Judas goes humbly and lovingly to embrace his mother, who says: «Yes, son! Yes, my Judas. Good! Good! Be always good, my child! For yourself; for the Lord! For your poor mother! »

<sup>10</sup>The hall is now full of excitement and comments, and many state that it was not wise to receive the Roman ladies and they reproach Jesus. 371. 10

Judas hears them, He leaves his mother and hastens to defend the Master. He informs them of his conversation with Claudia and concludes: «Her help is not to be neglected. We have been persecuted even before she came among us. Let her do as she wishes. And remember, it is better not to say a word to anybody. Consider that if to be friendly with heathens is dangerous for the Master, it is just as dangerous for us. The Sanhedrin which, after all, is held back by fear of Jesus because of a lively dread of lifting its hand against the Anointed of the Lord, would not hesitate

one moment to kill us like dogs, as we are poor common men. Instead of putting on scandalised looks, remember that only a little while ago you were like frightened sparrows and bless the Lord for helping us through unexpected means, even if you may think they are not legal. They are, however, strong enough to establish the Kingdom of the Messiah. We shall be able to do anything if Rome defends us! Oh! I am no longer afraid! This is a great day! More for this thing than for anything else... Ah! when You will be our Head! What a meek, strong, blessed power! What peace! What justice! The strong friendly Kingdom of the Just One! And the world will be coming slowly to it!... Prophecies will be fulfilled! Crowds, nations... the world will be at Your feet! Oh! Master! You will be the King, and we will be Your ministers... Peace on the Earth, glory in Heaven... Jesus Christ of Nazareth, King of the stock of David, Messiah and Saviour, I greet You and adore You! » and Judas, who seems to be in raptures, concludes prostrating himself: «Your Name is known on the Earth, in Heaven and even in Hell. Your power is infinite. Which strength can resist You, o Lamb and Lion, Priest and King; three times Holy? » and he remains prostrated on the floor in the hall, which is dumb struck with amazement.

### **372. The Day of Preparation. A missed danger and the courage of Mary Magdalene.**

30<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Men are lying asleep everywhere in Lazarus' palace, which has been changed into a dormitory for one night. I do not see any women. They have perhaps been taken to the rooms upstairs. The clear daybreak whitens the city slowly, it invades the courtyards of the palace, rousing the first timid chirping of birds in the branches of the shady trees, and the early cooing of doves resting in the cavity of the cornice. But the men do not wake up. Tired and full of food and excitement as they are, they are sleeping and dreaming...

Jesus goes into the hall and then into the main courtyard. He washes Himself at a fountain of clear water gurgling in its centre, in a square of myrtle, at the foot of which there are little lil-

ies, similar to the so called French lilies of the valley. He tidies Himself and without making any noise He goes to the staircase leading to the rooms upstairs and to the roof terrace. He goes up there to pray and meditate...

He walks slowly to and fro and the doves are the only ones to see Him: stretching their necks and cooing, they seem to be asking one another: «Who is that? » He then leans against the little wall and remains still, engrossed in thought. Finally He raises His eyes, probably because His attention is drawn by the sudden appearance of the sun, rising behind the hills concealing Bethany and the Jordan valley, and He contemplates the view before Him.

<sup>2</sup>Lazarus' palace is on one of the many ground elevations that make the streets in Jerusalem, particularly the less beautiful ones, so undulated. It is in the centre of the city, slightly southwest. It is situated in a beautiful street leading to the Sixtus, forming a T with it, and it overlooks the lower part of the town and faces towards Bezetha, Moriah and Ophel and the Mount of Olives, which is behind them; behind it there is Mount Sion, the area to which it belongs, while on both sides one's eyes rove over the southern hills, whereas Bezetha to the north hides most of the view. But beyond the Gihon valley, Golgotha comes into view looking yellowish in the pink light of dawn: it seems dismal even in that joyful light. 372. 2

Jesus is looking at it... His look, although more manly and pensive, reminds me of that of the remote vision of Jesus disputing with the doctors, when He was twelve years old. But it is not a terrified look as it was not then. It is the dignified look of a hero contemplating the field of his last battle.

He then turns around to look at the hills to the south of the town and He says: «Caiaphas' house! » and His eyes follow the itinerary from that spot to Gethsemane, then to the Temple, He then looks beyond the town walls, towards Calvary...

The sun has now risen and the town is full of light...

<sup>3</sup>Someone knocks loudly and uninterruptedly at the main door of the palace. Jesus leans out to see who is knocking, but the projecting cornice and the fact that the door is in the inner side of the thick walls, prevent Him from seeing anyone. But He hears the noise of the voices of the men who are beginning to 372. 3



wake up, while the door, which was opened by Levi, is closed with a bang. And He then hears many voices of men and women calling His Name... He hastens downstairs saying: «Here I am. What do you want? »

As soon as those who were calling Him, hear Him, they rush upstairs shouting. They are the oldest apostles and disciples, and amongst them there is Jonah, the caretaker of Gethsemane. They are all speaking at the same time and it is thus impossible to understand what they say.

Jesus has to order them sternly to stop where they are and to be silent, in order to calm them. He then approaches them asking: «What is the matter? »

There is great confusion once again, caused by their shouting, which cannot be understood. Behind those who are shouting there are women and disciples who look sad or astonished.

«Let one speak at a time. You, Peter, first. »

«Jonah came... He said that there were many of them and that they looked for You everywhere. He was upset all night and when the gates were opened, he went to Johanna's and was told that You were here. What shall we do? We have to keep Passover after all! »

Jonah of Gethsemane confirms the information saying: «Yes, they even ill-treated me. I told them that I did not know where You were and that perhaps You were not coming back. But they saw all your clothes and they understood that you were coming back to Gethsemane. Don't cause me any harm, Master! I have always given You hospitality with all my heart, and last night I suffered because of You. But... »

«Be not afraid! From now on I will not expose you to any danger. I will no longer stay in your house. I will come there when I happen to be passing through, at night time, to pray... You cannot forbid Me... » Jesus is most kind to frightened Jonah of Gethsemane.

4But the golden voice of Mary of Magdala bursts out vehemently: «Since when, man, are you forgetting that you are a servant and that our compliance makes you behave as if you were the master? To whom does the house and the olive grove belong? We are the only ones who can say to the Rabbi: "Do not go and cause harm to our property". But we will not say that. Because it would

still be the greatest of blessings, if the enemies of the Christ should destroy trees, walls and even make the hill slide down, because everything would be destroyed for giving hospitality to Love, and Love would repay us, His faithful friends, with love. Let them come and destroy everything. What does it matter, if He loves us and is unhurt?! »

Jonah is seized with the fear of his enemies and of his earnest mistress, and he whispers: «What about if they injure my son?... »

Jesus comforts him saying: «I am telling you not to be afraid. I will not stop there anymore. You can tell those who ask you that the Master no longer lives at Gethsemane... No, Mary! It is better to do so. Leave it to Me! I thank you for your generosity... But it is not My hour, it is not yet My hour! I suppose they were Pharisees... »

«And members of the Sanhedrin, and Herodians, and Sadducees... and Herod's soldiers... and... everybody... I am still trembling with fear... But You can see, Lord! I ran to warn You... at Johanna's... then here... » The man is anxious to point out that he has done his duty on behalf of the Master, at the risk of his own peace.

Jesus smiles kindly and sympathetically and says: «Yes, I see. May God reward you for it. Go home in peace now. I will let you know where you should send our bags or I will send somebody to collect them Myself. »

The man goes away and everybody, with the exception of Jesus and Our Blessed Lady, blames or mocks him. Peter's remarks are biting, the Iscariot's caustic and Bartholomew's ironic. Judas Thaddeus does not say anything, but looks at him in such a way! The whispering and the reproachful glances continue also among the women, ending in the final blow of Mary of Magdala, who replies to the bow of the servant-peasant: «I will tell Lazarus to come and get poultry crammed at Gethsemane for the banquet of the feast »

«I have no hen-house, madam. »

«You, Mark and Mary: three wonderful capons! »

Everybody laughs at the angry and... meaningful witty remark of Mary of Lazarus, who is furious at the fear of her subjects and at the discomfort of the Master, Who is deprived of the quiet resting place at Gethsemane.

«Do not be upset, Mary! Peace! Not everybody has a heart like yours! »

«Oh! Unfortunately not! If everybody had a heart like mine, Rabboni! Not even spears and arrows shot at me, would separate me from You! »

The men whisper... Mary hears them and replies at once: «Of course! We shall see! And I hope soon, whether this will help you to pluck up courage. Nothing will frighten me, if I can serve my Rabbi! Yes, serve Him! And, my brothers, one helps when there is danger! When there is no danger, one does not serve, one enjoys oneself!... And the Messiah is not to be followed by us, just for the sake of enjoying ourselves! »

The men lower their heads, stung by the truth.

372. 5 <sup>5</sup>Mary squeezes through the crowd and comes before Jesus. «What have You decided, Master? It is Preparation Day. Where will You celebrate Your Passover? Give Your orders... and if I have found grace with You, grant me to offer You my supper-room and to see to everything... »

«You have found grace with the Father of Heaven, and thus you have found it with the Son of the Father. Every movement of the Father is sacred to the Son. But if I accept the supper-room, let Me go to the Temple, to sacrifice the lamb, as a good Israelite... »

«And if they catch You? » many exclaim.

«They will not catch Me. They may dare to do so at night, in the dark, as rascals are wont to do. But not in the middle of crowds who worship Me. Do not become cowardly!... »

«Oh! In any case there is Claudia now! » shouts Judas. «The King and Kingdom are no longer in danger!... »

«Judas, please! Do not let them collapse within you! Do not lay snares for them within yourself. My Kingdom is not of this world. I am not a king like those sitting on thrones. Mine is the Kingdom of the spirit. If you lower it to the meanness of a human kingdom, you are laying snares for it and causing it to collapse within you. »

«But Claudia!... »

«But Claudia is a heathen. She cannot, therefore, appreciate the value of the spirit. It is a lot if she understands and supports Him, Who, according to her, is a Wise Man... Many people in Is-

rael do not even consider Me wise!... But you are not a heathen, My dear friend! Do not allow your providential meeting with Claudia to become detrimental to you, and likewise do not allow the gift, granted by God to strengthen your faith and your will to serve the Lord, to become a spiritual disaster for you. »

«How could it, my Lord? »

«Easily. And not in you only. If a gift given to assist the weakness of man, instead of fortifying him and making him desirous of supernatural good or even simply of moral good, should instead weigh him down with human desires and divert him from the right way to vicious ways, then the gift would become a lass. Pride is sufficient to turn a gift into a lass. The disorientation caused by something that elates man is sufficient, whereby one loses sight of the supreme good Purpose, and the gift becomes harmful. Are you convinced? Claudia's coming should give you only the support of one consideration. This one: if a heathen has perceived the greatness of My doctrine and the necessity that it should triumph, you, and all the disciples with you, should feel that more intensely and, consequently, devote yourselves entirely to that. But always in a spiritual way. Always... <sup>372-6</sup>And now let us decide. Where do you think we ought to celebrate this Passover? I want you to be in the peace of spirit for this ritual Supper, in order to feel God, Who is not perceived in a state of agitation. We are many. But I would love to be all together so that you may be able to say: "We celebrated one Passover with Him". Choose therefore a place where, being divided according to the rite, we can form groups, each group being sufficient to consume its own lamb, and we may be able to say: "We were all united, and one could hear the voice of his brother". »

Some mention this place, some that one. But Lazarus' sisters are the winners. «Oh! Lord! Here! We shall send for our brother. We have many halls and rooms here. We will be all together and according to the rite. Accept our offer, Lord! The palace has rooms suitable for at least two hundred people divided into groups of twenty people each. But we are not so many. Make us happy, Lord! Do it for our Lazarus who is so sad... and so ill» and the two sisters conclude weeping: «... we do not think that he will live to eat another Passover... »

«What do you all think? Do you think we should agree with

the good sisters? » says Jesus, putting the question to everybody.

«I would say yes» says Peter.

«And I, too» says the Iscariot and many more with him.

Those who do not speak, nod assent.

«Do the necessary, then. And we will go to the Temple to prove that he who is sure that he is obeying the Most High, is not afraid and is not a coward. Let us go. My peace to those who are remaining. »

And Jesus goes down the rest of the staircase, He crosses the hall and goes out with the disciples into the street crowded with people.

### **373. The Day of Preparation. In the Temple, amongst Judaic hatred and love of the poor. The meeting with Nike.**

31<sup>st</sup> January 1946.

373. 1 <sup>1</sup>Jesus enters the Temple. And from His very first steps inside one easily understands the evil disposition of minds towards the Nazarene. They leer at Him and give orders to the Temple guards to watch «the disturber», and they give them in public, so that everybody may hear and see; they shout coarse scornful words at those who are with Him and deliberately push the apostles... In short their hatred is such that the manners of the wonderful Pharisees, scribes and doctors are coarse beyond comprehension and they do not realize, blinded as they are with malice, that their behaviour disgraces them also as human beings.

Jesus passes by calmly as if their attitude did not concern Him! And whenever He sees any important person who either by sacred rank or power belongs to the «ruling» class of the Jewish world, He is the first to greet him. And if that person does not greet in return, Jesus does not change His attitude. When He looks away from such proud people and He sees one or more of the many humble people around Him, His face brightens with a very gentle smile. And there are many of the beggars and sick people whom He gathered together yesterday and who, through their unexpected good luck, are now in a position to celebrate Passover as perhaps they had not done for years, and who have spontaneously formed groups and are now going to buy the lambs to

be sacrificed, and the poor wretches look so happy as they are now just like everybody else, both with regards to their clothes and their means. And He stops and kindly listens to them, to their resolutions, to their amazing stories, to their blessings... Old people, children, widows, people sick yesterday: now cured; miserable, ragged, starving, forlorn yesterday: today clad and happy to be like all other men in the days of the great Feast of the Unleavened Bread!

Jesus is greeted, accompanied and followed by a variety of voices, from the silvery ones of children to the trembling voices of old people and between those two extremes there are the timid voices of women. Kisses rain upon His garments and His hands. And Jesus smiles and blesses whilst His enemies, who are as livid with anger as He is bright with peace, chafe with powerless rage.

<sup>2</sup>I hear scraps of conversation...

373. 2

«You are right! But if we lifted a finger, they (and a Pharisee points at the people pressing around Jesus) would tear us to pieces. »

... «Just imagine! He gathered us together, He fed us, He gave us clothes and cured us, and many have found work and help through His rich disciples. But in actual fact, everything came from Him, may God always save Him! » says a man, who probably yesterday was ill and a beggar.

... «No wonder! That is how the rebel bribes people, and stirs them against us» says a scribe threateningly, speaking to a colleague.

«One of His disciples took my name and she told me to go to her after Passover, because she will take me to her property at Bethel. Do you realize what that means? She will be taking me and my children. So I will be working. It is a pleasure to work when one is protected and safe. And my Levi will not break his back working in the fields. The lady who is taking us on will employ him in the rose-gardens... It will be a pastime, I say! Ah! May the Eternal Father grant glory and welfare to His Messiah! » says the widow from the plain of Sharron to a well to do Israelite woman, who was questioning her.

«Oh! and could I not help?... Are you all settled, you who were gathered together yesterday? » asks the wealthy Israelite.

«No, we are not, woman. There are still some widows with children and some men. »

«I would like to ask Him whether He will allow me to help Him. »

«Call Him. »

«I dare not. »

«Go, Levi and tell Him that a woman wishes to speak to Him... »

The boy runs away and informs Jesus.

373. 3 In the meantime a Sadducee ill-treats an old man who is lecturing in the middle of a crowd from beyond the Jordan and is singing the praises of the Master of Galilee.

The old man defends himself saying: «Am I doing anything wrong? Did you want to be praised? All you had to do was do what He does. But you, may God forgive you, you despise poverty and old age, instead of loving them, because you are a false Israelite, as you do not respect Deuteronomy by having mercy on the poor\*. »

«Do you hear that? That is the result of the doctrine of the instigator! He teaches common people to offend the saints of Israel. »

A priest of the Temple replies to him: «But it is our fault, if that happens! We do nothing but utter threats, without carrying them out! »

... Jesus in the meantime says to the woman of Israel: «If you really want to be a mother to orphans and a sister to widows, go to Chuza's palace at the Sixtus. Tell Johanna that I have sent you. And may the ground be as fruitful to you as Eden, because of your pity. And may your heart be more fruitful in a deeper and deeper love for your neighbour. »

At the same time He sees the guards drag the old man who had spoken previously. He shouts: «What are you doing to the old man? And what has he done? »

«He insulted the officials who were reprimanding him. »

«That is not true. A Sadducee ill-treated me because I was speaking of You to those pilgrims. And as he lifted his hand against me, because I am old and poor, I told him that he is a

\* **mercy on the poor**, as prescribed in: *Deuteronomy 24, 10-22*.

false Israelite who tramples on the words of Deuteronomy. »

«Set the old man free. He is with Me. He spoke the truth. Not sincerity: *the Truth*. If God speaks through the lips of children, He speaks also through the lips of old people. It is written: “Do not despise a man in his old age, because those who have grown old belong to us”. It is also written: “Do not ignore the words of the wise, be conversant with their proverbs, since from these you will learn wisdom and the theory of intelligence”, and also: “Do not be talkative where there are old men”. Let Israel remember that, that part of Israel which says that it is perfect, otherwise the Most High will give the lie to it. Father, come here beside Me. »

The old man approaches Jesus, while the Sadducees, impressed by the reproach, go away angrily.

4«I am a Jewess of the Diaspora, o expected King. Could I <sup>373. 4</sup>serve You like that woman whom You sent to Johanna? » says a woman, who is very much like that one, named Nicky, who wiped Jesus' face on Golgotha and received the Towel. But Jewesses are very much alike and after many months after that vision, I might be wrong.

Jesus looks at her. He sees a woman about forty years old, well dressed, of frank manner. He asks her: «You are a widow, are you not? »

«Yes, I am. And I have no children. I came back recently and I bought some land at Jericho, to be close to the Holy City. But now I see that You are greater than it is. And I will follow You. And I beg You to accept me as Your servant. I heard of You from Your disciples, but You exceed what they told me. »

«All right. But what do you want exactly? »

«To help You with the poor people and make people love You and know You, as best I can. I know many people in the colonies of the Diaspora, as I used to follow my husband in his business. I have means, but I need little for myself. So I can do quite a lot. And I am anxious to do much for Your sake and to pray for the soul of him who married me twenty years ago and who was my loving companion until his last breath. He told me when he was dying. He seemed to prophesy: “When I am dead, deliver this flesh of mine, which loved you, to the tomb and go back to our country. You will find the Promised One. Oh! You will see Him!



Look for Him and follow Him. He is the Redeemer and the Reviver and He will open the door of Life to me. Be kind and help me to be ready when He will open Heaven to those who have no debts with Justice and be good in order to deserve to meet Him soon. Swear that you will do so and that you will turn the unfruitful tears of widowhood into active strength. Follow the example of Judith, my darling, and all the nations will know your name". My poor husband! I ask You only to take cognizance of me... »

«I will know you as a good disciple. You may go to Johanna as well and may God be with you. »

373. 5 5... As busy as bees Jesus' enemies attack Him once again while He is making His way to the enclosure of the Temple, after He has sacrificed His lamb and has waited for those of the disciples to be sacrificed, in order to have enough for everybody.

«When are You going to stop posing as a king? You are not a king! And You are not a prophet! How long do You intend to trespass on our kindness, You sinner, rebel and cause of evil to Israel? How many times have we to tell You that You have no right to act as a Rabbi in here? »

«I came to sacrifice a lamb. You cannot forbid that. In any case I would remind you of Adonijah and Solomon\*. »

«What have they got to do with it? What do You mean? Are You Adonijah? »

«No. Adonijah made himself king by fraud, but Wisdom was watching and advising, and Solomon only became king. I am not Adonijah. I am Solomon. »

«And who is Adonijah? »

«All of you. »

«We? How can You say that? »

«With truth and justice. »

«We comply with the Law, with every point of it, we believe in the prophets and... »

«No. You do not believe in the prophets. They mention Me, but you do not believe in Me. You do not comply with the Law. It

\* **Adonijah and Solomon**, whose events in the succession to King David, their father, are narrated in: *1 King 1; 2, 1-25*. Other notes related to Solomon, apart from simple quotes of his name, are in: 69. 1 - 142. 4 - 166. 4 - 245. 3 - 269. 10 - 302. 1 - 336. 4 - 348. 10 - 389. 2 - 516. 3. 5.

prescribes just deeds, which you do not do. Even the offerings, which you come here to make, are not honest.

It is written\*: “The sacrifice of an offering unjustly acquired is a mockery”. It is written: “The Most High takes no pleasure in offerings from wicked people, He pays no attention to their offerings, multiplying sacrifices will not gain His pardon for sin”. It is written: “Offering sacrifice from the property of the poor is as bad as slaughtering a son before his father’s very eyes”. That is what is written, Johanan!

It is written: “A meagre diet is the very life of the poor, he who withholds it is a man of blood”. That is what is written, Ishmael!

It is written: “A man murders his neighbour if he robs him of his livelihood”. That is what is written, o Doras son of Doras.

It is written: “He who sheds blood and he who withholds an employee’s wages are brothers”. That is what is written, o Johanan, Ishmael, Hananiah, Doras, Jonathan. And remember that it is also written: “Whoever turns a deaf ear to the cries of the poor, will cry too, but he will not be listened to”.

And you, Eleazar ben Annas, remember and remind your father that it is written: “Let My priests be holy, they must not allow themselves to be contaminated for any reason whatsoever”.

And you, Cornelius, had better know that it is written: “Anyone who curses father and mother, must die”, and death is given not only by the executioner. A more severe death awaits those who sin against their parents: the eternal dreadful death.

And you, Tolme, remember that it is written: “He who practises magic, will be exterminated by Me”.

And you, Sadoc, golden scribe, remember that between an adulterer and his procurer of adultery there is no difference in the eyes of God and that it is written that he who swears falsehood will be devoured by everlasting flames. And tell him, who has forgotten it, that he who marries a virgin and when he is satiated with her, he rejects her with false accusations, is to be condemned. Oh! not in this world. In future life, because of his deceit, his perjury, the damage caused to his wife and his adultery.

What? Are you all running away? Before the Defenceless One Who is speaking words that are not His own, but belong to those

\* **It is written** introduces a whole sequence of quotes, not all textual, that we may group together as: *Leviticus 20, 6, 9; 21, 6-8; Sirach 34, 18-22.*

whom you declare to be the saints of Israel, thus you cannot say that the Defenceless One is a blasphemer; because if you did, you would call blasphemers the Books of Wisdom and those of Moses, which were dictated by God? Are you fleeing from the Defenceless One? Are perhaps My words stones? Or are they rousing your consciences by striking the hard bronze of your hardened hearts, and your consciences feel that it is their duty to become purified, not only in your bodies, in this Preparation Day, so that you may consume the holy lamb without any sin of impurity? Oh! if it is so, praised be the Lord! Because, since you wish to be praised as wise men, remember that it is true wisdom to know oneself, to confess one's errors, to repent and thus celebrate the rites with "true" devotion. That is, with the cult and rite of your souls, and not with an external cult...

They have gone! Let us go as well to give peace to those who are waiting for us... »

### **374. The Day of Preparation. Along the streets of Jerusalem and in the neighbourhood of Ophel.**

2<sup>nd</sup> February 1946.

374. 1 <sup>1</sup>They come out of the Temple, overcrowded with people and plunge into the swarming streets, where everybody is making haste in the last preparations for Passover and late comers are anxiously looking for a room, a hall, any place at all, to use as a supper-room, where to consume the lamb.

It is thus easy to meet people but it is also easy not to recognize one another in the dense agitated crowd, as one sees faces of all ages, of all the regions where there are Israelites, and where the pure blood of Israel, through mixture of blood or simply through mimicry, has become like other races. One can thus see Jews who are like Egyptians or look like Nubians because of their thick prominent lips, snub noses and facial angle; others with small fine features, slender bodies, witty eyes make one understand that they come from the Greek colonies or are crossed with Greeks; whereas tall robust men, with rather square faces, clearly show that they are connected with the Latin race; and there are many who modern people would say are Circassians or

Persians with a resemblance of Mongolian or Indian eyes in the very white faces of the former and the olive-hued faces of the latter. A beautiful kaleidoscope of faces and garments! The result is that one's eyes become tired and one ends up by looking without seeing. But what escapes one is noticed by another.

It is therefore understandable that what escapes the Master, Who is always absorbed in thought when He is left in peace, without being asked questions, is noticed by this one or that one of His followers. And the apostles, those who are closer to Jesus, point out to one another what they see and talk to one another in low voices making worldly comments... on the people they point out.

<sup>2</sup>One such biting comment on an ex-disciple who passes by <sup>374. 2</sup> haughtily, pretending he does not see them, is heard by Jesus, Who asks: «To whom were those words referred? »

«To that blockhead over there» says James of Zebedee. «He pretended he did not see us, and he is not the only one to do so. But when he wanted to be cured and was looking for You, he did see us! I hope he gets a malignant pustule! »

«James!! Are you standing beside Me with such feelings while you are getting ready to consume the lamb? In actual fact you are more inconsistent than he. He went away openly when he felt he could not do what I said. You, instead, have remained but you do not do what I say. Are you not perhaps a greater sinner than he? »

James blushes so deeply that he looks congested, and he withdraws behind his companions, as he is humiliated.

«It hurts to see them behave like that, Master! » says John to support his brother who has been reproached. «Our love rebels seeing their estrangement... »

«Of course. But do you think that you can bring them back to love by so doing? Discourteous acts, bad words, insults have never brought a rival or a man of different opinion to where he should be led. It is through kindness, patience, charity, persevering notwithstanding refusals, that you achieve your purpose. I understand and pity your hearts, which suffer seeing that I am not loved. But I would like to see and know that you are more supernatural in your acts and means to make Me loved. Come on, James, come here. I did not speak to humiliate you. Let us love and understand one another, at least among ourselves, My dear

friends... There is already so much incomprehension and sorrow for the Son of man! »

James, who is cheerful again, goes back beside Him.

374. 3 <sup>3</sup>They walk for some time in silence, then Thomas bursts into a thundering exclamation: «But it's really a shame! »

«What? » asks Jesus.

«The meanness of so many people! Master, don't You see how many pretend they do not know You? »

«So what? Will their behaviour change one iota of what has been written about Me? No, it will not. Only with regards to themselves what could be written will change. Because in the eternal books it could be said of them: "Good disciples", whereas it will be written: "They were not good, the coming of the Messiah meant nothing to them". Dreadful words, you know? Worse than: "Adam and Eve sinned". Because I can cancel that sin. But I will not be able to cancel the sin of those who deny the Word

374. 4 Saviour... <sup>4</sup>Let us go this way. I will stop with My brothers, with Simon Peter and James in the suburb of Ophel. Judas of Simon also will remain with Me. But Simon Zealot, John and Thomas will go to Gethsemane to get the bags... »

«Yes, so Jonah's lamb will not go down his throat the wrong way» says Peter, who is still angry. The others laugh...

«Be good! There is no reason to be astonished if he is afraid. You might feel the same tomorrow. »

«Me, Master? The sea of Galilee is more likely to turn into wine than I am to be afraid» states Peter confidently.

«And yet... the other evening... Oh! Simon! You did not look so brave on the staircase of Chuza's palace» remarks Judas of Kerioth pungently, without being too ironic... but sufficiently sarcastic to bite Peter.

«I was afraid for the Lord, that is why I was worried! For no other reason. »

«Very well! Let us hope that we shall... never be afraid, so that we may not cut a bad figure, eh! » replies Judas-of Kerioth, clapping him on his shoulder, protectingly and maliciously...

At any other moment his behaviour would have given rise to a reaction. But Peter, since the previous evening, is full of... admiration for Judas and puts up with him in everything.

Jesus says: «Philip and Nathanael with Andrew and Matthew,

please go to Lazarus' palace and tell them that we are coming. »  
The four apostles part and the others proceed with Jesus. The disciples, with the exception of Stephen and Isaac, go with the apostles sent to the palace.

At the Ophel suburb there is a further parting. Those destined for Gethsemane go away quickly with Isaac. Stephen remains with Jesus, the sons of Alphaeus, Peter, James and the Iscariot and to avoid stopping at the cross-roads, they proceed slowly in the same direction as those who have gone to Gethsemane. They go along the same little street along which Jesus will be taken by His torturers on the evening of Holy Thursday. Now, about midday, it is empty. After a short distance they come to a little square with a fountain shaded by a fig-tree, which is opening its little tender leaves above the calm water.

<sup>5</sup>«There is Samuel of Annaleah» says James of Alphaeus, who <sup>374. 5</sup> must know him well. The young man is about to enter a house carrying a lamb... and other foodstuffs.

«He is preparing the Passover supper also for his relative» remarks Judas of Alphaeus.

«Has he settled here now? Had he not gone away? » asks Peter.

«Yes, he has settled here. They say that he is flirting with the daughter of Cleopas, the sandal-maker. She is wealthy... »

«Ah! So why does he say that Annaleah left him? » asks the Iscariot. «That's a lie! »

«Man often makes use of lies. And he does not realize that by doing so he takes the wrong path. The first step, one step, is enough, and one can no longer get free... It is birdlime... it is a labyrinth... a snare... A sloping snare... » says Jesus to Judas of Kerioth.

«What a pity! He seemed such a good man last year! » says James of Zebedee.

«Yes. I really thought that he would imitate his girl-friend devoting himself entirely to You and forming a couple of married angels and Your servants. I would have sworn to it!... » says Peter.

«My dear Simon! Never swear on the future of man. It is the most uncertain of all things. No element, existing at the time of the oath, can guarantee a safe oath. There are criminals who' become saints, and there are just people, or apparently just, who

become criminals» Jesus replies to him.

374. 6 «Samuel in the meantime, after going into the house, has come out once again to draw water at the fountain... He thus sees Jesus. He looks at Him with obvious contempt and hurls at Him what is certainly an insult, although I do not understand it, as it was spoken in Hebrew.

The Iscariot jumps forward all of a sudden, he catches him by the arm, shaking him like a tree from which one wants ripe fruit to drop: «Is that how you speak to the Master, you sinner? Down, on your knees, at once! Apologise to Him, you foul tongue of a dirty pig! Down! Or I'll break your neck! » Handsome Judas is furious in his sudden violence! His countenance has changed fearfully. Jesus tries to calm him in vain. He does not release his hold until he sees the sinner kneeling on the muddy earth around the fountain.

«Forgive me» says the unlucky fellow between his teeth, feeling Judas' fingers torture him like pincers. But he says so badly, only because he is forced to it.

Jesus replies: «I am not angry. But you still are, notwithstanding what you say. Words are useless unless they are uttered with one's heart. But you are still cursing Me in your heart. And you are thus twice guilty. Because you accuse Me and you hate Me for a reason, which your conscience, from its very depth, tells you is not true. And because you are the only one who is at fault, not Annaleah, not I. But I forgive you everything. Go and try to become honest and pleasing to God. Let him go, Judas. »

«I am going. But I hate You! You have led Annaleah astray, and I hate You... »

«But you have found consolation with Rebecca, the sandal-maker's daughter. And you have sought consolation since Annaleah was your fiancée, and although ill, she thought of you only... »

«I was a widower... I thought I already was... and I was looking for a wife... I have now gone back to Rebecca because... because Annaleah does not want me» says Samuel to justify himself, when he realizes that his mischief has been discovered.

Judas Iscariot concludes: «... and because Rebecca is very rich. She is as ugly as an old worn-out sandal... and as old as a sole lost along the way... but rich, oh! very rich!... » and he laughs

sarcastically, while the other runs away.

«How do you know?» asks Peter.

«Oh!... it is easy to find out where there are virgins and money!»

«Well! Shall we go along this little street, Master? This square is as hot as an oven. It is shaded and windy» implores Peter who is perspiring.

<sup>7</sup>They walk slowly, waiting for the others to come back. The street is deserted. 374. 7

A woman comes out of a door and prostrates herself at Jesus' feet weeping.

«What is the matter?»

«Master!... Are You already purified?»

«Yes. Why are you asking Me?»

«Because I wanted to tell You... But You cannot approach him. He is all rotten... The doctor says that he is infected. I will call the priest after Passover... and... Hinnom will receive him. Don't say that it is my fault. I did not know... He worked at Joppa for many months and he came back saying that he had injured himself. I have used balms and I have bathed him with aromatic herbs... But they do not help. I applied to a herbalist. He gave me some powders for the blood... I separated the children... the bed... because I was beginning to realize. He got worse. I sent for the doctor. He said to me: "Woman, you know what your duty is and I know mine. It is an injury caused by lust. Separate him from yourself, I will separate him from the people, the priest from Israel. He should have thought about it when he was offending God, you and himself. Let him expiate now". He promised not to say anything until after the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. But if You had mercy on the sinner, on me who love him and on the five innocent children... »

«What do you want Me to do for you? Do you not think that he who sinned should expiate?»

«Yes Lord! But You are the Living Mercy!» All the faith of which a woman is capable is in her voice, in her eyes, in her kneeling attitude, with her arms stretched out towards the Saviour.

«And what are his feelings?»

«He is disheartened... What else could he be, Lord?»



«A supernatural feeling of repentance, of justice would be sufficient to obtain mercy!... »

«Justice? »

«Yes. He should say: “I have sinned. My sin deserves this and much more, but I ask those whom I offended to have mercy on me”. »

374. 8 «I have already had pity on him. You, God, have mercy on him. I cannot say to you: come in... I am not touching You myself either... <sup>8</sup>But if You want I will call him and I will make him speak from the terrace. »

«Yes, do. »

The woman, with her head inside the door of the house, shouts in a loud voice: «Jacob! Jacob! Go up to the roof. Look out. Don't be afraid. »

A few moments later the man appears at the parapet of the terrace. His face is yellowish and swollen, his neck and one hand are bandaged... the wreck of an infected man... He looks with the watery eyes of a man affected by dishonourable diseases. He asks: «Who wants me? »

«Jacob, the Saviour is here... » The woman says no more but she looks as if she wanted to hypnotise the sick man and instil her thoughts into him...

The man, whether he perceives her thoughts, or through a spontaneous act, stretches his arms and says: «Oh! Free me! I believe in You! It is terrible to die like this! »

«It is terrible to fail in one's duty. You did not think of that! You did not think of your children! »

«Have mercy, Lord... On them, on me... Forgive me! » And he leans on the low wall weeping. His bandaged hand is protruding as well as his arm, which is uncovered as his sleeve is pulled up and is spotted with pustules, and swollen: a repulsive sight... The man, in his present position, is like a macabre puppet or a corpse abandoned there and about to decay. A pitiful and disgusting sight at the same time.

The woman is weeping, still on her knees, in the dust. Jesus seems to be waiting for a further word.

At last it is heard among sobs: «I implore You with contrition in my heart! At least assure me that they will not starve... and then.. I will go with resignation... But save my soul, o Blessed

Saviour! At least that! »

«Yes, I will cure you. For the innocent children's sake and to give you the opportunity to become just. Do you understand? Remember that the Saviour cured you. God will absolve you of your sins according to how you respond to this grace. Goodbye. Peace to you woman. » And He almost runs away to meet those who are coming from Gethsemane. Not even the shouts of the man who feels and sees that he has been cured can stop Him, or those of his wife...

«Let us go along this lane, to avoid passing there again» says Jesus after He has joined the others.

<sup>9</sup>They walk along a miserable lane, which is so narrow that two people can hardly go along it walking side by side and if one should meet a donkey with a pack-saddle, one would have to stick to the wall like a stamp. The light is very faint because the roofs almost touch each other. It is a solitary, silent, bad smelling lane. They proceed in single file to the end of it. Then at a little square, crowded with boys, they all get together. 374. 9

«Why did You say those words to that man? You never said them before... » asks Peter curiously.

«Because that man will be one of My enemies. And his future sin will aggravate his present fault. »

«And You cured him?! » they all ask with surprised countenance.

«Yes. For the innocent children's sake. »

«H'm! He will fall ill again... »

«No, he will take care of his body, after the fright he had and what he suffered. He will not be taken ill again. »

«But he will sin against You, as You said. I would have let him die. »

«You are a sinner, Simon of Jonah. »

«And You are too good, Jesus of Nazareth» replies Peter.

They disappear in a central street and I no longer can see them.

<sup>10</sup>A note of mine.

I have recognized\* both the man who was cured and Samuel.

\* I have recognized, them because "seen" in an episode written the previous year, which will be in 604. 2.

The former is the man who hit Jesus' head with a stone at His Passion. I recognize him better than his wife, who was sorrowful then as she is now and I recognize the house, which has a characteristically tall door with three steps. Likewise, notwithstanding the mask of hatred that transforms him, I recognize in Samuel the young man who kills his mother with a kick in order to be able to go and strike the Master with a cudgel.

### **375. The ritual dinner in the palace of Lazarus and the sacrilegious banquet in the house of Samuel.**

3<sup>rd</sup> February 1946.

375. 1    1When Jesus enters the palace, He sees that it is crowded with servants from Bethany, who are busy making preparations. Lazarus, who is lying on a little bed and is suffering very much, greets the Master with a faint smile. He hastens towards him, bending kindly over the little bed and asking: «You have suffered a great deal, My dear friend, because of the jolting of the wagon, have you not? »

«Very much, Master» replies Lazarus, so exhausted that the very memory of what he felt makes tears well up in his eyes.

«Through My fault! Forgive Me! »

Lazarus takes one of Jesus' hands up to his face, rubs his skinny cheek against it, kisses it and whispers: «Oh! It was no fault of Yours, Lord! I am so happy that You are celebrating Passover with me... my last Passover!... »

«With God's will, notwithstanding everything, you will celebrate many more, Lazarus. And your heart will always be with Me. »

«Oh! I am a finished man! You are consoling me... but it is all over. And I am sorry... » He weeps.

«See, Lord? Lazarus does nothing but weep» says Martha compassionately. «Tell him not to cry. He wears himself out! »

«The body still has its rights. It is painful to suffer, Martha, and the flesh weeps. And it needs relief. But the soul is resigned, is it not, My friend? Your just soul is willing to do the will of the Lord... »

«Yes... But I weep because, since You are so persecuted, You

will not be able to assist me at the hour of my death... I shudder at the thought of death, I am afraid to die... But if You were here, I would not feel thus. I would take shelter in Your arms... and I would fall asleep like that... What shall I do? How shall I be able to die without feeling that I do not want to obey the dreadful Will? »

«Cheer up! Do not let that worry you! See? You are making your sisters weep... The Lord will help you so paternally' that you will not be afraid. Sinners must be afraid... »

«But You, if You can, will You come to me when I am in agony? Promise me! »

«I promise that and even more. »

«While they are preparing, tell me what You have done this morning... »

And Jesus, sitting on the edge of the little bed, holding one of Lazarus' skinny hands in His own, tells him in detail what happened, until Lazarus, who is exhausted, falls asleep. Jesus does not leave him even then. He remains still in order not to disturb his refreshing slumber and makes signs to make the least possible noise, so much so that Martha, after bringing a refreshment to Jesus, withdraws on tiptoe, drawing the heavy curtain and closing the solid door. The noise of the busy house is thus deadened to a barely perceptible low sound. Lazarus is sleeping. Jesus is engrossed in prayer and meditation.

<sup>375. 2</sup>Some hours pass thus, until Mary of Magdala brings a small lamp, because it is getting dark and the windows are closed.

«Is he still sleeping? » she whispers.

«Yes. He is very calm. It will do him good. »

«He has never slept so long for months... I think that the fear of death made him restless. With You close to him he is not afraid of anything... He is fortunate! »

«Why, Mary? »

«Because he will be able to have You beside him when he dies. But I... »

«Why not? »

«Because You want to die... soon. And who knows when I will die. Let me die before You, Master! »

«No, you will have to serve Me for a long time yet. »

«So I am right in saying that Lazarus is fortunate! »

«All the beloved ones will be as fortunate as he is, even more so... »

«Who are they? The pure, are they not? »

«Those who know how to love totally. You, for instance, Mary. »

«Oh! My Master! » Mary throws herself down, on the multi-coloured mat that covers the floor of this room, and she remains there, adoring her Jesus.

Martha, who is looking for her, looks into the room. «Come on, then! We must prepare the red hall for the supper of the Lord. »

«No, Martha. Give that room to the most humble guests, to Johanan's peasants, for instance. »

«Why, Master? »

«Because each poor man is Jesus and I am in all of them. Always love the poor whom no one loves, if you want to be perfect. Prepare for Me in the entrance-hall. If you leave open the doors of the many rooms opening on to it, everybody will be able to see Me and I shall see everybody. »

Martha, who is not very happy, objects: «What? You in the entrance-hall?... It is not worthy of You!... »

«Go, do as I say. It is most worthy to do what the Master advises. »

Martha and Mary go out silently and Jesus remains patiently to watch His friend who is resting.

375. 3     <sup>3</sup>Supper has now begun, with a distribution of the guests, which from a human point of view is not very just, but with a superior view aiming at giving honour and love to those who are usually neglected by the world.

Thus Johanan's peasants with Marjiam, Isaac and other disciples, to make up the ritual number\*, are sitting in the splendid regal red hall, the vault of which is supported by two columns of red porphyry, between which a long table has been placed. In the

\* **the ritual number** this may refer, as in 372. 6, to the prescription of the *Exodus* 12, 4 in the context of the ritual for the celebration of Easter, with greater details in the chapter on the Last Easter supper (from 600. 7 onwards). With regards to the Hebrew Easter, reference is made, once and for all, to *Exodus* 12; 13, 1-16; 23, 14-19; 34, 10-28; *Leviticus* 23, 5-8; *Numbers* 9, 1-14, 28, 16-25; *Deuteronomy* 16, 1-8; *Ezekiel* 45, 18-24. Prophecies taken from the Mosaic Easter can be found in 589. 3/7.

hall where they had supper the previous evening there are some more of the most humble disciples. In the white hall, a dream of white splendour, there are the virgin-disciples, and with them, only four in number, there are Lazarus' sisters and Anastasica and other young women. But the queen of the feast is Mary, the preeminent Virgin. In the next room, which is perhaps a library because the walls are lined with tall dark bookcases, which perhaps contain or contained rolls, there are the widows and the wives and they are looked after by Eliza of Bethzur and Mary of Alphaeus. And so on.

But what strikes one is to see Jesus in the marble entrance-hall. It is true that the refined taste of Lazarus' sisters has turned the square entrance into a large hall, which is brighter, more embellished and splendid than any hall. But it is still the entrance! Jesus is with the Twelve, but Lazarus is beside Him. And with Lazarus there is also Maximinus.

The supper proceeds according to the rite... and Jesus shines with joy and pleasure being in the centre of all His faithful disciples.

<sup>4</sup>When the supper is over, the last chalice has been consumed and the last psalm sung, all those who were in the different rooms crowd into the entrance. But they cannot all go in, because the table takes up much room. 375. 4

«Let us go into the red hall, Master. We will push the table against the wall and we will all be around You» suggests Lazarus beckoning to the servants to do so.

Jesus, Who is sitting in the centre, between the two precious columns, under the bright chandelier, on a tall pedestal formed with two bed-seats used for the supper, now really looks like a king on a throne in the midst of His courtiers. His linen tunic, which He put on before supper, shines as if it were woven with precious threads, and looks even whiter against the opaque red of the walls and the bright red of the columns. And His countenance is really divine and regal while He speaks or listens to those around Him. Even the most humble ones, whom He wanted near Him, speak confidently, mentioning their hopes, their worries with simplicity and faith, as they feel that they are loved in a brotherly way by the others.

<sup>5</sup>But the happiest among so many happy people is Marjiam's 375. 5

grandfather! He does not part from his grandson even for one moment, and he delights in looking at him and listening to him... Now and again, as he is sitting beside Marjiam, who is standing, he rests his white head on the chest of his grandson, who caresses it.

Jesus sees him do this several times and He asks him: «Father, is your heart happy? »

«Oh! very happy, my Lord! I cannot believe that it is true. I have but one desire now... »

«Which? »

«The one I mentioned to my son. But he does not approve of it. »

«What is your desire? »

«I would like to die, if possible, in this peace. Soon, at least. Because I have already received the greatest blessing. No human being can have more on the Earth. I want to go... suffer no more... go... How rightly You spoke in the Temple, Lord! “Offering sacrifice from the property of the poor is as bad as slaughtering a son before his father’s very eyes”. Only his fear of You prevents Johanan from emulating Doras. He is forgetting what happened to the other one, his fields are thriving and he fertilises them with our perspiration. Is perspiration not the property of the poor workman, his very self that is worn out with work exceeding his strength? He does not beat us, he gives us enough to enable us to work. But does he not exploit us more than his oxen? Will you tell Him, o my companions... »

Johanan’s new and old peasants nod assent.

«H’m! I think that... Yes, that Your words have made him a greater vampire... to their detriment... Why did You say them, Master? » asks Peter.

«Because he deserved them. What do you say, you workers of his fields? »

«Oh! yes! The first months... it was all right. But now... it is worse than before» avers Micah.

«The bucket of the well is pulled down by its own weight» declares John the priest.

«Yes, and a wolf soon grows weary of looking like a lamb» confirms Hermas.

The women, who are deeply moved, whisper to one another.

Jesus looks at the poor peasants with eyes wide with pity, and He is anguished at not being able to relieve them.

Lazarus says: «I offered absurd amounts of money to have those fields and give these men peace. But I did not succeed in getting them. Doras hates me, he is exactly like his father. »

«Well... we shall die thus. It is our destiny. But the time for us to rest in Abraham's bosom will certainly come! » exclaims Saul, another peasant of Johanan's.

«In God's bosom, son! In God's bosom. Redemption will be completed, Heaven will be open and you will go to Heaven and... »

«Somebody hammers at the main door, which resounds loudly. The guests become agitated. 375.6

«Who is it? »

«Who goes about on the evening of the Passover? »

«Soldiers? »

«Pharisees? »

«Herod's soldiers? »

But while the agitation spreads, Levi, the caretaker of the palace, appears. «Forgive me, Rabbi» he says «there is a man who wants You. He is in the entrance. He looks very depressed. He is old and looks like a man of the people. He wishes to see You at once. »

«Hey! This is no evening for miracles! Tell him to come back tomorrow... » says Peter.

«No. Every evening is the hour for miracles, and mercy» says Jesus standing up and descending from His seat to go towards the hall.

«Are You going alone? I will come with You» says Peter.

«No, stay where you are. » He goes out with Levi.

Near the heavy main door, at the other end of the entrance, which is now in half-darkness as all the lights have been put out, there is a very excited old man. Jesus approaches him.

«Stop, Master. I have perhaps touched a dead body and I do not want to contaminate You. I am the relative of Samuel, Annaleah's fiance. We were eating our supper and Samuel drank all the time... as it is not right to do. But the young man seems to have become mad for some time. It's remorse, Lord! He was half-drunk and while drinking again he was saying: "So I cannot re-



member whether I told Him that I hate Him. Because, I must tell you that I cursed the Rabbi”. And he looked like Cain to me, because he went on repeating: “My wickedness is too great. I do not deserve to be forgiven! I must drink! I must drink to forget. Because it is written\* that he who curses his God will carry his sin and must die”. He was raving like that when a relative of Anna-leah’s mother came into the house to ask about the repudiation. Samuel, who was almost drunk, replied with coarse words and the man threatened to take him to justice for the damage he was causing to the family honour. Samuel slapped his face. They came to blows... I am old, my sister is old, the servant and the maid are also old. What could the four of us and the two girls, Samuel’s sisters, do? All we could do was to shout and try to separate them! Nothing else... And Samuel took the hatchet with which we had prepared the firewood for the lamb and hit the man on the head with it... He did not split his head, because he hit him with the butt-end and not the blade. The man staggered babbling and fell... We did not shout any longer... as we did not wish to attract the attention of people... We bolted the door... We were terrified... We poured some water on the man’s head hoping he would come round. But he babbled all the time. He was certainly dying. At times he seemed dead. So I ran here to call You. His relatives will be looking for him tomorrow, perhaps earlier. And they will come to us, because they certainly know that he came. And they will find him dead... And Samuel, according to the Law, will be killed... Lord! Lord! Disgrace is already on top of us... We don’t want that! For the sake of my sister, Lord, have mercy on us! He cursed You... But his mother loves You... What shall we do? »

«Wait for Me here. I will come» and Jesus goes back to the hall and from the door He calls: «Judas of Kerioth, come with Me. »

«Where, Lord? » asks Judas obeying promptly.

«You will see. All of you stay here in peace and love. We shall soon be back. »

<sup>375. 7</sup> They go out the hall, through the entrance and leave the house. Through deserted dark roads they soon reach the tragic house.

\*it is written, in: *Leviticus 24, 15-16.*

«Samuel's house?! Why?... »

«Be quiet, Judas. I brought you with Me, because I rely on your common sense. »

The old man has made himself known. They go in. They go up—stairs, to the supper room, where they dragged the injured man.

«A dead man?! But Master, we will be contaminated! »

«He is not dead. You can see that he breathes and you can hear him groan. I will now cure him... »

«But his head has been struck! It's a crime! Who committed it?... And on the day of the lamb! » Judas is terrified.

«It was he» says Jesus pointing at Samuel, who is curled up in a corner, closer to death than the dying man, panting for breath with terror as the other man has the death-rattle in his throat, with part of his mantle over his head not to see and not to be seen, looked at with terror by everybody, except his mother, who with horror at the crime feels the torture of a guilty son already condemned by the rigid law of Israel. «Do you see to what result a first sin leads? To this, Judas! He began by perjuring himself over the girl, then over God; he then became slanderer, liar, blasphemer, then he took to drinking and now he is a murderer. That is how one becomes subject to Satan, Judas. Always bear it in mind... » Jesus is dreadfully solemn while He points at Samuel with His arm outstretched.

He then looks at Samuel's mother, who clinging to a shutter can hardly stand up and struck with terror seems to be dying, and He sadly says: «Judas, that is how poor mothers are killed by no weapon other than the crimes of their sons!... I feel sorry for her. I feel sorry for mothers! I, the Son, Who will see no mercy for His Mother... »

Jesus weeps... Judas looks at Him in bewilderment...

<sup>8</sup>Jesus bends over the dying man and lays His hand on his <sup>375. 8</sup> head. He prays.

The man opens his eyes. He looks stunned and amazed... but he soon revives. He sits up helping himself with his arms. He looks at Jesus and asks: «Who are You? »

«Jesus of Nazareth. »

«The Holy One! Why are You here with me! Where am I! Where is my sister and her daughter? What happened? » He tries to remember.

«Man, you called Me the Holy One. So, do you believe that I am such? »

«Yes, Lord. I do. You are the Messiah of the Lord. »

«So, is My word sacred to you? »

«Yes, Lord, it is. »

«Then... » Jesus stands up. He is imposing: «Then I, as Master and Messiah, order you to forgive. You came here and you were insulted... »

«Ah! Samuel! Of course!... The hatchet! I will denounce... » he says getting up.

«No. Forgive in the name of God. That is why I cured you. You care for Annaleah's mother because she has suffered. Samuel's mother would suffer even more. So forgive. »

The man hesitates somewhat. He looks at the injurer with evident ill-feeling. He looks at the anguished mother. He looks at Jesus Who commands him... He cannot make up his mind.

Jesus stretches His arms towards him, and draws him to His chest saying: «For My sake! »

The man begins to weep... To be thus in the arms of the Messiah to feel His breath in his hair and a kiss where the wound was!... He weeps...

Jesus says: «Yes, is that true? You forgive him for My sake? Oh! blessed be the merciful! Weep, do weep on My Heart. Let all ill-feeling come out with your tears! All new! All pure! There you are! Be meek! Oh! meek, as a child of God ought to be... »

The man looks and, still weeping, says: «Yes. Your love is so sweet! Annaleah is right! I now understand her... Woman, do not weep anymore! Let bygones be bygones. No one will learn anything from my mouth. Enjoy your son, providing he can give you joy. Goodbye woman. I am going back to my house» and he is on the point of going out.

Jesus says to him: «I am coming with you, man. Goodbye, mother. Goodbye, Abraham. Goodbye, girls. » Not a word to Samuel, who finds no word either.

His mother tears the mantle off his head, and as a result of what she suffered, she rushes upon her son: «Thank your Saviour, you heartless man! Thank Him, you worthless man!... »

«Leave him, woman. His word would be of no value. Wine makes him silly and his soul is dull. Pray for him... Goodbye. »

9He goes downstairs, in the street He joins Judas and the other man, He frees Himself from old Abraham, who wants to kiss His hands, and He begins to stride out in the early moonlight.

«Do you live far from here? » He asks the man.

«At the foot of Moriah. »

«Then we must part. »

«Lord, You have preserved me for my children, my wife, my life. What shall I do for You? »

«Be good, forgive and be quiet. Never, for any reason whatsoever, are you to say one word about what happened. Will you promise? »

«I swear to it on the Sacred Temple! However, I regret I cannot say that You saved me... »

«Be just, and I will save your soul. And you will be able to say that. Goodbye, man. Peace be with you. »

The man kneels down greeting Him. They part. «How dreadful! » says Judas now that they are alone.

«Yes. Horrible. Judas, you are not to speak either. »

«No, Lord, I will not. But why did You want me with You? »

«Are you not happy to have My confidence? »

«Oh! Very! But... »

«But because I wanted you to ponder on what falsehood, greed for money, orgy and the lifeless practice of a religion, which is no longer felt and practised spiritually, can lead to. What did the symbolic supper mean to Samuel? Nothing! A guzzling. A sacrilege. And through it he became homicidal. Many in the future will be like him, and with the taste of the Lamb in their mouths, not of a lamb born of a sheep, but of the divine Lamb, they will commit crimes. Why? How? Are you not inquiring why? I will tell you just the same: because they will have prepared that hour through previous deeds performed carelessly first, and stubbornly later. Remember that, Judas. »

«Yes, Master, I will. But what shall we tell the others? »

«That a man was seriously ill. It is the truth. »

They turn the corner of a street and I no longer see them.

### 376. The saving deeds of the right. The moods of Herod. A serious case of corruption in the Temple.

4<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

376. 1 <sup>1</sup>Many disciples, both men and women, have taken leave and have gone back to the houses where they are guests, or have set out for home again.

On this wonderful afternoon in late April only the true and proper disciples, and particularly those more devoted to preaching, have remained in Lazarus' house. That is, the shepherds Hermas and Stephen, John the priest, Timoneus, Ermasteus, Joseph of Emmaus, Solomon, Abel of Bethlehem in Galilee, Samuel and Abel of Korazim, Agapo, Aser and Ishmael of Nazareth, Elias of Korazim, Philip of Arbela, Joseph the boatman from Tiberias, John of Ephesus, Nicolaus of Antioch. Besides the well-known women disciples, also Annaleah, Dorcas, Judas' mother, Myrtha, Anastasica and Philip's daughters have remained. I do not see Mirjiam of Jairus any longer or Jairus himself. Perhaps they have gone back to the house that offered them hospitality.

They are walking slowly in the courtyards, or on the terrace of the house, while almost all the women and all the old women disciples are around Jesus, Who is sitting near Lazarus' little bed. They are listening to Jesus Who is speaking to Lazarus, describing the villages they have been through during the last weeks before their Passover trip.

376. 2 <sup>2</sup> «You arrived just in time to save the little one» remarks Lazarus after hearing the story of the castle of Caesarea Philippi, pointing at the baby who is sleeping peacefully in his mother's arms. And Lazarus adds: «He is a lovely boy! Woman, will you let me see him here, near me? »

Dorcas stands up and silently but triumphantly she offers her child to the admiration of the sick man.

«A lovely boy! Really lovely! May the Lord protect him and make him grow healthy and holy. »

«And faithful to his Saviour. I would rather see him dead now, than know that he is not faithful to Him. I can stand anything, but I could not bear my son to be ungrateful to the Lord Who saved him» says Dorcas resolutely, going back to her seat.

«The Lord always arrives in time to save» says Myrtha, the

mother of Abel from Bethlehem. «My son was just as close to death, and what a death!, as Dorcas' baby. But He came... and He saved. What a frightful moment!... » The very memory makes Myrtha go pale.

«So You will come in time also for me, will You not? To give me peace... » says Lazarus, caressing Jesus' hand.

«But are you not feeling a little better, brother? » asks Martha. «As from yesterday you look somewhat relieved... »

«Yes, I do. And I am surprised myself. Perhaps Jesus... »

«No, My dear friend. The fact is that I instill My peace into you. Your soul is sated with it and that dulls the pain of your body. It is God's decree that you must suffer. »

«And die. You may as well say so. Well... may His will be done, as You teach us. From now on I will not ask to be cured or relieved. I have received so much from God (and he unintentionally looks at Mary, his sister) that it is just that I should repay for what I had with my submission... »

<sup>3</sup>«Do more than that, My dear friend. It is a great thing to be <sup>376. 3</sup>resigned and bear sorrow. But you can give it greater value. »

«Which, my Lord? »

«Offer it for the redemption of men. »

«I am a poor man myself, Master. I cannot aspire to be a redeemer. »

«You say so, but you are wrong. God became Man to help men. But men can help God. The deeds of the just will be united to Mine in the hour of Redemption. Of the just who died ages ago, who are still alive, or will live in future. Add yours, as from now. It is so beautiful to merge with the infinite Bounty by adding to it what we can give of our limited bounty and say: "I am cooperating too, Father, to the welfare of my brothers". There can be no greater love for the Lord and for our neighbour, than this ability to suffer and die to give glory to the Lord and eternal salvation to our brothers. To save ourselves for our own sake? It is very little. It is the "least" degree of holiness. It is beautiful to save other people, by sacrificing ourselves, to love to such an extent as to become a sacrificing fire to save our neighbour. Love is then perfect. And great will be the holiness of such generous souls. »

«How beautiful that is, isn't it, sisters? » exclaims Lazarus with a dreamy smile on his thin face.

Martha, deeply moved, nods assent.

376. 4 <sup>4</sup>Mary, who is sitting on a cushion at Jesus' feet, in her usual posture of humble ardent worshipper, says: «Am I perhaps costing my brother such suffering? Tell me, Lord, that my anguish may be complete!... »

Lazarus exclaims: «No, Mary, no... I was to die of this. Do not pierce your heart. »

But Jesus, Who is sincere to the utmost, says: «Yes, Mary, you most certainly are! I heard the prayers and the heart-throbs of your good brother. But this must not cause a dull anguish to you, on the contrary it must urge your will to become perfect, for what you cost. And rejoice! Rejoice because of Lazarus, for snatching you from the demon... »

«Not I! You did, Master. »

«... for snatching you from the demon, has deserved from God a future reward, whereby peoples and angels will speak of him. And as for Lazarus, they will speak of other people, and particularly of other women, who through their heroism have snatched the prey from Satan. »

376. 5 «Who are they? » ask the women curiously, each hoping to be one. <sup>5</sup>Mary of Judas does not speak. But she looks at the Master... Jesus also looks at her. He could beguile her, but He does not. He does not mortify her, but He does not deceive her. He replies to them: «You will know in Heaven. »

Judas' mother, who is still full of anguish asks: «And if she should not succeed, although she is willing, what will her destiny be? »

«As her good soul deserves. »

«Heaven? But, Lord, a wife, a sister, or a mother who should fail in saving those whom she loves and should see that they are damned, could she enjoy Paradise, even if she were in Paradise? Do You not think that she will never be able to rejoice because... the flesh of her flesh and the blood of her blood have deserved eternal damnation? I think that she will not be able to rejoice seeing her beloved ones in dreadful pain... »

«You are wrong, Mary. The vision of God, the possession of God are the sources of such infinite beatitude that no grief can exist for the blessed souls. While they are active and diligent in helping those who can be saved, they no longer suffer for those

who are separated from God, and consequently from themselves who are in God. The Communion of saints is for the saints. »

«But if they help those who can still be saved, it means that those who are helped are not yet saints» objects Peter.

«But they have a will, at least a passive will, to be saints. The saints of God help also in material needs, to make them pass from a passive to an active will. Do you understand Me? »

«I do and I don't. For instance, supposing I were in Heaven and I saw, let us say, a fleeting kind attitude in... Eli, the Phari-see, what would I do? »

«You would find all the means to increase his kind attitude. »

«And if it did not help in any way? Then? »

«Then, if he were damned, you would be unconcerned about him. »

«And if he deserved to be damned, as he does now, but he were dear to me - which will never be the case - what should I do? »

«First of all, you had better know that you are in danger of being damned by saying that he is not dear to you and never will be; secondly you must know that, if you were in Heaven, you would pray for him and for his salvation, until the moment of his judgement. There will be souls that will be saved at the last moment, after a whole life of prayer for them. »

<sup>6</sup> A servant comes in saying: «Manaen has come. He wishes to see the Master. » 376. 6

«Let him come. He certainly wishes to speak of some serious matter. »

The women withdraw discreetly, followed by the men. But Jesus calls back Isaac, John the priest, Stephen and Hermas, Matthias and Joseph, who are all shepherd-disciples. «It is better for you to be informed as well, since you are disciples» He explains.

Manaen enters and bows to Jesus.

«Peace to you» greets Jesus.

«Peace to You, Master. The sun is setting. My first step after the Sabbath is for You, my Lord. »

«Did you have a good Passover? »

«Good!! There can be no good where there is Herod and Herodias! I hope it was the last time that I ate the lamb with them. At the cost of my life I will not stay any longer with them! »

«I think you are making a mistake. You can serve the Master



by remaining... » objects the Iscariot.

«That is true. And that is what has kept me there so far. But how nauseating! Chuza could replace me... »

Bartholomew points out to him: «Chuza is not Manaen... He wangles. He would never denounce his master. You are more sincere. »

«That is true. And what you say is true. Chuza is a courtier. He is spellbound by royalty... Royalty! What am I saying!? By the mud of royalty! But he thinks that he is a king, by being with the king... And he is terrified of royal disfavour. The other evening he looked crestfallen, when he almost crept before Herod who had sent for him after he had heard the complaints of Salome, whom You had chased away. Chuza was in dire difficulty. His desire to get out of trouble, at all costs, even by accusing You, stating that You were wrong, was clearly visible on his face. But Herod... wanted only to laugh at the girl behind her back, as he loathes her, now, as he loathes her mother. And he laughed like a madman on hearing Chuza repeat Your words. He kept saying: “Such words are by far too kind for that young... (and he uttered such an obscene word that I will not repeat it to You). He should have trodden on her lustful breast... But He would have become contaminated!” and he laughed. Then he became serious and said: “But... the insult deserved by the woman cannot be allowed with regard to the crown. I am generous (it is his fixed idea that he is, and as nobody tells him, he does so himself) and I will forgive the Rabbi, also because He told Salome the truth. But I want Him to come to Court so that I may forgive Him completely. I want to see Him, hear Him and make Him work miracles. Let Him come and I will be His protector”. That is what he said the other evening. And Chuza did not know what to say. He did not want to say no to the monarch and he could not say yes. Because You certainly cannot yield to Herod’s whims. Today he said to me: “You are certainly going to see Him... Tell Him what I want”. I have told You but I already know the answer. However, tell me, so that I may refer to him. »

«No! » A thundering no.

«Will You not make him a powerful enemy against You? » asks Thomas.

«He may become My executioner. But I can only reply: “no”. »

«He will persecute us... »

«Oh! In three days' time he will have forgotten all about it» says Manaen shrugging his shoulders. And he adds: «They have promised him... some pantomime dancers... They are arriving tomorrow... And he will forget everything!... »

<sup>7</sup>The servant comes back: «Nicodemus, Joseph, Eleazar and other Pharisees and leaders of the Sanhedrin are here, Master. They wish to greet You. » <sup>376.7</sup>

Lazarus looks at Jesus inquiringly. Jesus understands: «Let them come! I will be happy to greet them. »

Joseph comes in shortly afterwards with Nicodemus, Eleazar (the just man at Ishmael's banquet), John (the guest at the remote banquet of Joseph of Arimathea), another man whose name I hear is Joshua, a Philip, a Judas and lastly a Joachim. They seem to go on greeting forever. The room is fortunately a large one, otherwise there would be no room for so much bowing, embracing and rich vestments. But although it is so large, it becomes so full that the disciples clear out. Only Lazarus remains with Jesus. The disciples perhaps can hardly believe that they are not being looked up and down by the eyes of so many members of the Sanhedrin!

«We heard that you were in Jerusalem, Lazarus. And we came» says the one whose name is Joachim.

«I am amazed and happy. I had almost forgotten what your face looks like... » replies Lazarus somewhat ironically.

«Well... you know... We always wanted to come. But... You disappeared... »

«And you could not believe that it was true! It is in fact rather difficult to visit an unhappy fellow! »

«No! Don't say that. We... respected your desire. But now that... now that... is that right Nicodemus? »

«Yes, Lazarus. Old friends come back. Also to hear your good news and venerate the Rabbi. »

«What news have you brought me? »

«H'm... Well... The usual things... The world... Of course... » they cast sidelong glances at Jesus, Who is sitting erect on His seat, rather engrossed in thought.

<sup>8</sup>«How come you are all together today, when the Sabbath is just over? » <sup>376.8</sup>

«We had a special meeting. »

«Today?! What was so urgent?... »

The visitors look at Jesus furtively and significantly. But He is engrossed... «There were many reasons... » they eventually reply.

«And do any concern the Rabbi? »

«Yes, Lazarus. Him as well. But we also passed judgement on a serious fact, while we were all gathered in town for the festivity... » explains Joseph of Arimathea.

«A serious fact? Which? »

«An... error of youth... H'm. Of course! A nasty discussion because... Rabbi, listen to us. You are among honest people. Although we are not Your disciples, we are not Your enemies. In the house of Ishmael You told me\* that I am not far from justice» says Eleazar.

«That is true. I confirm it. »

«And I defended you\*\* against Felix at Joseph's banquet» says John.

«That is also true. »

«And these people are of the same opinion as we are. Today we were summoned to decide... and we are not happy about the decision. Because we were defeated by a majority verdict. As You are wiser than Solomon, we ask You to listen to us and let us have Your opinion. »

Jesus pierces them with a deep glance. He then says: «Speak. »

«Are we sure that no one can hear us? Because it is... a dreadful thing... » says the man whose name is Judas.

«Close the door and draw the curtain, and we will be in a tomb» replies Lazarus.

<sup>376.9</sup> «Master, yesterday morning You told Eleazar of Annas that for no reason whatsoever he was to become contaminated. Why did You tell him? » asks Philip.

«Because it was to be said. He does become contaminated. I do not. The holy books tell us. »

«That is true. But how do You know that he is contaminated? Did the girl perhaps speak to You before she died? » asks Eleazar.

«Which girl? »

«The girl who died after she was raped and her mother died

\* **You told me**, in 335. 11.

\*\* **I defend you**, in 114. 5/6.

with her, and it is not known whether grief killed them, or they committed suicide, or they were poisoned to prevent them from speaking. »

«I know nothing about that. I saw the corrupt soul of Annas' son. I smelt the stench of him. I spoke. I did not know or see anything else. »

«But what happened? » asks Lazarus with deep concern.

«Eleazar, the son of Annas, saw a girl, the daughter of a widow and... he called her saying that he had some work to give her, because they earned their living doing needlework, and... he seduced her. The girl died three days later, and her mother died, too. But before dying they told their only relative everything, notwithstanding that they had been threatened not to... And their relative went to Annas, to accuse his son, and as he was not satisfied, he told Joseph, me and other people... Annas had him (the relative, ) arrested and put into prison. From there he will be taken to the scaffold or he will never be free again. Today Annas wanted to have our opinion on the matter» says Nicodemus.

«He would not have asked us, if he had not known that we were already aware of the fact» grumbles Joseph between his teeth.

«Of course not... Well, with sham voting and counterfeited justice, judgement was passed on the honour and life of three unhappy people and on the punishment for the culprit» concludes Nicodemus.

«So? »

«So! It is obvious. We, who had voted for the freedom of the man and punishment for Eleazar, were threatened and expelled as being unjust. What do You say? »

«That I am horrified at Jerusalem and that the Temple is the most fetid bubo there is in Jerusalem» says Jesus slowly and fearfully. And He concludes: «And you may report that to those of the Temple. »

«And what did Gamaliel do? » asks Lazarus.

«As soon as he heard of the fact, he covered his face and went out saying: "May the new Samson come soon to crush corrupt Philistines". »

«He was right. And he will soon come. » There is silence.

<sup>10</sup>«And was no mention made of Him? » asks Lazarus pointing <sup>376. 10</sup> at Jesus.

«Yes. Before everything else. Someone reported that You had said that the kingdom of Israel is “mean”. So they said that You are a blasphemer, nay, a sacrilegious person. Because the kingdom of Israel comes from God. »

«Did they? And what did the Pontiff say the seducer of a virgin is? He who disgraces his ministry? Tell Me! » asks Jesus.

«He is the son of the High Pontiff. Because Annas is the real king in there» says Joachim, who is frightened by the stateliness of Jesus, Who is standing in front of him, with His arm stretched out.

«Yes. The king of corruption. And shall I not call “mean” a Country in which we have a filthy and murderous Tetrarch, a High Pontiff who is the accomplice of a seducer and murderer?... »

«Perhaps the girl committed suicide or died of grief» whispers Eleazar.

«Still murdered by her seducer... And are they not preparing now the third victim in the relative who has been imprisoned so that he may not speak? And is the altar not being desecrated by those who approach it with so many crimes? And is justice not being hushed up by enjoining silence on the too rare just members of the Sanhedrin? Yes, let the new Samson come and destroy this desecrated place, let him exterminate in order to reform!... As this wretched Country makes Me feel sick, I not only say that it is mean, but I am going away from its corrupt heart, full of nameless crimes... the very den of Satan... I am going away. Not because I am afraid of death. I will prove to you that I am not afraid. I am going away because My hour has not yet come and I do not give pearls to the swine of Israel, but I will take them to the humble people scattered in hovels, in the mountains and valleys of poor villages, where they still know how to believe and to love, if there is someone to teach them, where under coarse garments there are souls, whilst here sacred vestments and even more so the Ephod and the Pectoral\* cover up filthy carrions and conceal

\* **the Ephod and the Pectoral**, also mentioned in 114. 7, 294. 3, 509. 4, 525. 13 and 588. 3, were part of the priests clothing described in *Exodus 28; 39, 1-32*. The *Pectoral* was in the shape of a square pocket, fixed by the *Ephod* that was a tunic. “Only I wear the real Pectoral on which the words: Doctrine and Truth are written”, Jesus will say to Caifa in 604. 14. (The *Ephod* was also the name of a divine instrument, as in *Judges 8, 24-27*).

murderous weapons. Tell them that in the name of the True God I consecrate them to their condemnation and as a new Michael\* I drive them out of Paradise. Forever. As they wanted to be gods, whereas they are demons. It is not necessary for them to die to be judged. They are already judged. With no forgiveness. »

<sup>11</sup>The imposing members of the Sanhedrin and the Pharisees seem to become smaller and in fact they cower before the dreadful wrath of the Christ: Who, on the contrary, seems to become a giant, so dazzling is His appearance and so furious His attitude. 376.11

Lazarus moans: «Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! »

Jesus hears him and changing His tone and appearance He asks: «What is the matter, My dear friend? »

«Oh! Be not so terrible! It's no longer You! How can one hope in mercy, if You appear so dreadful? »

«And yet I will be thus, and even more, when I Judge the twelve tribes of Israel. But cheer up, Lazarus. He who believes in the Christ is already judged... » And He sits down once again.

There is silence.

At last John asks: «As we preferred to be insulted rather than make a false statement against justice, how will we be judged? »

«With justice. Persevere and you will reach the place where Lazarus already is: God's friendship. »

They stand up.

«Master, we are going. Peace to You. And to you, Lazarus. »

«Peace to you. »

«What was said in here, is to remain here» some of them say imploringly.

«Be not afraid! Go. May God always guide you. »

They go out.

Jesus is left alone with Lazarus. After a short while the latter says: «How horrible! »

«Yes. How horrible!... Lazarus, I am going to arrange our departure from Jerusalem. I will be your guest at Bethany until the end of the Unleavened Bread\*\*. » And He goes out...

\* **Michael**, is the name of the prince of angels in: *Daniel 10, 13, 21; 12, 1*. He will also be mentioned in 405. 4.

\*\* **Unleavened Bread**, therefore the feast of the Unleavened Bread that began with Easter and lasted for one week, during this time they were only allowed to eat unleavened bread, as indicated in: *Exodus 12, 15-20; 13, 3-7; 23, 15*.

### **377. The parable of the water and the rush for Mary of Magdala who has chosen the best part.**

14<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

377.1 <sup>1</sup>I realize at once that we are still dealing with the Magdalene, because she is the first person I see, wearing a plain pink lilac dress like the mallow flower. She is not wearing any precious ornament, her hair is plaited and collected at the back of her neck. She looks younger than when she wore sumptuous dresses. Her eyes are no longer shameless, as when she was a «sinner». Neither are they discouraged as when she was listening to the parable of the lost sheep, or shameful and shining with tears as when she was in the hall of the Pharisee... Her eyes are now peaceful and they have become as clear as those of a boy and they shine with a calm look.

She is leaning against a tree near the border of the Bethany property, looking towards the road. She is waiting. She then utters a cry of joy. She turns towards the house and shouts loudly - to be heard by everybody - in her earnest unmistakable voice: «He is arriving!... Martha, they told us the truth. The Rabbi is here! » and she runs to open the heavy creaking gate. She does not give the servants time to open it and she runs out onto the road, with her arms stretched out, as does a boy towards his mother, and with a cry of loving joy: «O Rabboni! » (I am writing «Rabboni» because I see that it is spelt so in the Gospel. But every time I hear Mary call Him, she seems to be saying «Rabboni », with an 'm' and not with an 'n'). She prostrates herself at Jesus' feet, kissing them in the dust of the road.

«Peace to you, Mary. I have come to rest under your roof. »

«O my Master! » repeats Mary, looking up with an expression of respect and love, which is so meaningful... it is thanksgiving, joy, an invitation to come in, happiness because He is entering...

Jesus has laid His hand on her head and seems to be absolving her once again.

377.2 <sup>2</sup>Mary stands up and walking beside Jesus she goes into the enclosure of the property. In the meantime servants and Martha have arrived, the servants with amphoras and cups. Martha with just her love, which is so great.

The apostles, who are warm, take the fresh drinks poured

by the servants. They would like to give some to Jesus first, but Martha has forestalled them. She has taken a cup full of milk and has offered it to Jesus. She must be aware that He likes it very much.

After the disciples have taken some refreshments, Jesus says to them: «Go and inform the believers. I will speak to them this evening. »

The apostles scatter in various directions as soon as they are out of the garden.

Jesus proceeds between Martha and Mary.

«Come, Master» says Martha. «While waiting for Lazarus to have a rest and take some refreshment. »

While they are entering a cool room which opens onto the shady porch, Mary, who had gone away quickly, comes back. She is carrying a pitcher of water and is followed by a servant with a wash-hand basin. But it is Mary who wants to wash Jesus' feet. She unlaces His dusty sandals and hands them to the servant to be cleaned, together with His mantle, which needs brushing. She then dips His feet in the water, which some spices have made pale pink, she dries them and kisses them. She then changes the water and offers it to Jesus for His hands. And while waiting for the servant with the sandals, crouching on the carpet at Jesus' feet, she caresses them, and before putting His sandals on, she kisses them once again saying: «a holy feet, which have walked so far looking for me! »

Martha, who is more practical in her love, considers the human side and asks: «Master, is anybody else coming, besides Your disciples? »

And Jesus replies: «I am not sure, as yet. But you can prepare for five more people in addition to the apostles. »

Martha goes away.

<sup>3</sup>Jesus goes out into the cool shady garden. He is wearing His <sup>377. 3</sup> dark-blue tunic only. His mantle, which Mary has carefully folded, is lying on a chest in the room. Mary goes out with Jesus.

They walk along well-kept paths, among blooming flowerbeds, as far as the fish-pond, which looks like a mirror lying in the greenery. The very clear water is rippled here and there by the silvery wriggling of fish and by the drizzle of a very tall slender jet in the centre of the pond. There are seats around the wide



basin, which looks like a little lake with irrigation canals departing from it. Actually I think that one of the canals feeds the pond, while the other smaller ones discharge the water for irrigation purposes.

Jesus sits on a seat placed against the border of the pond. Mary sits at His feet, on the green well-kept grass. At first they do not speak. Jesus is clearly enjoying the silent restful cool garden. Mary delights in looking at Him.

Jesus plays with the clear water of the pond. He dips His fingers into it, He combs its surface forming little wakes and then He immerses His whole hand in the pure cool water. «How lovely this clear water is! » He says.

And Mary: «Do You like it so much, Master? »

«Yes, Mary. Because it is so limpid. Look. There is not the least trace of mud. The basin is full of water, but it is so clear that it does not seem to contain anything, as if the water were not a material but a spiritual element. On the bottom we can read the words which the little fish whisper to one another... »

«As one can read in the depth of pure souls. Is that right, Master? » and Mary sighs with secret regret.

377. 4 <sup>4</sup>Jesus perceives the stifled sigh and reads her regret disguised by a smile and He at once relieves Mary's grief.

«Mary, where do we find pure souls? It is easier for a mountain to walk than it is for a human being to be pure with the three purities. Too many things stir and ferment around adults. And it is not always possible to prevent them from penetrating inside. Only children have angelical souls, which their innocence preserves from knowledge liable to change into mud. That is why I love them so much. I can see in them a reflection of the Infinite Purity. They are the only ones who have within themselves this remembrance of Heaven. My Mother is the Woman with a child's soul. Even more. She is the Woman with an angel's soul. As Eve was when the Father made her. Can you imagine, Mary, what the first lily in bloom in the earthly garden was like? Also these ones, which lead to this water are beautiful. But the first one, which came out of the hands of the Creator! Was it a flower or a diamond? Were they petals or plates of the most pure silver? And yet My Mother is purer than that first lily that scented the winds. And Her scent of inviolate Virgin fills Heaven and Earth,

and good people will follow it in future centuries. Paradise is light, perfume, harmony. But if in it the Father did not delight in contemplating the Most Beautiful Lady Who changes the Earth into a paradise, if Paradise in future should not have the living Lily in Whose bosom are the three pistils of fire of the Divine Trinity, the light, perfume and harmony, which are the delight of Paradise, would be halved. The purity of My Mother will be the gem of Paradise. But Paradise is boundless! What would you think of a king who had but one gem in his Treasure? Even if it were the pre-eminent Gem? When I open the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven... - do not sigh, Mary, I have come for that - many souls of just people and children will come in, like a brilliant immaculate wake, behind the purple of the Redeemer. But they will be too few to populate Heaven with gems and form the citizens of the eternal Jerusalem. And later... after My Doctrine of truth and holiness has become known to men, after My Death has restored Grace to men, how could men conquer Heaven, if the poor life of men is continuously soiled with mud, which makes them impure? So, will My Paradise be populated only by children? Oh! no! One must learn how to become like a child. The Kingdom is open also to adults. Like children... That is purity. See this water? It looks so limpid. But watch: if I only stir its bottom with this rush, it becomes muddy. Waste and mud come to the surface. From clear it becomes yellowish and no one would drink it anymore. But if I remove the rush, it settles and little by little it becomes once again limpid and beautiful. The rush: sin. The same applies to souls. It is repentance, believe Me, that cleanses... »

<sup>5</sup>Martha arrives panting: «Are you still here, Mary? And I am so busy!... Time is flying. The guests will soon be here and there is so much to be done. The maids are busy baking bread, the servants flaying and cooking. I am preparing drinks, dishes and I am laying the tables. But the fruit is still to be picked and the honey and mint water is to be prepared... » 377. 5

Mary does not pay much attention to her sister's complaints. Smiling blissfully she continues to look at Jesus, without moving from her position.

Martha begs Jesus' help: «Master, look how hot I am. Do You think that I should be the only one to be so busy? Tell her to help me. » Martha is really annoyed.

Jesus looks at her smiling half kindly and half ironically, or rather jokingly.

Martha becomes rather impatient: «I really mean it. Look how idle she is while I am so busy. And she sees... »

Jesus becomes serious: «It is not idleness, Martha. It is love. It was idleness previously. And you wept so bitterly because of that worthless idleness. Your tears lent wings to My efforts to save her and bring her back to your honest love. Do you want to forbid her to love her Saviour? Would you prefer her to be far from here, so that she would not see you work, but would be far also from Me? Martha, Martha! Have I to say that she (and Jesus lays His hand on her head) who has come from so far, has excelled you in love? Have I to say that she, who did not know one word of love, is now learned in the science of love? Leave her to her peace! She was so ill! She is now convalescent and she is recovering by drinking what fortifies her. She was tormented so violently... Now that she has come out of her nightmare, she looks around and within herself and finds herself new and discovers a new world. Let her become certain. With her “new ego” she has to forget her past and conquer what is eternal... And the latter will not be conquered only through work, but also through adoration. He who gives a piece of bread to an apostle and a prophet will receive his reward. But double reward will be given to him who will forget to feed himself in order to love Me, because his soul will be greater than his body, a soul that will cry even louder than human needs, also when the latter are lawful and right. You worry and fret about too many things, Martha. She is concerned with one only. That which is sufficient for her soul and above all for her and your Lord. Forget useless things. Imitate your sister. Mary has chosen the better part, which will never be taken from her. When all virtues become superfluous, because they are no longer necessary to the citizens of the Kingdom, Charity alone will remain. It will last forever. Alone and supreme. That is what Mary has chosen and has taken as her shield and pilgrim’s staff. Through it, as if she were flying with angelical wings, she will come to My Heaven. »

377.6 «Martha, who feels mortified, lowers her head and goes away.

«My sister loves You very much and is anxious to honour You... » says Mary to excuse her.

«I know, and she will be rewarded for that. But she needs to be purified of her human way of thinking, as this water was purified. Look how limpid it has become again, while we were speaking. Martha will be purified by the words I spoke to her. You... through the sincerity of your repentance. »

«No, through Your forgiveness, Master. My repenting was not sufficient to wash my great sin... »

«It was and will be sufficient for the sisters who will imitate you. It will be sufficient for all the poor whose souls are diseased. Sincere repentance is a purifying filter; love, then, preserves from further defilement. Thus, those who through life become adults and sinners, will be able to become as innocent as children again and enter My Kingdom like them. Let us go home now. So that Martha may not be left too long in her grief. Let us go and smile at her as Friend and sister. »

<sup>7</sup>Jesus says:

377. 7

«No comment is required. The parable of the water is the comment on the repenting action of hearts.

You have thus seen the complete cycle of the Magdalene\*. From her death to the Life. Of all the resurrected people of My Gospel she is the greatest. She was raised from seven deaths. She was reborn. You have seen her raise the stalk of her new flower higher and higher above the mud of the earth, like a flowery plant, and then bloom and smell sweetly for Me, and die for Me. You have seen her when she was a sinner, then when, thirsty, she approached the Fountain, then when she repented, then when she was forgiven, then you saw her as a lover, then as a pitiful woman bent over the slain Body of her Lord, then as a servant of My Mother, Whom she loves because She is My Mother; and finally you have seen her as a repentant soul at the threshold of her Paradise.

O souls who are afraid, learn not to be afraid of Me by reading the life of Mary of Magdala. O souls who love, learn from her how to love with seraphic ardour. O souls who have erred, learn

\* **the complete cycle of the Magdalene** includes the episodes of the so-called Gospel of Mercy, as listed in note 174. 11 and other episodes to which reference is made here and belong, as well as the aforementioned, in this work, apart from the one indicated in 15. 2.

from her the Science that will prepare you for Heaven.  
I bless you all to help you to rise. Go in peace. »

**378. The parable of the birds and preference  
for children. A trap set by the Judaic enemies  
and the intervention of Claudia Procula.**

378. 1     <sup>1</sup>The vision dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1944: The sheep in the fold at the feet of the Good Shepherd, is to be put before this chapter.

6<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

378. 2     <sup>2</sup>Jesus is at Bethany and the fertile country is full of blossoms and flowers in this beautiful month of Nisan April, which is so serene and clear that creation seems to have been cleansed of all filthiness. But the crowds who have been looking for Him in Jerusalem and do not wish to go away without hearing Him, to take away in their hearts His words, soon find Him. And they are so numerous that Jesus orders His disciples to gather them all together, so that He may teach them. And the twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples, who have formed a group of approximately that number with the new disciples who joined them recently, spread out in all directions to carry out His instructions.

In the meantime Jesus, in Lazarus' garden, takes leave of the women, and particularly of His Mother, as they are all going back to Galilee, as instructed by Him, escorted by Simon of Alphaeus, Jairus, Alphaeus of Sarah, Marjiam, Susanna's husband and Zebedee. They bid farewell to one another and weep. Many wish they did not have to obey. A desire brought about by their love for the Master. But the power of their perfect love for the Most Holy Word, being entirely supernatural, is stronger, and that power makes them obey and accept the painful separation.

The one who speaks least is Mary, His Mother. But Her countenance is more eloquent than all the words of the others put together. Jesus understands Her grief, and He reassures and comforts Her, overwhelming Her with caresses, if a mother, and particularly that Mother, can ever be overwhelmed, as She is full of love and in great distress for Her persecuted Son. And the women depart at last, turning round several times to greet the Mas-

ter, their sons and the lucky Judaeans women disciples who are still staying with the Master.

«They have suffered in going away... » remarks Simon Zealot.

«But it is better that they have gone, Simon. »

«Do You foresee sad days? »

«Troubled at least. Women cannot bear fatigue as we do. In any case now that I have almost as many Judaeans as Galileans, it is better if they are divided. They will have Me in turns, and in turns they will have the joy of serving Me, and I the consolation of their holy love. »

<sup>3</sup>The crowds are continuously increasing in numbers. The orchard between Lazarus' house and that which belonged to the Zealot is swarming with people. There are people of all castes and conditions, as well as Pharisees from Judaea, members of the Sanhedrin and veiled women. 378. 3

The members of the Sanhedrin who on Passover Sabbath had called on Lazarus in Jerusalem, come out of Lazarus' house, with other people, in one group, close to a litter in which Lazarus is carried. When passing by, Lazarus waves his hand and smiles happily at Jesus. And Jesus returns the greeting, while He follows the little procession to where the people are waiting for Him.

The apostles join Him and Judas Iscariot, who has been exulting for some days, in a very happy mood, turns his very dark bright eyes here and there and reports to Jesus what he discovers.

«Oh! look! There are also some priests!... Look! There is also Simon of the Sanhedrin. And there is Helkai. What a liar! Only a few months ago he used to speak evil of Lazarus, and now he pays his respects to him as if he were a god!... And Dora the Elder and Trison are over there. See? He is greeting Joseph. And Samuel the scribe with Saul... And Gamaliel's son! And over there there is a group of Herodians... And that group of women with veils... must be the Roman ladies... They are standing on one side, but look how they are watching where You are going, so that they can change place and hear You! I recognize them notwithstanding their large mantles. See? Two are tall, one is broader than taller, the others are of middle height, but well shaped. Shall I go and greet them? »

«No. They have come here as strangers, as anonyms who Wish to hear the word of the Rabbi. We must consider them as such. »

«As You wish, Master. I wanted to remind... Claudia of her promise... »

«It is not necessary. And even if it were, we must never become beggars, Judas. Is that right? Heroism in faith is to be perfected among difficulties. »

«It was for Your sake, Master. »

«And for your everlasting idea of a human triumph. Do not cherish false hopes, Judas. Neither with regards to My future behaviour, nor with regards to promises you have received. You believe in what you say to yourself. But nothing will be able to change the thought of God, which is, that I am Redeemer and King of a spiritual Kingdom. »

Judas does not reply.

Jesus is now in His place, in the middle of the apostles. Lazarus is in his little bed, almost at His feet. Not far from Him there are the Judaeen women disciples, that is Lazarus' sisters, Eliza, Anastasica, Johanna with the children, Annaleah, Sarah, Marcella, Nike. The Roman ladies, or at least those pointed out by Judas as such, are a little behind, almost at the end, mingled in a group of common people. Members of the Sanhedrin, Pharisees, scribes, priests are in the first row, which is unavoidable. But Jesus begs them to make room for three small litters with sick people, from whom Jesus asks questions, but He does not cure them at once.

378. 4 <sup>4</sup>Jesus, as a starting point for His speech, draws the attention of the audience to the large number of birds that nestle in the trees in Lazarus' garden and in the orchard where His listeners are gathered.

«Watch them. Some are indigenous, some exotic, they are of all breeds and sizes. And when it gets dark, they will be replaced by night birds, which are also very numerous, although we are inclined to forget about them, because we do not see them. Why so many birds here? Because they find what they need to live happily: sunshine, peace, plenty of foodstuff, safe shelter, cool water. And they gather coming here from east and west, north and south, if they are migrant birds, and they stay here permanently if they are indigenous. So? Shall we thus see that the birds of the air exceed the sons of man in wisdom? How many of these birds are the young ones of birds that are now dead, but last year

or farther back in time, built their nests here and were happy here. They told their little ones, before dying. They showed them this place and the young ones obeyed and came here. The Father, Who is in Heaven, the Father of all men, did He perhaps not tell His saints the truth, did He not give them all the necessary instructions for the welfare of His children? All the instructions: those concerning the welfare of the body and those concerning the welfare of the spirit. But what do we see? We see that while what was taught for the health of the body - from the hide tunics, which He made for the First Parents, stripped in their own eyes of the dress of innocence, which was torn by sin, to the latest discoveries made by man through the light of God - is remembered, handed down and taught, the rest, which was taught, ordered and pointed out for the spirit, is not kept, or taught or practised. »

Many people of the Temple begin to whisper. Jesus calms them with a gesture.

<sup>5</sup>«The Father, Whose goodness exceeds by far man's understanding, sent His Servant to remind men of His teaching, to gather birds in healthy places, to give them clear knowledge of what is useful and holy, to establish the Kingdom, where every angelical bird, every soul, will find grace and peace, wisdom and health. And I solemnly tell you that as the birds born in this place, in springtime will say to the birds of other places: "Come with us, because there is a good place where you will enjoy peace and the bounty of the Lord", and thus next year new birds will be seen gathering here, in the same way, we shall see numerous spirits rush from every part of the world, as predicted by the prophets\*, towards the Doctrine, which has come from God, and towards the Saviour the founder of the Kingdom of God. But the day-birds are mixed in this place with night-birds, which are birds of prey, disturbers and quite capable of terrifying and killing the good little birds. And those birds have been such for years, for generations and nothing can flush them, because they work in darkness and in places impenetrable by man. They work in darkness, with their cruel eyes, their silent flights, their voracity, their cruelty and unclean as they are, they spread filth and sorrow. To whom shall we compare them? To those who in

378. 5

\* predicted by the prophets, for example by: *Isaiah 2, 1-4; 45, 14-25; 60; Jeremiah 16, 19-21; Micah 4, 1-8; Zephaniah 3, 9-10; Zechariah 8, 20-23.*



Israel do not want to accept the Light that has come to illuminate darkness, the Word that has come to teach, Justice that has come to sanctify. I have come for them in vain. Nay, I am the cause of sin for them, because they persecute Me and My faithful believers. So what shall I say? What I have already said many a time\*: “Many will come from east and west and will sit with Abraham and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the children of this kingdom will be thrown out into the dark”. »

378. 6 ««The children of God in the dark? You are blaspheming! » shouts one of the hostile members of the Sanhedrin. It is the first sprinkle of the slaver of the reptiles, who have been silent for too long and who can no longer be quiet, otherwise they would be drowned in their own poison.

«Not the children of God» replies Jesus.

«You said so! You said: “The children of this kingdom will be thrown out into the dark”. »

«And I repeat it. The children of this kingdom. The kingdom that is ruled by flesh, blood, avarice, fraud, lust, crime. But that is not My Kingdom. My Kingdom is the Kingdom of Light. Yours is the kingdom of darkness. Righteous spirits, including those that at present are heathens, idolaters, despised by Israel, will come to the Kingdom of Light from east and west, north and south. And they will live in holy communion with God, having accepted the light of God within themselves, while waiting to ascend to the true Jerusalem, where there are no tears, no sorrow and above all no falsehood. The Falsehood that now rules over the world of darkness and gluts its children to such extent that they cannot hold a tiny beam of the divine Light. Oh! Let the new children come and replace the disowning children! Let them come! And wherever they come from, they will be enlightened by God and will reign forever and ever! »

«You have spoken to insult us! » shout the hostile Judaeans.

«I spoke to tell you the truth. »

«Your power lies in Your language, by which You, the new snake, allure and mislead the crowds. »

«My power is the strength that comes to Me by being One with My Father. »

\* I have already said many a time, as in 177. 4 and 363. 7.

«Blasphemer! » shout the priests.

<sup>7</sup>«Saviour! You, who are lying at My feet, what are you suffering from? » 378. 7

«I broke my spine when I was a child and I have been lying on my back for thirty years. »

«Rise and walk! And what are you suffering from, woman? »

«My legs have been hanging lifelessly since my son, who now carries me about with my husband, was born» and she points at a young man who is at least sixteen years old.

«Rise, too, and praise the Lord. And why is that child not walking by himself? »

«Because he was born feeble-minded, blind, deaf and dumb. He is a lump of breathing flesh» explain those who are with the poor child.

«In the Name of God, have intelligence, speech, sight and hearing. I want it! » And after working the third miracle, He turns to His enemies and asks: «What do you say now? »

«Dubious miracles. Why do You not cure Your friend and supporter, if You can do anything? »

«Because God wants otherwise. »

«Ah! Ah! God! A fine excuse! If we bring You a sick man, nay, two, will You cure them? »

«I will, if they deserve it. »

«Wait then» and they go away quickly, grinning sarcastically.

«Be careful, Master! They may set a trap for You» some say.

Jesus makes a gesture as if He wanted to say: «Let them do as they like! » <sup>8</sup>and He bends to caress the children, who little by little have approached Him, leaving their relatives. Some mothers imitate them, taking to Him those who are not yet steady in their first steps or sucklings. 378. 8

«Bless our children, Blessed One, because we are lovers of the Light! » say the mothers.

And Jesus imposes His hands, blessing them. That brings about a bustle in the crowd. All those with children want the same blessing and they push and shout to make their way through the crowd.

The apostles, both because they have been irritated by the usual mischievousness of scribes and Pharisees, and because they feel pity for Lazarus, who risks being carried away by the

wave of relatives taking their little ones to the divine blessing, become impatient and shout reproaching and pushing back this one and that one, particularly the little children who have come by themselves. But Jesus says kindly and lovingly: «No, do not do that! Never prevent children from coming to Me, nor their relatives from bringing them to Me. Because the Kingdom is of these innocent souls. They will not be guilty of the great Crime, and they will grow up in My Faith. Let Me therefore consecrate them to it. Their angels are leading them to Me. »

Jesus is now in the middle of a crowd of children looking at Him ecstatically; so many little faces looking up at Him, so many innocent eyes, so many little smiling mouths...

The veiled ladies take advantage of the confusion to go round at the rear of the crowd and come behind Jesus, as if they were urged by curiosity to do so.

378. 9 <sup>9</sup>The Pharisees and scribes come back with two sick people who seem to be suffering from severe pain. One particularly is moaning in his little litter, and is completely covered with a mantle. The other one, apparently, is not so seriously ill, but is certainly very ill, because he is reduced to a skeleton and is panting.

«Here are our friends. Cure them. They are really ill. Particularly that one! » and they point to the moaning one.

Jesus lowers His eyes and looks at the sick people, He then looks up at the Jews. He darts a dreadful look at His enemies. Standing behind the group of innocent children, who do not reach up to His groin, He seems to be rising from a wreath of purity, to be the Avenger, as if from that purity He were drawing the strength to be so. He opens His arms and shouts: «Liars! That man is not ill! I tell you! Uncover him! Or he will be really dead in a moment, for attempting to deceive God. »

The man jumps out of his litter shouting: «No, no! Don't strike me! Here, you cursed ones, take your money! » and he throws a purse at the feet of the Pharisees and takes to his heels...

The crowds howl, laugh, boo, applaud...

The other sick man says: «And what about me, Lord? They forced me out of my bed and they have been using violence on me since this morning... But I did not know that I was in the hands of Your enemies... »

«Be cured, poor son, and may you be blessed! » and He imposes

His hands on him, after making His way through the children.

The man lifts for a moment the blanket covering his body and he looks at I do not know what... He then stands up. He is naked from his thighs downwards. And he shouts and shouts until he becomes, hoarse: «My foot! My foot! But who are You, Who can give back what was lost? » and he throws himself at Jesus' feet. He then stands up, jumps precariously on his little litter shouting: «My disease was eating away my bones. The doctor had torn off my toes, he had cauterised my flesh and had cut me up to the bone of my knee. Look! Look at the scars. But I was going to die just the same. And now... It is all cured! My foot has been restored... It is no longer painful! I feel well... strong... My chest is free... My heart is sound! Oh! mother! I am coming to share my joy with you! »

He begins to run away. But gratitude stops him. He goes back to Jesus and he kisses His blessed feet repeatedly, until Jesus, caressing his head, says to him: «Go! Go to your mother and be good. » <sup>10</sup>He then looks at His enemies, who have been held up to ridicule and says: «And now? What should I do to you? What should I do, people, after this ordeal? »

378. 10

The crowds shout: «Let the offenders of God be stoned! Death to them! No more snares for the Holy One! May you be cursed! » and they begin picking up lumps of earth, branches, little stones, ready to throw them.

Jesus stops them. «That is the word of the crowds. That is their answer. Mine is different. I say: Go away! I will not soil My hands striking you. The Most High will take care of you. He is My defence against the wicked. »

The culprits, instead of being silent, do not hesitate to offend the Master, and although they are afraid of the people, they shout foaming with anger: «We are Judaeans and we are powerful! We order You to go away. We forbid You to teach. We banish You. Go away! Enough of You. The power is in our hands and we are making use of it; and we will use it more and more, persecuting You, cursed usurper... »

They are about to say more in a tumult of cries, tears, hisses, when the tallest veiled woman comes forward, placing herself between Jesus and His enemies with swift imperious movement, with even more imperious countenance and voice; she uncovers

her face and her sentence drops sharper and more lashing than a whip on galley-slaves or an axe on a neck: «Which of you is forgetting that he is a slave of Rome? » She is Claudia. She lowers her veil again. She bows lightly to the Master. She goes to her place. It was enough.

The Pharisees calm down at once. One only, on behalf of everybody, says with creeping servility: «Forgive us, domina! But He is upsetting the old spirit of Israel. As you are powerful, you should forbid Him and get the brave just Proconsul to forbid Him to do so; long life and health to him! »

«That does not concern us. It is enough that He does not disturb the order of Rome. And He does not! » replies scornfully the patrician, who then gives a sharp order to her companions and goes away towards a thicket of trees at the end of the path and disappears behind it. She reappears in a creaky covered wagon, all the curtains of which she has ordered to be lowered.

378. 11 <sup>11</sup>«Are You happy now that You had us insulted? » ask the Judeans, Pharisees, scribes and their companions, making a fresh attack.

The crowds shout contemptuously. Joseph, Nicodemus and all those who have proved to be friends - among them there is Gamaliel's son, who has not joined them but has spoken the same words - feel that they must interfere and reproach the others for passing all bounds. The altercation thus passes from Jesus' enemies to the two opposite groups, leaving out the One most interested in it.

Jesus is silent, with arms folded, listening, and I think that He emanates a power to hold the crowds back and particularly the apostles, who are beside themselves with rage.

«We must defend ourselves and other people» shouts a hot-headed Jew.

«We are tired of seeing fascinated crowds run after Him» says another one.

«We are the powerful ones! Nobody else! We are the only ones to be listened to and followed» cries a scribe.

«Away from here! Jerusalem is ours! » shouts a priest as red as beetroot.

«You are wicked! »

«You are more than blind! »

«The crowds have left you, because you deserve it. »

«Be holy if you want to be loved. If you vex and insult people, you lose your power, which is based on the reputation of the people for its governors! » shout those of the opposite party and many of the crowd.

«Silence! » orders Jesus. And when there is silence, He says: «Oppression and imposition cannot change love or the consequences of good received. I gather what I gave: love. By persecuting Me, you only increase such love, which compensates Me for your indifference. In all your wisdom, do you not know that to persecute a doctrine serves no other purpose but to increase its power, particularly when the doctrine in actual fact corresponds to what it teaches? Listen to a prophecy of Mine, people of Israel. The more you persecute the Rabbi of Galilee and His followers, trying to destroy by violence His Doctrine, which is divine, the more you will help it to thrive and spread throughout the world. Every drop of blood of the martyrs killed by you, hoping to triumph and reign with your corrupt hypocritical laws and precepts, which no longer correspond to the Law of God, every tear of saints oppressed by you, will become the seed of future believers. And you will be defeated just when you think that you are going to triumph. Go. I am going as well. Those who love 'Me should look for Me at the borders of Judaea and beyond the Jordan, or they can wait for Me there, because like lightning flashing from east to west, so fast will be the movement of the Son of man, until He ascends the altar and the throne, new Pontiff and King, and will remain there firmly in the presence of the world, of creation and of Heaven, in one of His many epiphanies, which only good people can understand. »

<sup>378. 12</sup> <sup>12</sup>The hostile Pharisees and their companions have gone. All the others have remained. Gamaliel's son struggles against himself to come to Jesus, but he goes away without speaking...

«Master, You will not hate us because we belong to the same castes as they do? » asks Eleazar.

«I never strike with anathema a single person only because his class is guilty. Be not afraid» replies Jesus.

«They will now hate us... » whispers Joachim.

«That will be an honour for us! » exclaims John, the member of the Sanhedrin.

«May God fortify wavering souls and bless strong ones. I bless everybody in the name of the Lord» and opening His arms He gives the Mosaic blessing to all the people present.

He then takes leave of Lazarus, his sisters, Maximinus, the women disciples, and He sets out...

The green country on the sides of the road to Jericho receives Him while its green is growing red in a glorious sunset.

### **379. A premonition of the apostle John.**

7<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>«It is getting dark, where are we going? » the apostles ask one another. They are talking in low voices of what happened. They are not saying anything loud, as they do not want to depress the Master, Who is clearly very pensive.

Night falls while they proceed, following the Master Who is still very serious. A village appears at the foot of a chain of very rough mountains.

«Let us stop here for the night» orders Jesus. «Or rather, you stop here. I will go up those mountains to pray... »

«By Yourself? Ah! no! You are not going by Yourself up Mount Adamin! With all those thieves who are lying in wait for You, no, You are not going!... » says Peter quite firmly.

«What can they do to Me? I have nothing! »

«You have... Yourself. I am talking of the real thieves, of those who hate You. And Your life is quite enough for them. You are not going to be killed like... like... thus, I mean, in a cowardly ambush. You would give Your enemies the opportunity to invent goodness knows what story to divert the crowds also from Your doctrine» insists Peter.

«Simon of Jonah is right, Master. They would be quite capable of getting rid of Your body and then saying that You have fled because You had realized that You had been unmasked. Or... they could even take You to places of evil fame, to the house of a prostitute and then say: “See where and how He died? In a quarrel over a prostitute”. You quite rightly said: “To persecute a doctrine is to increase its power” and I noticed that Gamaliel’s son, whose sight I never lost, was nodding assent while You were

saying so. But it is also right to say that to hold a saint and his doctrine up to ridicule is the safest weapon to confute his doctrine and make him lose the esteem of the crowds» says Judas Thaddeus.

«Of course. And that must not happen to You» concludes Bartholomew.

«Don't lend Yourself to the tricks of Your enemies. Consider that not only You would be damaged, but also the Will of Him Who sent You would be made void by such imprudence, and one would see that the children of Darkness have defeated, at least temporarily, the children of Light» adds the Zealot.

«That's right! You always say, and You pierce our hearts, that You will be killed. I remember when You reproached Simon Peter and I will not say to You: "Let that never happen". But I do not think that I am Satan if I say: "At least let that be to Your glorification, as unequivocal seal of Your Holiness, and definite conviction of Your enemies. So that the crowds may know and have valid reasons to distinguish and believe". At least that, Master. The holy mission\* of the Maccabees never appeared so holy as when Judas, the son of Mattathias, died as a hero and saviour in the battlefield. Do You want to go up Mount Adomin? We will come with You. We are Your disciples! Where You go as our Head, we will come as Your ministers» says Thomas, and I have seldom heard him speak with such solemn eloquence.

«That is very true! And if they attack You, they will have to attack us first» several of them say.

«Oh! They will not attack us so easily! They are curing the smart of Claudia's words and... they are very... too cunning! They must certainly consider that Pontius would know whom to punish for Your death. They have betrayed themselves in the eyes of Claudia and they will ponder over that and think of traps more reliable than vulgar aggression. Perhaps it is foolish of us to be afraid. We are no longer the poor unknown people of the past. There is Claudia now! » says the Iscariot.

«Very well... But don't let us run any risk. <sup>379. 2</sup>What do You want to do on Mount Adomin? » asks James of Zebedee.

«I want to pray and find a place where you can all pray in the

\* mission, narrated in: *1 Maccabees 9, 1-22*.



next days, to be ready for fresh fiercer and fiercer struggles. »

«Against our enemies? »

«Also against our egos. I am in great need of being fortified. »

«But did You not say that You wanted to go to the borders of Judaea and beyond the Jordan? »

«Yes, and I will. But after praying. I will go to Achor and then to Jericho via Doco. »

«No, Lord! They are inauspicious places for the saints of Israel. Don't go there. I tell You, I can feel it! There is something within me that tells me. Don't go! In the name of God, don't go! » shouts John, who seems to be on the point of losing consciousness, as if he were seized by ecstatic fear...

They all look at him in amazement, as they have never seen him thus before. But no one sneers at him. They all feel that they are in the presence of a supernatural fact and they respectfully remain silent.

Jesus also is silent until He sees John regain his normal composure and hears him say: «O my Lord! How much I suffered! »

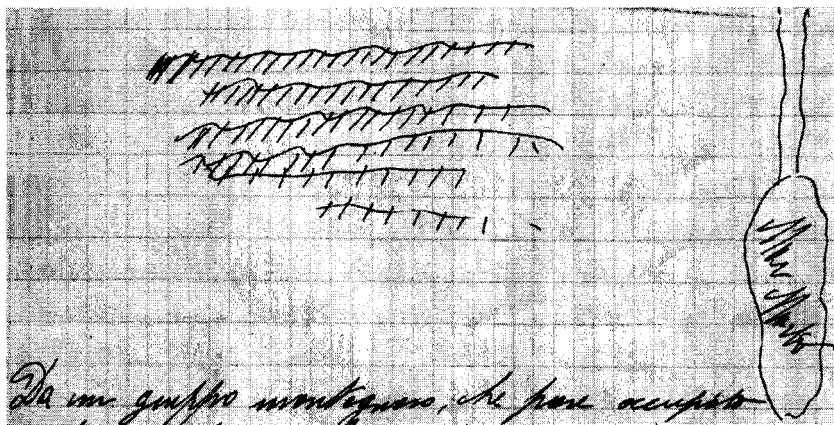
«I know. We shall go to Mount Cherith. What does your spirit say? » I am deeply impressed by the respect with which Jesus addresses His inspired apostle...

«You are asking me, Lord? You, the Most Holy Wisdom, are asking a poor foolish boy! »

«Yes, I am asking you. *The least is the greatest when he humbly communicates with his Lord for the welfare of his brothers.* Tell Me. »

«Yes, Lord. Let us go to Mount Cherith. There are gorges there where we can safely collect our thoughts in meditation, and the roads to Jericho and Samaria are not far. We will descend the mountain to gather those who love You and hope in You and we will bring them to You, or take You to them, and we will also nourish our souls with prayer... And the Lord will descend and speak to our spirits... and will open our ears, which hear the Word but do not fully understand Him... and above all will inflame our hearts with His fire. Because only if we are aflame, shall we be able to bear the torments of the Earth. Because only if we first suffer the sweet martyrdom of total love, shall we be ready to suffer the torture of human hatred... Lord... what have I said? »

«My words, John. Be not afraid. Let us stop here then, and tomorrow at dawn we will go up the mountains\* . »



### 380. The apostles urged to love at the end of the retreat on the Cherith mount.

9<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

It is occasionally possible to catch glimpses of parts of the Dead Sea, which lies to the south of the place where the apostles are with the Master, from a group of mountains, which seem intent on rising more and more. And, I would say, every phase of their effort is marked by a rough chain of rocky hills, with sheer sloping sides, severed by narrow valleys similar to gigantic slashes and crowned with wild peaks. It is not possible to see the Jordan and its peaceful fertile valley, or Jericho or other towns. One can see nothing but mountains rising towards Samaria, and the gloomy Dead Sea through the narrow gorge between two acuminated mountains. Down in the valley there is a stream flowing from west to east towards the Jordan. There is a loud screeching of hawks and croaking of ravens in the bright blue sky. Many birds are chirping among the branches of the wild slopes. The winds whisper as mellow as flutes among the gorges,

380. 1

\* **up the mountains».** We have reproduced here the sketch that M. V. in between the date and the first words of the following chapter. On the right and side, the *Dead Sea*.

carrying remote scents and noises, or overwhelming those which are near, according to whether they are light or strong. An odd harness-bell is heard now and again from the road, which must be down in the valley. One can also hear the bleating of sheep grazing on the tablelands and the noise of water dripping from rocks or murmuring in torrents. But the season is good, dry and mild, the mountain sides are covered with bright flowers standing out against the emerald green of the grass, and bunches of flowers and festoons hang from tree trunks and branches and the sight of the place is most pleasant.

The faces of the thirteen men gathered there are very happy, shining with a supernatural happiness. The world has been forgotten... It is remote... Their spirits have recovered from many shocks, they are once again in the halo of God, that is, in peace. And peace is visible on their countenances.

380. 2 <sup>2</sup>But the rest is over, and Jesus tells them so. And Peter repeats his prayer of Mount Tabor: «Oh! Why do we not stop here? It is beautiful to be here with You! »

«Because there is work awaiting us, Simon of Jonah. We cannot be only contemplative. The world is waiting for our teaching. The workers of the Lord cannot stop when there are fields to be sown. »

«Then... as I become a little good only when I live apart as now, I will never be able to... The world is so great! How shall we be able to work it all and then concentrate on You before dying? »

«You will certainly not work it all. It will take hundreds and hundreds of years. And when a part has been worked, Satan will go there to spoil what has been done. It will thus be a continuous work lasting until the end of the world. »

«Well, then, how shall I be able to be ready to die? » Peter is really depressed.

Jesus reassures him embracing him and says: «You will have time. It does not take long. An act of perfect concentration is sufficient to prepare you to appear before God. And you will have all the time you need. In any case you must realize that *by fulfilling the will of God one is always preparing to die in holiness*. If God wants you to be active and you obey, you are preparing better by obeying than you would by retiring among the most solitary rocks to pray and meditate. Are you convinced? »

«Certainly! You say so! So what shall we do? »

«Go along the roads in the valley. Gather together those who are waiting for Me and preach the Lord and Faith until I come. »

«Are You remaining alone here? »

«Of course. Be not afraid. <sup>3</sup>You can see that at times evil is of some help to good. Elijah here was fed by crows\*. We can say that fierce vultures fed us. » <sup>380. 3</sup>

«Do You think that it was a kind of beginning of conversion? »

«No. But charity, although it was urged by the consideration that by treating us generously, they would put us in a situation not to betray them... »

«But we would not have betrayed them! » exclaims Andrew.

«No. But the wretched thieves do not know that. There is no spiritual feeling in them, laden as they are with crimes. »

«Lord, You were saying that charity... What were You going to say? » asks John.

«I wanted to say: the fact that they treated us charitably will be rewarded, at least among the better ones. The conversion, which did not take place now, may work slowly, but it can take place. That is why I said to you: “Do not refuse their offerings”. And I accepted them although I smelt the stench of sin in them. »

«But You did not eat any... »

«But I did not mortify the sinners by rejecting them. They had initial good feeling. Why destroy it? That torrent down there, does it not originate in the spring that trickles from that crag? Always remember that. It is a lesson for your future life, when I shall no longer be among you. If in your apostolic travels you should come across criminals, do not behave like Pharisees, who despise everybody, and they do not consider that they should despise themselves first, corrupt as they are. But approach them with great love. I would like to be able to say with, “infinite love”. Nay, I say so. And that is possible, although man is “finite, limited” in his acts and actions.

<sup>4</sup>Do you know how man can possess infinite love? By being so united to God, as to be all one with God. Then, as the creature disappears in the Creator, it is the Creator Who really acts, and He is infinite. And My apostles must be like that, all one with <sup>380. 4</sup>

\* fed by crows, as mentioned: *1 King 17, 2-6.*

their God through the power of love, which is so close to the Origin as to dissolve in it. *It is not the way in which you speak, but the way in which you love, that will convert hearts.* Will you find sinners? Love them. Will you suffer because of disciples who go astray? Try to save them through love. Remember the parable of the lost sheep. Oh! forever and ever it will be the sweet appeal made to sinners. But it will also be the definite order given to My priests. With every artifice, with every sacrifice, at the cost of losing your own lives in the attempt to save a soul, you must patiently go and look for those who are lost and bring them back to the Fold. Love will give you joy. It will say to you: “Be not afraid”. It will give you such a power to expand all over the world, as I did not possess Myself. No longer is the love of future just people to be set as a seal on the heart and on the arm, as the Song of Songs says\*. But it is to be set in the heart. It must be the spur urging souls to all actions. And each action must be superabundance of charity, which is no longer satisfied with loving God or one’s neighbour only mentally, but it enters the lists against the enemies of God, to love God and neighbour concretely, also through material deeds, which lead to wider and more perfect actions aiming at the redemption and sanctification of brothers.

Through contemplation one loves God, through action one loves one’s neighbour, but the two loves are not separated, because there is one love only, and loving our neighbour we love God Who orders this love and gave us our neighbour as a brother.

380. 5 Neither you nor future priests will be able to say that you are My friends, if your charity and theirs is not entirely devoted to the salvation of souls, for whom I became incarnate and for whom I will suffer. I give you the example of how one must love. But you and those who will come after you, must do what I do. The new time has come. The time of love. I have come to cast this fire into hearts and it will grow greater after My Passion and Ascension, and it will inflame you when the Love of the Father and of the Son descends to consecrate you to your ministry.

Most Divine Love! Why do You delay in consuming the Victim, in opening the eyes and ears, in loosening the tongues and limbs of this flock of Mine, so that they may go among wolves

\* says, in: *Song of Songs 8, 6.*

and teach that God is Charity, and that he who has no charity is a brute and a demon? Oh! come, most sweet and strong Spirit, and inflame the Earth, not to destroy it, but to purify it. Inflame hearts! Make other Christs of them, like Me, that is, anointed by love, active for love, holy and sanctifying through love.

Blessed are those who love, because they will be loved, and their souls will never stop singing to God together with the angels until they will sing the eternal glory in the light of Heaven. So be it for you, My friends. Now go and do with love what I told you. »

### **381. The parable of the unfaithful and cunning steward. Hypocrisy of the Pharisees and conversion of an Essene.**

10<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Waiting for the Master many people are scattered over the <sup>381. 1</sup> lower slopes of a rather isolated mountain, which rises from intertwined valleys surrounding it; in certain places the slopes rise sheer from the valleys. To reach the top there is a path cut in the calcareous rock like a scratch winding up the slope. In some parts the borders of the path are the steep incline of the mountain on one side, and a deep precipice on the other. And the dark yellowish-red rugged path, looks like a ribbon thrown among the low dusty-green thorny bushes, full of aculei; I would say the aculei are the very leaves that cover the arid rocky slopes and adorn themselves with bright violet-red flowers, like tassels or flocks of silk torn from the garment of some unfortunate person who happened to pass along the thicket of thorn bushes. And this blue-green tormenting vegetation, full of sharp thorns, is as sad as if it were spread with impalpable ashes and extends in stripes also at the foot of the mountain and in the plain between the mountain and other mountains, both north-west and south-east, alternating with places where there are real bushes and real grass, which are neither tormenting nor useless.

The crowds have camped on the green grass, patiently waiting the arrival of the Master. It must be the day after the speech to the apostles, because it is a cool morning and the dew has not yet evaporated from all the stems. It particularly decorates those thorns and leaves which are in the more shady spots, transform-

ing the quaint flowers of the thorny bushes into tassels studded with diamonds. This is certainly the hour of beauty for the sad mountain. Because during the other hours, in the scorching sun or in moonlit nights, it must look like a horrible place of hellish expiation. A large wealthy town can be seen to the east, in the very fertile plain. Nothing else is visible from this hillside, which is still low, where the pilgrims are, but from the top the eye must enjoy a wonderful sight of the nearby districts. Taking into account the height of the mountain I think that one's eyes would rove over the Dead Sea and the area to the east of it, as far as the mountain chains of Samaria and those that hide Jerusalem. But I have not been to the top, so...

The apostles are moving about among the crowds, trying to keep them quiet and orderly and to put sick people in the best places. They are assisted by some disciples, perhaps those who are active in that locality and had led to the borders of Judaea the pilgrims anxious to hear the Master.

<sup>381.2</sup> <sup>2</sup>Jesus appears all of a sudden. He is wearing a white linen tunic and a red mantle, to make the heat of the sunny days compatible with the coolness of the nights, as we are not yet in summer. He has not yet been seen and He looks at the crowds waiting for Him and smiles. He seems to be coming from behind the eastern side of the mountain, half-way up the hill, and He comes down quickly along the difficult path.

It is a boy, who, either because he was looking at the flight of birds nestling among the bushes and which take off when a stone rolls down the mountain side and frightens them, or because his eyes were attracted by the sudden appearance, sees Jesus and bouncing to his feet shouts: «The Lord! »

They all turn around and see Jesus, Who is now about two hundred metres away. They start running towards Him, but with a gesture of His arm and with His voice, which is heard clearly, perhaps because it is echoed by the mountain, He says: «Remain where you are. » And smiling all the time He comes down as far as those waiting for Him and stops at the highest spot of the tableland. He greets them from there: «Peace to everybody, » and with a particular smile He repeats His greeting to the apostles and disciples who have gathered around Him.

Jesus is beaming with beauty. With the sun in front of Him

and the greenish hillside behind His back, He looks like the vision of a dream. The hours spent in solitude, something unknown to us, or perhaps an overflow on Him of fatherly caresses, I do not know what, accentuate His ever perfect beauty, they make it glorious, imposing, peaceful, serene, I would say joyful, as becomes a person who comes back from a tryst and whose countenance, smiles and eyes show all his happiness. The evidence of this divine encounter shines infinitely more brightly than can normally be seen after the meeting of poor human lovers, and the Christ appears dazzling with it. And He subdues all the people present who contemplate Him silently with admiration, as if they were intimidated by the intuition of a mysterious reunion of the Most High with His Word... It is a secret, a secret hour of love between the Father and the Son. No one will ever know it. But the Son keeps its seal as if, after being the Word of the Father, as He is in Heaven, He could hardly be once again the Son of man. Infinity, sublimity find it difficult to become «the Man» again. Divinity overflows explodes, radiates from Humanity like sweet oil from a porous earthen jar or like the light of a furnace through the veil of ground glass.

And Jesus lowers His beaming eyes. His blissful face conceals His wonderful smile, bending over the sick people, whom He caresses and cures while they are seized with astonishment looking at the bright loving face bent over their misery to make them happy. But at last He must stand up and show the crowds the Face of the Peaceful, Holy One, of the God Incarnate, still wrapped in the brightness of the ecstasy. He repeats: «Peace to you. » Even His voice is more melodious than usual, as it resounds with sweet triumphant notes... It spreads powerfully over the silent listeners, searching for their hearts, caressing them, shaking them and inviting them to love.

Everybody is deeply moved, with the exception of that group of Pharisees, who are more arid, coarse, prickly and harsher than the mountain itself and are standing like statues full of incomprehension and hatred in a corner, and with the exception of the other group, all dressed in white and standing aloof, listening from a brow and whom Bartholomew and the Iscariot point out as «Essenes». And Peter grumbles: «And so there is another extra fowl-run of hawks! »



«Oh! Never mind. The Word is for everybody! » says Jesus, smiling at Peter, referring to the Essenes.

381. 3 <sup>3</sup>He then begins to speak.

«It would be lovely if man were as perfect as the Father in Heaven wants him. Perfect in every thought, affection, deed. But man does not know how to be perfect and misuses the gifts of God, Who has given freedom of action to man, ordering, however, good things, advising perfect things, so that man might not say: "I did not know".

What use does man make of the freedom given to him by God? The greatest part of men use it as a child would; or as a fool; the rest use it as criminals. Then death comes and man is subject to the Judge Who asks severely: "How did you use or misuse what I gave you? ". A dreadful question! How less worthy than motes will then look the goods of the Earth, for which man so often becomes a sinner! Poor in eternal misery, divested of a garment that nothing can replace, he will stand dejected and trembling before the Majesty of the Lord, and will find no word to justify himself. Because it is easy to justify oneself, deceiving poor men. But that cannot happen in Heaven. God cannot be deceived. Never. And God does not resort to any compromise. Never.

Now, then. How can one be saved? How can man make everything be of use to his salvation, even including what has originated from Corruption, which taught men to use metals and gems as instruments of wealth and fostered their eager desire for power and pleasure of the flesh? So will man, who, however poor he may be, can always sin by desiring gold, offices, women immoderately, - and at times he becomes the thief of such things to have what rich people have - so will man, rich or poor as he may be, never be able to save himself? Of course he will. How? By exploiting wealth on behalf of Good; exploiting misery on behalf of Good. The poor man who is not envious, who does not curse, who does not attempt to take what belongs to other people, but is happy with what he has, exploits his humble condition in order to achieve future holiness, and in actual fact, most poor people know how to do that. But the rich are not so capable, as wealth is a continuous trap, set by Satan, of the treble concupiscence.

381. 4 <sup>4</sup>But listen to a parable and you will see that the rich also can save themselves although they are rich, or they can make amends

for their past wrongs, by making good use of their riches, even if they were unjustly obtained. Because God, the Most Good God, always grants many means to His children so that they may save themselves.

So there was a rich man who had a steward. Some enemies of the latter, who were envious of the good position he had, or because they were very friendly with the rich man and therefore mindful of his wealth, accused the steward saying to his master: “He squanders your wealth. He embezzles your goods. Or he does not make them yield any fruit. Be careful. Defend yourself!”.

The rich man, after hearing such repeated accusations, summoned the steward. And he said to him: “I have been told so and so. Why have you done that? Give me an account of your stewardship, because I will not allow you to keep it any longer. I cannot trust you and I cannot make an example of injustice and servile tolerance, which would induce the other servants to act as you did. Go and come back tomorrow with your documents, that I may examine them and ascertain the situation of my property before handing it to another steward”. And he dismissed the steward, who went away and began to worry saying to himself: “And now? What shall I do now that the master is taking the stewardship from me? I have no savings, because, as I was sure that I would get away with it, I spent in enjoyment everything I usurped. I do not feel like working as a peasant, subject to other people, because I am no longer used to digging, and I have grown heavier with orgies. And I dislike begging even more. It is too humiliating! But what shall I do?”.

He thought it over and over again and he found a way out from his painful situation. He said: “I have found it! As I secured a pleasant life for myself so far, in the same way I will make sure that my friends will offer me hospitality out of gratitude, when I am dismissed from my office. He who does good always has friends. Let us go, therefore, and help people, in order to be helped, and let us go at once, before the news spreads and it is too late”.

And he went to the sundry debtors of his master and he said to the first one: “How much do you owe my master for the money he lent you three years ago in springtime?”.

And the debtor replied: “One hundred measures of oil for money and interest”.

“Oh! Poor fellow! What, with such a large family and with your children afflicted by diseases, you have to give so much?! But did he not give you money to the value of thirty measures?! ”.

“Yes, but I needed it urgently and he said to me: ‘I will give it to you, but on the condition that you will pay me back whatever the sum will yield to you in three years’. It yielded the equivalent of one hundred measures. And I must give them”.

“But that is usury! Don’t! He is rich, while you are not far from starving. He has a small family, you have a large one. Write here that it yielded to the value of fifty measures and forget about it. I will swear that it is the truth. And you will benefit by it”.

“But will you not betray me? And if he finds out? ”.

“Do you think it is possible? I am the steward and what I swear is sacred. Do as I tell you and do not worry”.

The man signed the document, handed it to him and said: “May you be blessed! You are my friend and saviour. How can I compensate you? ”.

“In no way! But if I should get into trouble, and be dismissed because of this, you will welcome me out of gratitude”.

“Of course! Certainly! You may rely on that! ”.

The steward went to another debtor and talked to him more or less in the same way. This debtor was to give back one hundred measures of wheat, because the drought had destroyed his crops for three years, and he had to borrow what was necessary to feed his family.

“Forget about doubling what he gave you! How can one deny wheat and exact twice as much when a fellow and his family are starving and one’s wheat is eaten by worms in the barns, because there is superabundance of it! Write eighty measures”.

“But if he remembers that he gave me twenty, then another twenty, and then ten? ”.

“How can you expect him to remember? I gave them to you and I do not want to remember. Do as I say and it is all settled. There must be justice between rich and poor people! If I were the master, I would accept only the fifty measures, and perhaps I would remit them as well”.

“You are good! I wish they were all like you! Remember that

my house is open to you”.

The steward called on other debtors, in the same way, stating that he was willing to get into trouble to put matters right according to justice. And offers of help and blessings rained upon him.

<sup>5</sup>When he was reassured about his future, he went to his master, who, in turn, had dogged his steps and discovered his trick. The master, however, praised him saying: “What you did is not right and I do not praise you for that. But I must praise you for your cunning. The children of this world are really more cunning than the children of Light”.

And I repeat to you what the rich man said: *“Fraud is not right, and I will never praise anyone for it. But I exhort you to be shrewd, at least like the children of this world, with the means of this world, to make them serve as money to enter the Kingdom of Light”*. That is, make good use of earthly riches, which are means distributed unjustly and used to purchase a fleeting welfare, which is of no value in the eternal Kingdom, so that they may open its door to you. Assist the poor with the means you have, give back what you or any other member of your family took unjustly, break with the evil guilty love for riches. And all these things will be like friends who in the hour of your death will open the eternal gates to you and will receive you in the blissful abode.

How can you expect God to give His heavenly goods, if He sees that you cannot make good use even of earthly goods? As an impossible supposition, do you want Him to accept squanderers in the heavenly Jerusalem? No, never. Up there one will live with charity, generosity and justice. Everybody for One and everyone for everybody. The Communion of Saints is an active and honest society, it is a holy society. And no one who has proved to be unjust and unfaithful can enter it.

Do not say: “But we shall be faithful up there, because we shall have everything up there without any fear”. No. He who is unfaithful in little, would be unfaithful even if he possessed everything, and he who is unjust in little is unjust in much. God does not trust true wealth to those who in the earthly test prove that they do not know how to use earthly riches. How can God entrust you one day in Heaven with the mission of supporting

spirits of your brothers on the Earth, when you have shown that extortions, frauds and greed are your prerogatives? He will, therefore, deny you your treasure, which He had kept for you, and He will give it to those who were shrewd on the Earth, by using also what is unjust and unwholesome in deeds which make them just and wholesome.

No servant can serve two masters. Because he will belong to one or to the other, and he will hate one or the other. The two masters whom man can choose are God or Mammon. But if he wishes to belong to the former, he cannot wear the colours, or follow the voice, or use the means of the latter. »

381. 6    ‘A voice rises from the group of the Essenes: «Man is not free to choose. He is forced to follow a fate. We do not state that it is distributed unwisely. On the contrary the perfect Mind has fixed, according to its own perfect plan, the number of those who will be worthy of Heaven. All the others strive in vain to become so. That is the situation. And it cannot be otherwise. As one coming out of a house may be killed by a stone falling from a cornice, whereas one in the thick of the battle may not suffer the slightest wound, likewise he who wants to save himself, but it is not written so, will only commit sin even unawares, because his damnation is fated. »

«No, man. It is not so. And change your mind. By thinking so you do the Lord wrong. »

«Why? Tell me and I will change my mind. »

«Because, by saying so, you mentally confess that God is unjust with His creatures. He created them in the same way and with the same love. He is a Father. Perfect in His paternity, as He is in everything else. How can He, therefore, make distinctions and curse a man when he is being conceived and is an innocent embryo? When he is incapable of committing sin? »

«To take His revenge for the offence received from man. »

«No. God does not take His revenge thus! He would not be satisfied with a miserable sacrifice like that, with an unjust forced sacrifice. The offence made to God can be removed by the God made Man. He will be the Expiator. Neither this nor that man. Oh! I wish it had been possible for Me to have to remove only the original sin! I wish there had been no Cain on the Earth, no Lamech, no corrupt sodomite, no homicide, thief, fornicator, adul-

terer, blasphemer, no one without love for one's parents, no perjurer, and so forth! But of each of those sins, the sinner is guilty and the author, not God. God left His children free to choose between Good and Evil. »

«And that was wrong» shouts a scribe. «He tempted us beyond measure. Although He knew that we were weak, ignorant, poisoned, He led us into temptation. That is either imprudence or wickedness. Since You are just, You must grant that what I say is the truth. »

«You are telling lies to tempt Me. God had given Adam and Eve all the necessary advice, to what avail? »

«He did the wrong thing even then. He should not have put the tree, the temptation, in the Garden. »

«In that case, where is the merit of man? »

«He would have done without it. He would have lived with no merit of his own, but only with the merit of God. »

«They are tempting You, Master. Leave those serpents alone, and listen to us, who live in continence and meditation» shouts once again the Essene.

«Yes, you live. But badly. Why do you not live holily? »

<sup>7</sup>The Essene does not reply to the questions, but he asks: «As 381. 7  
You gave me a convincing answer on free will, and I will meditate on it with goodwill, hoping that I will be able to accept it, now tell me. Do You really believe in the resurrection of bodies and in the life of souls completed by it? »

«And do you want God to put an end to the life of man thus? »

«But the soul... Since the soul is happy with its reward, why make the matter rise again? Will it increase the happiness of the blessed souls? »

«Nothing will increase the bliss of a saint when he possesses God. Or rather, one thing only will increase it on the Last Day: the knowledge that there is no longer sin. But do you not think that it is fair, that as during this day body and soul were united in the struggle to possess Heaven, they should be united also in the eternal Day to enjoy the reward? Are you not convinced? Why do you live in continence and meditation, then? »

«To be... a more perfect man, the lord over the other animals that obey their instinct without control and to be better than most men who are soiled with animality even if they display

phylacteries, fringes, tassels and wide garments and they call themselves “the separated ones”. »

Anathema! The Pharisees, upon hearing the pungent remark, which is approved by the crowds with a murmur, become excited and shout like madmen. «He is insulting us, Master! You are aware of our holiness. Defend us» they shout gesticulating.

Jesus replies: «He, too, is aware of your hypocrisy. Garments have nothing to do with holiness. When you deserve to be praised, I will be able to speak. But My answer to you, Essene, is that you sacrifice yourself for too little. Why? For whom? For how long? For human praise. For a mortal body. For as short a time as the flight of a falcon. Raise your sacrifice. Believe in the true God, in the blissful resurrection, in the free will of man. Lead an ascetic life, but for those supernatural reasons. And with your risen body you will enjoy eternal happiness. »

«It is late! I am old! I have perhaps wasted my life in an erroneous sect... It’s the end!... »

381. 8 «No. It is never the end for those who want good! <sup>8</sup>Listen, sinners, and you, who are in error, or you, whatever your past may have been. Repent. Come to Mercy. It opens its arms to you. I show you the way. I am the pure vital fountain. Get rid of what has misled you so far. Undress and come to the fountain. Clothe yourselves with light. Revive. Have you stolen like highwaymen, or like gentlemen and craftily in business or in offices? Come. Have you had bad habits or lustful passions? Come. Have you oppressed your neighbour? Come. Repent. Come to love and to peace. Oh! Let the love of God flow upon you. Relieve that love, which is in anguish because of your resistance, your fear, your hesitation. I beg you in the name of My Father and yours. Come to Life and to the Truth, and you will have eternal life. »

A man shouts from the crowd: «I am rich and a sinner. What shall I do to come? »

«Give up everything for the sake of God and of your soul. »

The Pharisees grumble and scoff at Jesus, calling Him «vendor of illusions and heresies», and «sinner feigning holiness», and they warn Him that heretics are always heretics and that such are the Essenes. They say that sudden conversions are nothing but passing enthusiasm and that an impure man will always be impure, a thief will always be a thief and a murderer a mur-

derer. They conclude by saying that, as they live in perfect holiness, they are the only ones entitled to Heaven and to preaching.

<sup>9</sup> «This was a happy day. Seeds of holiness were falling into hearts. My love, nourished by the kiss of God, was giving life to the seed. The Son of man was happy in sanctifying... You have poisoned the day. But it does not matter. I say to you - and if I am not gentle, the fault is yours - I say to you that you are the ones who show themselves just, or try to do so, in the eyes of men, but you are not just. God knows your hearts. What is great in the eyes of men, is abominable before the immensity and perfection of God. You quote the old Law. Why, then, do you not live according to it? You alter the Law in your favour, aggravating it with burdens that give you a profit. Why, then, do you not allow Me to alter it to the benefit of these little ones, removing all the tassels and heavy useless burdens of the precepts made by you, which are so many and such that the essential Law disappears under them and is smothered? I feel sorry for these crowds, for these souls, who seek fresh air in Religion and find a slip-knot. They seek love and find terror... No. Come, little ones of Israel. The Law is love! God is love! This is what I say to those who are frightened among you. The severe Law and the threatening prophets who foretold Me, but notwithstanding the cries of their distressing prophecies they were not able to withhold sin, end with John. After John comes the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of love. I say to the humble: "Go in. It is for you". And everyone with a goodwill strives to go in. But for those who will not lower their heads, beat their chests and say: "I have sinned", there will be no Kingdom. It is written\*: "Circumcise your heart and be obstinate no longer". This land saw the prodigy of Elisha\*\*, who made the foul water wholesome, by throwing some salt into it. And do I not throw the salt of Wisdom into your hearts? Why are you then worse than water and you do not change your spirits? Mix My salt with your formulae and they will have a fresh taste, because they will give the Law its primitive strength. In you, first of all, as you are the most needy. Do you say that I change, the Law? No. You tell lies. I give the Law its original form, which you distorted. Because it is the Law that will last as long as the

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\* written, in: *Deuteronomy 10, 16.*

\*\* prodigy of Elisha, narrated in: *2 King 2, 19-22.*



Earth, and both sky and earth will disappear before one only of its elements or its advice. And if you alter it, because you like to do so, and if you draw fine distinctions looking for loop-holes for your faults, you had better know that it is of no avail. It is of no avail, Samuel! Of no avail, Isaiah. It is written: "You shall not commit adultery" and I complete it adding: "He who sends back his wife to marry another one, is adulterous, and he, who marries a woman repudiated by her husband, is adulterous, because what God joined, death only can separate". But harsh words are for obdurate sinners. Those who have sinned, but grieve desolately for doing so, must know and believe that God is Goodness, and let them come to Him Who absolves, forgives and admits to Life. Go with this certainty. Spread it in people's hearts. Preach mercy, which gives you peace, blessing you in the name of the Lord. »

381. 10 <sup>10</sup>The crowds disperse slowly, both because the path is narrow and because they are attracted by Jesus. But they disperse.

The apostles remain with Jesus and while speaking they make their way. They seek the shade walking close to a thicket of ruffled tamarisks. But there is an Essene in it. The one who spoke to Jesus. He is taking off his white clothes.

Peter, who is ahead of everybody, is dumbfounded seeing that the man is left with only his undergarment on, and he runs back saying: «Master! A madman! The one who was speaking to You, the Essene. He is undressed and is weeping and sighing. We cannot go there. »

But the man, who is lean, bearded, with no clothes on his body except his undergarment and sandals, is already coming out of the thicket and he turns his steps towards Jesus weeping and beating his chest. He prostrates himself: «I am the one whose heart has been miraculously cured. You have cured my soul. I will obey Your word. I want to clothe myself with light, leaving every other thought, which might clothe me with errors. I will live apart to meditate on the true God, to obtain life and resurrection. Is that enough? Give me a new name and tell me a place where I can live of You and of Your words. »

«He is mad! We could not lead such a life and we have heard so many of His words! And he... just after one sermon... » say the apostles to one another.

But the man, who has heard them, says: «Are you going to put limitations to God? He has broken my heart to give me a free spirit. Lord!... » he implores, stretching his arms out towards Jesus.

«Yes. Your name is Elijah and be fire. That mountain is full of caves. Go there, and when you hear the earth quake because of a dreadful earthquake, come out, and look for the servants of the Lord to join them. You will then be re-born and you will be a servant, too. Go! »

The man kisses His feet, gets up and goes away.

«But is he going half-dressed like that? » ask the dumbfounded apostles.

«Give him a mantle, a knife, tinder and flint, and some bread. He will walk today and tomorrow and then he will retire to pray where we stopped and the Father will see to His son. »

Andrew and John run after him and they reach him when he is about to disappear around a bend.

They come back saying: «He took everything. We also told him where we were. What an unexpected prey, Lord! »

«God makes plants flower also on rocks. And in the deserts of hearts He makes spirits of goodwill rise to comfort Me. Now let us go towards Jericho. We will stop in some house in the country. »

### **382. A restoring stop at the house of Nike who will have to mind the penitent Essene.**

12<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Although the road runs through a green country, with leafy trees along its sides, it is as hot as an oven in the midday sun. Heat and the aroma of bread being baked in an oven come from the fields, where the crops are maturing rapidly. The light is dazzling. Each ear of corn looks like a tiny gilded lamp among the golden glumes and the pointed awns, and the sunshine sparkling on the straw of the cornstalks is as troublesome to the eye as the dazzling road. In vain the pilgrims seek relief in the leaves. If they look up at them, they expose their eyes even more to the glare of the oppressive sunshine, and they must lower them at

once, to shun such violence, and close them, leaving a narrow gap between their dusty reddened irritated eyelashes. Perspiration trickling down their dusty cheeks leaves shiny streaks on them. They drag their tired feet raising more dust, which increases their torture.

Jesus comforts His tired apostles. Although He is perspiring as well, He has covered His head with His mantle, to protect it from the sun, and advises the others to do likewise. They obey without speaking. They are too exhausted to waste their breath on one of their usual complaints. They are proceeding like drunk men...

«Cheer up. There is a house over there in the fields... » says Jesus.

«If it is like the others... there will be nothing but the distress of walking so much through fiery fields to no purpose» grumbles Peter within his mantle. The others confirm uttering a depressed «h'm! ».

«I will go. You stay here in this little shade. »

«No. We will come with You. They will have at least a well, as there is no shortage of water here... and we will have a drink to quench the fire within us. »

«It will do you harm to drink while you are so hot. »

«We shall die... but it will be better than what we have now... »

Jesus does not reply. He sighs and He goes ahead of them along a path through fields of corn.

<sup>2</sup>The fields do not stretch as far as the house, but they end at the border of a wonderful shady orchard, which forms a rich refreshing ring around the house, as both light and heat are mitigated in it. And the apostles thrust themselves into it, with an «ah! » of relief. But Jesus goes on, heedless of their entreaties to stop for a little while.

The cooing of doves, the creaking of pulleys and the calm voices of women are heard from the house and spread in the dead silence of the country.

Jesus arrives at a little esplanade, which surrounds the house like a wide clean pavement, over which a pergola of grapes spreads its entangled leafy branches and a protecting shade. There are two wells, one on the left and one on the right hand side of the house, shaded by the vine. There are some flowerbeds

against the walls of the house. Light dark-striped curtains are fluttering at the open doors. Voices of women and noise of dishes come from a room. Jesus goes towards it and as He passes by, a dozen doves, which were pecking cereals spread on the ground, take flight with loud flapping of wings. The noise draws the attention of those in the room and it is contemporaneous with the drawing of the curtain, which Jesus moves to the right with His hand, while a servant pulls it to the left and remains astonished before the Unknown visitor.

«Peace to this house! May I, as a pilgrim, have some refreshment?» asks Jesus standing on the threshold of the room, a large kitchen in which servants are washing the dishes used for the midday-meal.

«The landlady will not reject You. I will go and tell her.»

«There are twelve more people with Me, and if I should get refreshment only for Myself, I would prefer to have none.»

«We will tell the mistress and she certainly...»

<sup>3</sup>«Master and Lord! You here? In my house? What grace is this?» interrupts a voice, and a woman, Nike, rushes forward and kneels to kiss Jesus' feet. 382. 3

The maidservants are left like statues. The one who was washing the dishes is standing with a towel in her right hand and a dripping dish in her left one, reddened by the boiling water. Another one, who was polishing knives, crouching in a corner, gets up on her knees to see better, and the knives fall on the floor with a crash. A third one, intent on removing ashes from the cookers, raises her face covered with ashes and remains thus, emerging open mouthed from the level of the fireplace.

«I am here. Many houses rejected us. We are tired and thirsty.»

«Oh! Come! Not here. Let us go into the rooms facing north, which are cool and shady. And you, prepare water so that they can wash, and bring some aromatic drinks. And you, girl, go and awake the steward and ask him to let you have some snacks, while waiting for the meal...»

«No, Nike! I am not a worldly guest. I am your persecuted Master. I ask for shelter and love, rather than for food. I ask for pity, more for My friends than for Myself...»

«Yes, Lord. But when did You have Your last meal?»

«They... I do not know. I, yesterday at dawn, with them. »

«So You can see... I will not commit excesses. But as a sister or a mother I will give everybody what is necessary, and as a servant and disciple, I will give You honour and assistance. Where are the brothers? »

«In the orchard. But I think that they are coming. I can hear their voices. »

Nike runs out, she sees them and calls them and then she leads them with Jesus into a cool entrance-hall, where there already are basins and towels, so that they can wash their faces, hands and feet and get rid of dust and perspiration.

«I beg you, take off your dusty clothes and give them to the servants at once. You will feel much better with clean clothes and cool sandals on. Then come into that hall. I will wait for you there. »

And Nike goes out closing the door...

382. 4 4... «Ah! It is lovely in this shade and so refreshing! » says Peter with a sigh entering the room where Nike is waiting for them kindly and respectfully.

«My joy in giving you relief is certainly greater than your relief, o apostle of my Lord. »

«H'm! Apostle... Of course... But, listen, Nike, let us do without ceremony. You: without attaching importance to the fact that you are rich and wise; I, without attaching importance to the fact that I am an apostle. So... like good brothers and sisters, who need each other's help for their souls and their bodies. The thought that I am an "apostle" frightens me too much. »

«What are you afraid of? » asks the amazed woman smiling.

«Of being... too big... with regard to the clay I am, and that I may collapse because of the weight... I am afraid of... becoming arrogant with pride... I am afraid that... the others, I mean the disciples and good souls, knowing that I am the apostle, may keep away from me and hold their tongues even if I make mistakes... And I do not want that because among the disciples, also among those who believe in a simple way, there are many who are better than I am, some with regard to this, some with regard to that, and I want to do as... as that bee over there, which has come in, and of the baskets of fruit that you ordered to be brought in for us, it sucked a little here and a little there, and now, to corn-

plete the task, is sucking those flowers and then it will go out and suck clover and cornflowers, camomiles and bindweeds. It takes a little of everything. And I must do likewise... »

«But you suck the most beautiful flower! The Master. »

«Yes, Nike. But from Him I learn to become a son of God. Men will teach me to become a man. »

«You are. »

«No, woman. I am little less than an animal. And really I do not know how the Master puts up with me... »

«I put up with you because you know what you are, and I can work on you as easily as one can knead dough. But if you were stubborn and offered resistance, and above all if you were proud, I would drive you away as if you were a demon» says Jesus.

<sup>5</sup>Some maidservants come in with cups of cold milk, and porous amphoras, which keep liquids very cool.

«Take some refreshment» says Nike. «Then you will be able to rest until evening. There are rooms and beds in the house. And if I did not have them, I would give you mine, to let you rest. Master, I will now withdraw to attend to household matters. You all know where to find me and the maidservants. »

«Go and do not worry about us. »

Nike goes out. The apostles do ample justice to the snack offered to them. And while eating with a good appetite, they speak and make comments.

«Lovely fruit! »

«And a good disciple. »

«Beautiful house. Not magnificent, not poor. »

«And it is controlled by a woman who is both kind and firm. There is order, neatness, respect, and tenderness at the same time. »

«There are beautiful fields around it! A fortune! »

«Yes. And a furnace!... » says Peter, who has not forgotten what he suffered. The others laugh.

«But it is very pleasant here. Did You know that Nike lived here? » asks Thomas.

«Not anymore than you did. I knew that she had recently bought some property near Jericho. But that was all. The dear angel of pilgrims led us here. »

«Actually, he led You. We did not want to come. »

«I was ready to throw myself on the ground and let the sun burn me, rather than take another step» says Matthew.

«It is not possible to travel during the day. The sun is very strong this year. It seems to be going mad as well. »

«Yes, we will travel during the first hours in the morning and in the evening. But we shall soon be up on the mountains. It is milder there. »

«To my house? » asks the Iscariot.

«Yes, Judas. And to Juttah and to Hebron. »

«Not to Ashkelon, eh? »

«No, Peter. We will go where we have never been. We shall still have to suffer from sunshine and heat. A little sacrifice for My sake and for the sake of souls. Rest now. I am going into the orchard to pray. »

«But are You never tired? Would it not be better if You had a rest as well? » asks Judas of Alphaeus.

«Perhaps the Master wishes to stop here... » remarks the Zealot.

«No. We will leave at dawn to wade across the river in the cool hours. »

«Where are we going beyond the Jordan? »

«The crowds are going home after Passover. Too many looked in vain for Me in Jerusalem. I will preach and cure at the ford. Then we will go and tidy up Solomon's house. It will be invaluable to us... »

«But are we not going back to Galilee? »

«We will go there, too. But we will remain in these southern parts for a long time, and a shelter will be most useful to us. Sleep. I am going. »

382. 6      «Supper must be over. It is night. Dew drops fall from cornices and resound on the vine leaves. There is an unbelievable number of stars in the sky and eyes get lost contemplating them. Chirps of crickets and night birds. The silence of the country.

The apostles have already withdrawn. But Nike is up and she is listening to the Master. He is sitting stiffly on a stone seat against the house. The woman is standing before Him, in an attitude of respectful attention.

Jesus must be concluding a speech already started. He says:

«Yes. The remark is correct. But I was sure that the penitent, or rather the “reviving man” would not be left without the help of the Lord. While we were having supper and you were serving and asking questions, I was thinking that you are the help. You said: “I can only follow You for short periods of time, because I have to watch over the house and the new domestic staff”. And you regretted that and you said that if you had known you were going to find Me so soon, you would not have bought the property, which is now binding you. You can see that it has served to give hospitality to the evangelizers. So it is good. And it may be useful again... while waiting to serve your Lord perfectly. I now ask a service of you, for the sake of that soul, who is reviving and is full of goodwill, but is very weak. Excessive penance might distress him, and Satan might take advantage of such distress. »

«What must I do, my Lord? »

«Go to him: Go to him every month, as if it were a rite. It is a rite of brotherly love. You will go to the Cherith and climbing up the path among the bushes you will call: “Elijah! Elijah! ”. He will look out in amazement and you will greet him thus: “Peace to you, brother, in the name of Jesus the Nazarene”. You will take him as many pieces of bread baked twice, as the days of a month. Nothing else in summer. From the Feast of the Tabernacles onwards, you will take him also four log\* of oil each month, together with the bread. And at the Tabernacles take him a garment made of goat-skin, a heavy one, water resistant, and a blanket. Nothing else. »

«And no word? »

«Only those strictly useful. He will ask after Me. Tell him what you know. He will confide his hesitations, his hopes and low spirits to you. You will tell him what your faith and piety inspire you. The sacrifice, in any case, will not last long... Not even twelve months... Will you be merciful to Me and to the penitent? »

«Yes, my Lord... But why are You so sad? »

«And why are you weeping? »

«Because in Your words I hear a foreboding of death... Will I

\* **log**, a unit of measurement mentioned several times in the text of *Leviticus* 14, 10-24, corresponded to approximately half a litre. Another measurement is bat, that we will find in 467. 3.



be losing You so soon, Lord? » Nike weeps behind her veil.

«Do not weep! There will be so much peace for Me, afterwards... No more hatred. No more ambushes. No more all this... horror of sin against Me and around Me... No more atrocious contacts... Oh! Do not weep, Nike! Your Saviour will be in peace. He will be victorious... »

«But before... I always read the prophets with my husband... And we shuddered with horror at the words of David and Isaiah... But will it really be like that for You? »

«That and more... »

«Oh!... Who will comfort You? Who will let You die still... hopeful? »

«The love of My disciples and particularly of My women disciples. »

«Also mine, then. Because at no cost I will be far from my Saviour. Only... oh! Lord! Exact any kind of penance from me, any sacrifice, but give me manly courage for that hour. When you will\* be like “a dry potsherd”, “with Your tongue stuck to Your jaw” out of thirst, when You will look “like a leper who covers his face”, grant that I may recognize You as the King of kings and I may assist You, as a devoted servant. Do not conceal Your tortured face from me, o my God! But as You now allow me to delight in Your brightness, o Morning Star, let me look at You then and may Your face be impressed in my heart, because, oh! also my heart, like Yours, will melt like wax on that day, through grief... » Nike is now on her knees, almost prostrated and now and again she raises her weeping face to look at her Lord, Whose body is white in the white moonlight against the dark wall.

«You will have all that. And I shall have your pity. And it will come with Me to the scaffold and from there it will rise to Heaven. Your crown forever. Angels and men will utter the most beautiful praise of you: “In the hour of calamity, of sin, of doubt, she was faithful, she did not sin and she assisted her Lord”. Stand up, woman. And may you be blessed as from now and forever. »

He lays His hands on her head while she is getting up, and they then go into the silent house, for their night's rest.

\* **you will**, as said in: *Psalm 22, 16, Isaiah 53, 3.*

### 383. Sermon on the bank of the Jordan after the shameless act of a prostitute.

14<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>The banks of the Jordan near the ford are exactly like a camp 383. 1  
of nomads during present days, when caravans are returning to their home towns. Tents or just blankets are tied to two tree-trunks, or resting on branches planted in the ground, or tied to the high saddle of a camel, fixed, in short, somehow, to enable people to get under them, and be sheltered from the dew which must be just like rain in these places below sea level. These are spread everywhere along the woods, which form a green frame around the river.

When Jesus arrives with His disciples near the river banks, to the north of the ford, the camps are slowly awaking. Jesus must have left Nike's house at dawn, because the sun has not yet risen and the place is beautiful, cool and serene. The more earnest people, awakened by the neighing, braying, the strange cries of horses, donkeys and camels, by the quarrels or songs of hundreds of sparrows and other birds among the branches of willows, of reed-thickets, of the tall trees forming green tunnels above the flowery banks, begin to steal out of the gaily-coloured tents and go down to the river to wash. One can hear some children weeping and the sweet voices of mothers speaking to their children.

All the signs of life revive minute by minute. All kinds of vendors arrive from the nearby town of Jericho, with new pilgrims, guards and soldiers responsible for watching over and keeping order during these days, when tribes of every region meet and do not spare themselves insults and reproaches. And there are frequent thefts by highwaymen, who mix with the crowds disguised as pilgrims in order to steal; and there is no shortage of prostitutes, who have come on «their» Passover pilgrimage, that is, to squeeze money and gifts out of the more wealthy and lustful passengers in payment for an hour's pleasure, which miserably neutralises all Passover purifications... The honest women, who among the pilgrims have husbands and grown up sons, shout like upset magpies calling their men who are watching the prostitutes stand enraptured, or at least mothers and wives think so. And the shameless women laugh and give sharp answers to the

titles addressed to them by the honest women. The men, and the soldiers in particular, laugh and willingly joke with the prostitutes. Some Israelites, morally rigid, or only hypocritically rigid, go away indignantly, whilst others... make use of the deaf-and-dumb alphabet in advance, because they make themselves clearly understood with the prostitutes by such gestures.

<sup>2</sup>Jesus does not follow the straight road that would take Him to the middle of the camp. He goes down to the river shore, takes His sandals off and walks where the water washes against the grass. The apostles follow Him.

The elder ones, who are more uncompromising, grumble: «And to think that the Baptist preached penance here! »

«Yes! And this place is now worse than a porch in the Roman thermae! »

«And those who call themselves saints do not disdain to amuse themselves there! »

«Did you see them, too? »

«Of course I did! I have eyes as well!... »

The younger or less rigid apostles - such as Judas of Kerioth who laughs and watches very carefully what is happening in the camps, does not disdain contemplating the beautiful impudent women who have come looking for customers; and Thomas laughs while watching the angry wives and the indignant Pharisees; and Matthew, who cannot speak severely against vices and corrupt people, as once he was a sinner himself, is content with sighing and shaking his head; and James of Zebedee, who watches without interest and without criticising, indifferently - follow their little group, ahead of which there is Jesus with Andrew, John and James of Alphaeus.

Jesus' face is uncommunicative, as if it were carved in marble. And it becomes more and more uncommunicative, as from the top of the embankment He hears words of admiration or shameless conversations between a not very honest man and a prostitute. He looks straight ahead all the time, fixedly. He does not want to see. And His attitude makes His intention very clear.

383.3

<sup>3</sup>But a young man, magnificently dressed, who is speaking to two prostitutes with other fellows like him, says in a loud voice to one of the women: «Go! We want to have a good laugh. Go and offer yourself! Comfort Him! He is sad because, poor as He is, he

cannot buy women. »

Jesus' ivory face blushes and then becomes pale once again. But He does not look round. His blushing is the only sign that He has heard.

The impudent woman, with her necklaces tinkling loudly and her dress flapping lightly, utters an affected cry and jumps from the low embankment on to the shore, and in doing so, she succeeds in showing much of her secret beauty. She falls just at Jesus' feet and with trilling laughter on her beautiful lips, inviting eyes and figure, she shouts: «Oh! handsome one among those born of woman! For a kiss of Your lips, I give all myself without payment! »

John, Andrew and James of Alphaeus are paralysed with scandalised astonishment and cannot make a gesture. But Peter! He springs like a panther and from his group he falls heavily on the unfortunate woman, now on her knees and leaning backwards, he shakes her, lifts her, hurls her, with an awful epithet, against the embankment, then charges her to give her the rest.

Jesus says: «Simon! » A cry which is more than a sermon.

And Simon goes back to his Lord, red with anger. «Why do You not let me punish her? »

«Simon, you do not punish a garment which has become dirty. You wash it. Her garment is her filthy body and her soul is polluted. Let us pray to cleanse her soul and her body. » He says so kindly, in a low voice, but loud enough to be heard by the woman, and setting out again, He now does cast a glance with His mild eyes at the wretched woman for one moment. One glance only! For one moment only! But all the power of His merciful love is in it! And the woman lowers her head, picks up her veil and covers herself with it... Jesus continues on His way.

<sup>383. 4</sup> He is now at the ford. The shallow water allows adults to cross to the other side on foot. It is enough to lift one's clothes above one's knees and look for the large white stones submerged in the crystal-clear water forming a kind of pavement for the people wading across. Those on horseback cross over downstream.

The apostles wallow happily in the water half way up their thighs and Peter cannot believe that it is true. And he promises the others and himself a «refreshing» bath when they stop in Solomon's house, as compensation for yesterday's «roasting».

They are now on the other side. Here also the crowds are becoming active after the night's rest, or people are drying themselves after wading.

Jesus orders: «Spread around and inform people that the Rabbi is here. I am going near that fallen tree-trunk and I will wait for you there. »

Many people are soon informed and they flock to hear Him.

Jesus begins to speak. A sad procession passes by following a stretcher, on which there is a young man who has been taken ill in Jerusalem, and as the doctors have condemned him, he is now being rushed home to die there. Everybody is speaking about him because he is rich and still young. And many say: «It must be very sad to die when one is so wealthy and so young! » And some say - perhaps they are people who already believe in Jesus - : «It serves him right! He will not believe. The disciples went to his relatives and said to them: “The Saviour is here. If you have faith and you ask Him, He will cure him”. But he was the first to refuse to come to the Rabbi. » Criticism follows pity. And Jesus refers to that to begin His speech.

383.5 <sup>5</sup>«Peace to everybody!

Rich and young people certainly do not like to die, when they are rich only in money and young in age. But those, who are rich in virtue and young because of their pure habits, are not sorry to die. A truly wise person, from the age of discretion onwards, acts in such a way as to die peacefully. Life is preparation for death, just as death is preparation for a greater Life. The true wise man, when he understands the truth of living and dying, the truth of dying to rise again, strives in every possible way to divest himself of what is useless, and to become enriched with what is useful, that is, with virtues and good deeds, in order to have a supply of goods before Him Who summons him to judge him, to reward or punish him with perfect justice. The true wise man leads a life that makes him more adult in wisdom than an old man, and younger than a teenager, because by living virtuously and justly, he keeps such pure feelings in his heart that even youths at times do not possess. How sweet then it is to die! The wise man reclines his tired head on the bosom of the Father, relaxes in His embrace, and in the midst of the mist of fleeing life he says: “I love You, I hope in You, I believe in You”, saying so

for the last time on the Earth, to repeat then the jubilant “I love You! ”, forever and ever in the brightness of Paradise.

Is death a harsh thought? No. A just decree for all mortals, it is a grievous worry for those who do not believe and are full of sins. In vain man says, to explain the troubled anxiety of a man who is dying and who was not good during his lifetime: “It’s because he would not like to die as yet, because he has not done any good, or only very little, and he would like to live to make amends”. In vain he says: “If he had lived longer, he could have had a greater reward, because he would have done more good”. A soul knows, at least vaguely, how much time it has been given. No time, as compared to eternity. And the soul spurs the whole ego to act. But, poor soul! How often it is overwhelmed, trodden upon, gagged, in order not to hear its words! That happens to those who lack goodwill. Whilst just men, from their very childhood, listen to their souls, obey their advice, and are continuously active; and saints die young in age but rich in merits, at times at the dawn of life; and not even by the addition of one hundred or one thousand years, would they become holier than they are, because the love for God and their neighbour, practised in every form and with utter generosity, makes them perfect. What matters in Heaven is not how long, but how one has lived.

People mourn for corpses and weep over them. But corpses do not weep. People tremble at the thought that they must die. But they do not worry about living in such a way as not to tremble at the hour of their death. Why do people not mourn for and weep over living corpses, the real corpses, those who have in their bodies, as in their tombs, dead souls? And those who weep thinking that their bodies must die, why do they not weep over the corpses they have within themselves? How many corpses I see, and they laugh and joke, but they do not weep over themselves! How many fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sons, friends, priests, teachers, I see who foolishly weep for a son, a wife, a husband, a brother, a parent, a friend, a believer, a disciple who died in clear friendship with God, after a life that was a crown of perfection and who do not weep over the corpses of the souls of a son, a husband, a wife, a brother, a father, a friend, a believer, a disciple, who is dead through vices and sins, and is dead and lost forever, unless he repents! Why not try to revive them? That is

love, you know? It is the greatest love. Oh! foolish tears for dust, which has become dust! Idolatry of affections! Hypocrisy of affection! Weep, but over the dead souls of your dearest relatives. Try to bring them to Life. And I speak in particular to you, women, who can influence so much those whom you love.

383. 6     <sup>6</sup>Let us now consider together what Wisdom indicates as the cause of death and shame.

Do not insult God by misusing the life He gave you, soiling it with evil deeds which dishonour man. Do not insult your parents through behaviour that flings mud at their white hair and causes violent sorrow to their last days. Do not abuse those who assist you, so that you will not be cursed for the love you tread upon. Do not abuse those who govern you, because it is not by rebelling against rulers that countries become great and free, but it is through the holy life of citizens that you obtain the assistance of the Lord, Who can touch the hearts of rulers or remove them from their places or even from life, as our history of Israel has shown several times, when they pass all bounds and especially when the people, sanctifying themselves, deserve the forgiveness of God, Who thus removes the oppressive yoke from the necks of the punished citizens. Do not abuse your wives by putting an affront of adulterous love upon them, and do not abuse the innocence of your children with the knowledge of unlawful love. Live holily in the eyes of those who, both because of their love and of their duty, consider you the person who is to be the example of their lives. You cannot sever your holiness in respect of your closest neighbour from your holiness towards God, because one germinates the other, as the two loves: of God and neighbour germinate each other.

Be just with your friends. Friendship is a kinship of the soul. It is written\*: “How delightful it is for friends to proceed all together”. But it is delightful if they proceed on the path of virtue. Woe to those who pollute and betray friendship by turning it into selfishness, treason, vice or injustice. Too many are those who say: “I love you” to find out their friends’ business and exploit the information to their own benefit! Too many are those who usurp the rights of their friends!

\* It is written, in: *Psalm 133, 1.*

Be honest with judges. With all judges. From the most high judge, Who is God and cannot be defrauded or deceived through hypocritical practices, to the intimate judge, that is, your conscience, to the loving, suffering judges, watchful of their love, which are the eyes of your relatives, to the severe judges of the people. Do not lie by invoking God to corroborate your lies.

Be honest in selling and buying. When you are selling, and your greed says to you: “Steal to have a bigger profit”, whilst your conscience says to you: “Be honest because you would be sorry if you were robbed”, listen to the latter voice, remembering that we must not do to others what we would not like done to ourselves. The money given to you in exchange for goods is often wet with the perspiration and tears of the poor. It costs hard work. You do not know how much grief it costs, how much sorrow and pain there is behind that money, which you vendors think that it is always too little for what you give. Sick people, fatherless children, old people short of money... Oh! holy grief and holy dignity of the poor, which the rich do not understand, why are you not taken into consideration? Why are people honest when selling to the powerful and mighty ones, for fear of retaliation, whereas they take advantage of defenceless unknown brothers? That is rather a crime against love than against honesty itself. And God curses it, because the tears squeezed out of poor people, who have but tears as a reaction against abuse of power, cry to the Lord with the same voice as the blood drained from the veins of a man by a murderer, by a Cain of his fellow creature.

Be honest in your looks, as you are in your words and deeds. A look, given to those who do not deserve it, or denied to those who do deserve it, is like a noose and a dagger. The look that meets the impudent eyes of a prostitute, and says to her: “You are beautiful! ”, and replies to her inviting look with assent, is worse than the slip knot for a hanged man. The look denied to a poor relative or to a friend fallen into poverty, is like a dagger that pierces the hearts of those unhappy people. And likewise the glance of hatred or of contempt cast at one’s enemy or at a beggar. Enemies are to be forgiven and loved at least with your souls, if your bodies refuse to love them. *Forgiveness is love of the spirit. Not to take revenge is love of the spirit.* A beggar is to be loved because nobody comforts him. It is not sufficient to throw a mite and



pass by scornfully. The offering serves for the starving, naked, homeless body. But the pity that smiles in offering, that takes an interest in the tears of the unhappy fellow, is bread for his heart. Love, love, love.

Be honest in tithes and customary practices, be honest in your homes, without exploiting servants beyond measure and without tempting the maidservant sleeping under your roof. Even if the world is unaware of the theft committed in the secrecy of your house against your unaware wife and against the maidservant you debauch, God is aware of your sin.

Be honest in speaking. Be honest in bringing up your sons and daughters. It is written\*: “Keep a sharp look-out, that your daughter does not make you the laughing stock of the town”. I say: “Keep a sharp look-out that the soul of your daughter may not die”.

383. 7 <sup>7</sup>And now go. I also will go away, after giving you provisions of wisdom. May the Lord be with those who strive to love Him. »

He blesses them with a gesture, He descends quickly from the fallen tree and takes a lane among the trees going upstream and soon disappears among the green vegetation.

The crowds make comments animatedly with opposing opinions. The unfavourable comments, of course, are made by the few scribes and Pharisees who are among the crowds of humble people.

### **384. Old Ananias becomes the guardian of the small house of Solomon.**

15<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

384. 1 Solomon’s little house, which I saw in the vision\*\* of the resurrection of Lazarus in 1944, without knowing its owner, is one of the last houses in the only road that takes one to the river, in this poor village that is out of the way, a little village of boatmen, where the houses of the... wealthier people are situated along the

\* **It is written**, in: *Syrach 42, 11*.

\*\* **the vision**, of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1944, indicated in the volume “The Notebooks. 1944”. The “resurrection of Lazarus” narrated in this work, in chapter 548, is dated 26<sup>th</sup> December 1946.

little dusty road, and the others are spread at random among the trees of the embankments. They are not many. I do not think that they are fifty in all. And they are so small, that they could be all contained in one of those tenement houses in large modern towns. Springtime now makes them appear less miserable, because it adorns them with its freshness, while garlands of bindweed or festoons of vines, or cheery smiling yellow flowers of vegetable marrows adorn the coarse fences marking the boundaries of properties, the borders of roofs, the doors of houses. There are also some roses, which sees out of place in there beauty in the midst of baskets and nets, of yellow mustards in bloom and of the early pods of humble swinging beans.

Also the road looks prettier as the cane-brake at its end has not only the hard berries of the dusty knots, but it is also decorated with plumes, and wild gladioli display their sword-shaped leaves and bright-coloured flower spikes, while light bind-weeds with thread like stems embrace canes and knots winding round them and at each twirl they put forth the very delicate chalice of their little lilac-pink flower. And myriads of birds make love among the reed-thickets, flirting on the canes, swinging on the bearbines, enlivening the green marshy embankments with their chirping and multi-coloured feathers.

Jesus pushes the little rustic gate providing access to a small kitchen garden or courtyard. If it was a kitchen garden, now it is certainly a wild entanglement of grass, if it was a courtyard it is still a disorder of weeds sown by the wind. Only some vegetable marrows have been wise by clinging to the only vine and fig-tree, climbing up to put forth the smiling mouths of their flowers close to the miniature bunches of grapes of the vine, or to the tiny tender fig leaves, which at their joints, in the cradles of the stalks, have the hard gems of the fig-flowers just formed. Stinging-nettles are tormenting the apostles' bare feet, so much so that Peter and Thomas pick up two worm-eaten oars and are busy beating the irritating plants to lessen their poisonous effect.

In the meantime James and John are trying to turn the big rusty lock, and when they succeed, they open the rustic door, entering a kitchen room smelling mouldy and close. Dust and cobwebs decorate the walls. A rough table, some benches and seats and a shelf furnish it; there are two doors in one of the walls.

2Peter explores... «There is a little room with one bed only. It's good for Jesus... And there? Ah! I see! This is the store-room, the lumber-room, the barn and the rats' nest... Look how they run! They have gnawed away everything these months. But now I will see to you, don't you worry. Master... can we act as if we were at home here? »

«That is what Solomon said. »

«Very well! Listen, brother, and you, James. Come here and close all these holes. And you, Matthew stand here at the door with Judas, and make sure that not even one mouse gets out. Just imagine that you are still the kind toll-collector at Capernaum. No customer escaped you then, not even if he became as thin as a lizard after hibernating... And you go and get as much weed as you can in the kitchen garden and bring it here. And You, Master, go... wherever You like, while I will fix these filthy devils, which have ruined these good nets and have eaten the whole keel of a boat... » And while speaking he gathers together gnawed bits of wood, bits of nets reduced like tow, faggots... everything in the middle of the room, and when he gets the green grass, he places it on top of the rest and then sets fire to the lot and runs out when the first spirals of smoke rise from the pile. And he laughs saying: «Let all the Philistines die! »

«But you are not going to set everything on fire? » asks Simon Zealot.

«No, my dear. Because the damp green grass chokes the flames, and the flames exhale smoke from the grass and thus, as good allies, the dry and green elements help each other in taking revenge. Can you smell how it stinks? And before long you will hear screams! Who told me that swans sing before dying? Ah! Syntyche did! The mice will be singing, too, shortly. »

Judas Iscariot suddenly stops laughing and remarks: «We have not been able to find out anything about her. And we have heard nothing of John of Endor. I wonder where they have ended up. »

«In the right place certainly» replies Peter.

«Do you know where? »

«I know that they are no longer here to be harassed by ill-will. »

«Have you ever inquired about them? I have. »

«I have not. I am not interested in knowing where they are. I am quite satisfied thinking and praying that they may persevere in holiness. »

Thomas says: «Some rich Pharisees asked me about them. They are customers of my father. I replied that I do not know. »

«And are you not anxious to know? »

«I am not and that is the truth... »

«Listen! Listen! It's starting to smoke. But let us go out, otherwise we shall be choking, too» says Peter. And the distraction puts an end to the discussion.

<sup>3</sup>Jesus is in the kitchen garden and is straightening the stems of legumes, creeping on the ground, which have come up from seed fallen there. 384. 3

«Are You working as a kitchen gardener? » asks Philip smiling.

«Yes. It upsets Me to see a plant creep uselessly, whereas it is destined to rise towards the sun and bear fruit. »

«A beautiful subject matter for a sermon, Master» remarks Bartholomew.

«Yes. Beautiful. But everything can be used as a subject, when one knows how to meditate. »

«We will help You, too. Come on! Who will go down to the river to get some canes for the legumes? »

The younger disciples go away laughing, and the elder ones get busy weeding carefully.

«Oh! One can see that it is a kitchen garden like that. There is no salad. But there are leeks, garlic, vegetables, fine herbs and legumes. And vegetable marrows! How many of them! The vine needs pruning and the fig-tree wants to be cleared... »

«But, Simon, we are not staying here!... » says Matthew.

«But we shall come here often. He said so. And it will do us no harm to have a little order here. Look! There is also a jasmine, poor thing, under this cascade of marrows. If Porphirea saw this plant so dejected, she would weep over it, and she would talk to it as to a child. Of course, before she had Marjiam she used to talk to her flowers as if they were her children... Here you are! I have made room here. I removed the marrow because... <sup>4</sup>Oh! 384. 4  
Here are the boys with the canes and a... Master, there is work for You. He is blind! »

In fact James, John, Andrew and Thomas come in, laden with canes, and Thomas is almost carrying a poor old man, covered with rags; his eyes are white with cataracts.

«Master, he was trying to find chicory on the banks and almost fell into the water. He has been left alone for some months, because the son who kept him died, and his daughter-in-law went back to her house and he... lives as best he can. Is that right, father? »

«Yes, it is. Where is the Lord? » he says turning round his veiled eyes.

«He is here. Can you see that long whiteness? It's Him. »

But Jesus comes forward and takes him by the hand. «Are you alone, poor father? And you cannot see? »

«No, I cannot. When I could, I made baskets and eel-pots and I made also nets. But now... I can see more with my fingers than with my eyes, and looking for herbs, I make mistakes, and at times I have suffered from stomach disorder because of harmful herbs. »

«But in the village... »

«Oh! They are all poor and with many children, and I am old... If a donkey dies... one is sorry. But if an old man dies!... What is an old man? What am I? My daughter-in-law took everything away. If she had only taken me with her, like an old sheep, that I might be near my grandchildren... my son's children... » he weeps resting his head on the chest of Jesus, Who holds him in His arms caressing him.

«Have you got a house? »

«She sold it. »

«And how do you live? »

«Like an animal. At first the people in the village helped me. Then they became tired... »

«Solomon in that case is no longer of the same race, because he is generous» remarks Matthew.

«With us, though. Why did he not give the house to the old man? » asks Philip.

«Because the last time he came here, I had a house. Solomon is good. But for some time the people of the village have said that he is mad, and they no longer do what Solomon had taught them» says the old man.

5«Would you be willing to stay with Me? »

«Oh! I would no longer regret my grandchildren! »

«Even if you were to remain poor and blind, would you be happy just by serving Me? »

«Yes! » A trembling yes, and yet so firm...

«All right, father. Listen. You cannot travel about as I do. And I cannot remain here. But we can love each other and do each other a good turn. »

«You can, yes, to me. But I... What can old Ananias do? »

«You can take care of the house and of the kitchen garden so that I may find them in good order when I come back. Do you like the idea? »

«Yes, I do! But I am blind... The house... I will become accustomed to the walls. But the kitchen garden... How can I take care of it, if I cannot tell one herb from another? Oh! How lovely it would be to serve You thus, Lord! And end my life thus... » The old man is pressing his hands against his heart, dreaming of what is impossible.

Jesus bends smiling and kisses his dimmed eyes...

«But I... I am beginning to see... I can see... Oh! Oh!... » He staggers in his joy and would fall if Jesus did not support him.

«Eh! what joy does!... » says Peter in a deeply moved voice.

«And hunger... He says that he has been living for days on chicory, without any oil or salt... » concludes Thomas.

«Yes, that is why we brought him here. To feed him... »

«Poor old soul! » they all exclaim sympathetically.

The old man recovers his senses and weeps. The poor tears of old people... so sad also when they are tears of joy, and he whispers: «Now... now I can serve You, Blessed One! » and he wants to bend to kiss Jesus' feet.

«No, father. Now we shall go inside and we shall have something to eat. Then we will give you a tunic and you will be among sons, and we shall have a father who will welcome us every time we come back and will bless us every time we depart. We will go and find two doves, so that you may always have living creatures around you. We will get seed for the kitchen garden and you will sow them in the soil and you will sow faith in Me in the hearts of the people here. »

«I will teach them charity, for they have none! »

«Yes, also charity. But be kind... »

«Oh! I will be. I did not say one harsh word to my daughter-in-law when she left me. I understood and I forgave. »

«I read that in your heart. That is why I loved you. Come. Come with Me... » And Jesus goes into the house holding the old man by the hand.

384. 6 «Peter looks at them, and with the back of his hand he wipes off a tear, before resuming his work.

«Are you weeping, brother? »

Peter does not reply.

Andrew insists: «Why are you weeping, brother? »

«Mind your own business, the weeds in this case. If I am weeping it's because... it's because I know why... »

«Tell us, too, be good» say several apostles.

«It's because, these lessons... given so... they touch my heart more than when He thunders imposingly... »

«But we see the King in Him then! » exclaims Judas.

«And here we see the Saint. Peter is right» says Bartholomew.

«But He must be powerful in order to reign. »

«And He must be holy in order to redeem. »

«I agree, with regards to souls. But with regards to Israel... »

«Israel will never be Israel unless souls become holy. »

The conflicting opinions bounce backwards and forwards.

The old man comes out with a water-jug in his hand. He is going to the fountain. He is so happy that he is entirely different from the man he was previously.

«Old father, listen. According to you, what does Israel need to become great? » Andrew asks him. «A king or a saint? »

«It needs God. That God Who is praying and meditating in there. Ah! My sons! Be good, you who follow Him! Be good, very good! Ah! what a gift the Lord has given you! What a gift! » and he goes away raising his arms towards the sky whispering: «What a gift! What a gift! »...

### 385. The parable of the crossroad and miracles in the village of Solomon.

16<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>The little group comes out of the house; there is also the old man who admires himself in the tunic of one of the rather short apostles. <sup>385. 1</sup>

«If you wish to remain here, father... » says Jesus.

But the old man interrupts Him: «No, I will come, too. Oh! let me come. I had a meal yesterday! Last night I slept, and in a bed! And my heart is no longer grieved! I feel as strong as a youth... »

«Come, then. You will stay with Me, with Bartholomew and My brother Judas. The rest will go around in twos as I said. We shall all be here again by the sixth hour. Go! and peace be with you. »

They part, some go towards the river, some towards the country. Jesus lets them go away and He then sets out last. He crosses the village slowly and He is looked at by the fishermen coming back from the river or going there and by the industrious housewives, who have got up at dawn to do the washing, or water their kitchen gardens or bake bread. But none of them speak.

<sup>2</sup>Only a boy, who is leading seven sheep to the river, asks the old man: «Where are you going, Ananias? Are you leaving the village? » <sup>385. 2</sup>

«I am going with the Rabbi. But I will come back with Him. I am His servant. »

«No. You are My father. Every just old man is a father and a blessing for the place giving him hospitality and for those who assist him. Blessed are those who love and respect the old» says Jesus with solemn countenance.

The boy looks at Him and seems to be frightened. He then whispers: «I always gave some of my bread to Ananias... » as if he wished to say: «Do not reproach me, for I do not deserve it. »

«Yes. Michael was good to me. He was a friend of my grandchildren... and he is still a friend of their grandfather. His mother is also good and she would help. But she has eleven children and they make their living by fishing... »

Some women approach them out of curiosity and listen.

«God will always help those who do what they can for the



poor. And there is always a way to help them. Very often it is a lie to say: "I cannot". Because if one is willing, one will always find a superfluous mouthful, an old blanket, a garment that is no longer worn, and give it to someone who has none. And Heaven rewards for the gift. God will give you back, Michael, the mouthfuls you gave the old man. » Jesus caresses the boy and walks away.

The women remain mortified where they were, they ask the boy questions and he tells them what he knows. And the stingy women are seized with fear, as they had closed their hearts to the needs of the old man...

385. 3     <sup>3</sup>In the meantime Jesus has arrived at the last house and He turns His steps towards a cross-road, which from the main road leads towards the little village. From there they can see caravans on the main road going back to the towns of the Decapolis and Perea.

«Let us go over there and preach. Do you want to preach, too, father? »

«I am not capable. What can I say? »

«You are capable. Your soul is aware of the wisdom in forgiving and being faithful to God and resigned also in the hours of grief. And you know that God assists those who hope in Him. Go and tell the pilgrims. »

«Oh! I can do that! »

«Judas, go with him. I will remain here at the cross-road with Bartholomew. »

And when He is there He stops in the shade of a group of leafy plane-trees and waits patiently.

The nearby fields have beautiful crops and orchards. They look fresh in the early morning and it is a pleasure to admire them. And the caravans pass along the road... Only few people look at the two leaning against the trunks of the plane-trees. Perhaps they think that they are tired travellers. But some recognize Jesus and point Him out or they bow greeting Him.

At last there is one who stops his little donkey and those of his relatives dismounts and goes towards Jesus saying: «God be with You, Rabbi! I come from Arbela. I heard You in autumn. This is my wife, this is her sister, a widow, and this is my mother. This elderly man is her brother. And that young man is my wife's

brother. And these are our children. Give us Your blessing, Master. I heard that You spoke at the ford. But I arrived there last night... Will you not say a word to us? »

«The Word is never refused. But wait a few minutes, because other people are arriving... »

In fact the people of the village are arriving at the cross-road and they look very dejected. Other people, who had passed by along the main road, going north, come back, while others stop out of curiosity dismounting from their horses or remaining on horse-back. The little group of listeners is increasing more and more.

Judas of Alphaeus also comes back with the old man; there are also two sick people with them and many more healthy ones.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus begins to speak.

385. 4

«Those who go along the roads of the Lord, the roads indicated by the Lord, and they do so with goodwill, end up by finding the Lord. You have found the Lord coming here after fulfilling your duty of faithful Israelites at holy Passover. And here is Wisdom speaking to you as you wished at this cross-road, where Divine Providence has made us meet. Man comes to many cross-roads on the way of his life. More supernatural cross-roads than material ones. Every day our conscience has to face the road-forks and cross-roads of Good and Evil. And one must choose carefully to avoid making mistakes. And if one does make a mistake, one must come back humbly, when one is called and warned. And even if the way of Evil, or also the way of tepidness, looks more beautiful, one must choose the rough but safe road of Good.

Listen to a parable.

A group of pilgrims, who had come from remote regions looking for work, arrived at the frontier of a nation. At the frontier there were agents sent by various masters to employ labour. Some were looking for men for the mines, some for the woods and forests, some for servants for a wicked rich man, and some for soldiers for a king who lived in a castle on the top of a mountain, which could be reached by a very steep road. The king needed soldiers, but he wanted them to be not so much men of violence as of wisdom, to send them to his various towns to sanctify his subjects. That is why he lived up there, in a kind of hermitage,

to perfect his servants, preventing them from being corrupted by worldly distractions, which delay or annul the perfecting of their spirits. He did not promise high wages, or a comfortable life. But he assured them that they would obtain holiness and a reward at his service. That is what his agents said to those who arrived at the frontier. The agents of the owners of mines and fields instead said: "It will not. be a comfortable life, but you will be free and you will earn enough to enjoy yourselves". And those who were looking for servants for a wicked master promised rich meals, an idle life, enjoyment, wealth: "All you need do is to give consent to his exacting whims - oh! not at all painful! - and you will be able to enjoy yourselves like satraps".

The pilgrims consulted with one another. They did not want to part... They asked: "The fields and mines, the palace of the wealthy man and that of the king, are they close to one another? ".

"Oh! no! " replied the agents. "Come to that cross-roads and we will show you the different roads".

They went.

"Now! This wonderful, shady, flowery, smooth road, with cool fountains, leads to the palace of the wealthy man" said the agents looking for servants.

"Now! This dusty one, through pleasant fields, leads to the fields. It is exposed to the sun, but you can see that it is beautiful, after all" said those of the fields.

"Now! This one furrowed by heavy wheels and stained with dark spots, takes to the mines. It is neither beautiful nor ugly" said those of the mines.

"Now! This steep path, cut in the rocks inflamed by the sun, spread with thorn-bushes and ravines, which delay people, but are excellent defence against attacks of enemies, leads eastwards, to the severe, we could almost say sacred castle, where spirits are perfected in Good" said those of the king.

385. 5 <sup>5</sup>And the pilgrims looked and looked. They reckoned... They were tempted by many things, of which one only was entirely good. And they slowly parted. They were ten. Three went towards the fields... and two towards the mines. The rest looked at one another and two of them said: "Come with us, to the king. We shall not make a profit and we shall not enjoy ourselves on the Earth, but we shall be saints forever".

“That path there? Do you think we are mad? No profit! No enjoyment! It was not worth leaving everything and coming into exile to have even less than what we had in our country. We want to earn much and enjoy ourselves... ”.

“But you will lose the eternal Good! Have you not heard that he is a wicked person? ”.

“Nonsense! After a little while we will leave him, but we shall have had a good time and we shall be rich”.

“You will never get rid of him. The first were wrong in complying with their greed for money. But you! You are led by your greed for pleasure. Oh! Do not exchange your eternal destiny for a fleeting hour! ”.

“You are fools and you believe in idealistic promises. We are after facts. Goodbye!... ” and they began to run along the beautiful, shady, flowery, smooth road, rich in water, at the end of which the magic palace of the wicked epicurean was shining in the sunshine.

The two remaining took the steep path weeping and praying. And they almost lost heart after a few metres, as it was so hard. But they persevered. And their bodies seemed to become lighter and lighter the more they proceeded and their fatigue was comforted by a strange rejoicing. They were panting and scratched all over when they arrived at the top of the mountain and were admitted to the presence of the king, who told them what he expected from them in order to make them his brave men, and he concluded saying: “Think about it for eight days and then let me know”.

And they thought it over and struggled fiercely with the Tempter, who wanted to frighten them with their bodies which said: “You are sacrificing us”, with the world, the remembrance of which was still alluring. But they won. They remained. They became heroes of Good. <sup>385.6</sup> Death came, that is their glorification. From the height of Heaven they saw in the abyss those who had gone to the wicked master. They were in chains also after their lifetime and were groaning in the darkness of Hell. “And they wanted to be free and enjoy themselves! ” said the two saints.

And the three damned souls saw them and cursed them and everybody, God first of all, in a horrid manner, saying: “You have all deceived us! ”.

“No. You cannot say that. You were warned of the danger. You wanted your own ruin” replied the blessed souls, who were serene even when seeing and hearing their obscene mockery and curses cast at them.

And they saw those of the fields and of the mines in various regions of Purgatory, and those saw them and said: “We were neither good nor bad, and we are now expiating our tepidity. Pray for us! ”.

“Oh! We will! But why did you not come with us? ”.

“Because we were not demons, but men... We lacked generosity. We loved what is temporary, even if honest, more than what is Eternal and Holy. We are now learning to know and love with justice”.

That is the end of the parable. Every man is at a cross-roads. At a perpetual cross-roads. Blessed are those who are firm and generous in following the ways of Good. May God be with them. And may God touch and convert those who are not so and lead them to become so. Go in peace. »

385. 7      7«And what about the sick people? »

«What is the matter with that woman? »

«Malign fever, which distorts her bones. She has gone as far as the Great Sea. But without any relief. »

Jesus bends over the sick woman and asks her: «Who do you think that I am? »

«He Whom I have been looking for. The Messiah of God. Have mercy on me, for I have looked for You so much! »

«May your faith give health both to your limbs and to your heart. And what about you, man? »

The man does not reply. The woman who accompanies him, replies on his behalf: «A tumor is eating his tongue. He cannot speak and he is dying of hunger. » The man in fact is a skeleton. «Have you faith that I can cure you? »

The man nods assent.

«Open your mouth» orders Jesus. And with His face close to the horrible mouth eaten away by the tumor, He breathes into it saying: «I want it! »

After a moment two cries are heard: «My bones are sound again»; «Mary, I am cured! Look! Look at my mouth. Hosanna! Hosanna! » and he wants to stand up, but he staggers through

weakness.

«Give him something to eat» orders Jesus. And He is about to withdraw.

«Don't go away! Other sick people will be coming! Others are coming back... Cure them, too! » shout the crowds.

«Every morning I will be here from dawn until the sixth hour. Volunteers should gather the pilgrims together. »

«I will, Lord! » several people say.

«May God bless you for that. »

And Jesus turns towards the village with His first companions and with the other disciples who have come, a few at a time while He was speaking, and who have brought other people with them.

<sup>8</sup>«But where are Peter and Judas of Kerioth? » asks Jesus.

385. 8

«They have gone to the nearby town. They have a lot of money. They have gone shopping... »

«Yes. Judas worked a miracle and he is jubilant» remarks Simon Zealot smiling.

«Also Andrew, and he got a sheep, as a souvenir. He cured the broken leg of a shepherd, who rewarded him thus. We will give it to the old father. Milk is good for old people... » says John, caressing the old man who is happy.

They go into the house and prepare some food...

They are about to sit at the table, when the two missing apostles arrive laden like donkeys and followed by a cart with a load of those mats used as beds by poor people in Palestine.

«Forgive me, Master. But this was needed. We are all right now» says Peter.

And Judas: «Look. We bought the bare necessities, clean and poor. As You like things» and they are busy unloading, dismissing the carter.

«Twelve little beds and twelve mats. A few dishes. Here is the seed. And here are the doves. There is the money. And tomorrow there will be many people. Phew! How warm it is! But everything is all right now. And what have You done, Master?... »

And while Jesus tells him, they sit happily at the table.

### 386. Towards the Western bank of the Jordan.

17<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus is once again on His way. Facing south He walks along the meanderings of the river, looking for someone who may ferry Him across. His apostles are all around Him, discussing the events of the few days spent in Solomon's village and in his house. From what I gather, they remained there until the news of Jesus' presence there spread in hostile surroundings, and when that happened, they left, entrusting old Ananias, now serene in his no longer desolate poverty, with the care of the house, which had just been set in order again.

«Let us hope that their present mood may last» says Bartholomew.

«If we come back here often, as the Master says, we will keep them in the same frame of mind» replies Judas of Alphaeus.

«He was weeping, poor old soul! He had become fond of us... » says Andrew, who is also deeply moved.

<sup>386.2</sup> <sup>2</sup>«And I liked his last speech. He spoke as a wise man, Master, didn't he? » says James of Zebedee.

«He spoke as a holy man, I would say! » exclaims Thomas.

«Yes, he did. And I will bear in mind his desire» replies Jesus.

«What did he say exactly? I had gone with John to tell Michael's mother to remember to do what the Master had told her, so I do not know» says the Iscariot.

«He said: "Lord, if You happen to go through the village of my daughter-in-law, tell her that I bear her no grudge and that I am happy that I am no longer forsaken, because thus the judgement of God will not be so severe on her. Tell her to bring up my grandchildren in the faith of the Messiah, so that I will have them with me in Heaven, and as soon as I am in the peace of God, I will pray for them and for their good health". And I will tell her. I will look for the woman and I will tell her because it is the right thing to do» says Jesus.

«Not one word of reproach! On the contrary he is happy that the woman's sin is no longer so serious, since he is not dying of starvation or dereliction. He is admirable! » remarks James of Alphaeus.

«But will the fault of the daughter-in-law really diminish in

the eyes of God? That is what I would like to know! » says Judas of Alphaeus.

The opinions are conflicting. Matthew asks Jesus: «What is Your opinion, Master? Will the situation remain as before or will it change? »

«It will change... »

«See... I was right! » exclaims Thomas triumphantly.

But Jesus beckons to them to let Him speak and He says: «It will change for the old man, also in Heaven as it changed on the Earth because of his indulgent kindness. It will not change for the woman. Her sin will always cry in the eyes of God. Only if she should repent, His severe judgement may change. And I will tell her. »

<sup>3</sup>«Where does she live? »

386. 3

«At Masada, with her brothers. »

«And do You wish to go as far as that? »

«Those places are to be evangelized as well... »

«And what about Kerioth? »

«We will come back to Kerioth from Masada, and we will go to Juttah, Hebron, Bethzur, Bether, and we shall be back in Jerusalem for Pentecost. »

«Masada is one of Herod's places... »

«What does it matter? It is a fortress. But he is not there. And even if he were!... It will not be the presence of a man to prevent Me from being the Saviour. »

«Where shall we cross the river? »

«Near Gilgal. From there we will go along the coast, following the mountains. The nights are cool and the new moon of Civ (May) is bright in the serene sky. »

«If we are going through those places, why do we not go to the mountain where You fasted? It is fair that everybody should become acquainted with it» says Matthew.

«We shall go there as well. But there is a boat. Negotiate the price so that we may cross to the other side. »



**387. In Gilgal. The beggar Oglā  
and the tempting scribes. The apostles compared  
with the twelve stones of the prodigy of Joshua.**

18<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

387.1 <sup>1</sup>I do not know what Gilgal is like now. When Jesus enters it, it is an ordinary Palestinian town, quite densely populated, situated on a low hill covered mainly with vineyards and olive groves. But there is so much sunshine, that cereals also can be cultivated, at random, under trees or between rows of vines. And they ripen notwithstanding the foliage above them, because the sun is very warm and the effect of the nearby desert is felt.

There is the dust, noise, dirt and confusion of market days. And inflexible as fate, there are the usual zealous unconvinced Pharisees and scribes, who are discussing with great gestures and displaying their learning in the best corner of the square, pretending they do not see Jesus or they do not know Him.

Jesus goes straight on and takes His meal in a little side square, almost in the outskirts, well shaded by interlaced branches of all kinds of plants. I am under the impression that it is part of the mountain recently annexed to the village and still keeping a semblance of its natural state.

387.2 <sup>2</sup>The first person to approach Jesus, Who is eating bread and olives, is a man in ragged clothes. He asks for a little bread. Jesus gives him His portion with all the olives that He is holding in His hand.

«And what about You? You know that we have no money» remarks Peter. «We gave everything to Ananias... »

«It does not matter. I am not hungry. But I am thirsty... »

The beggar says: «There is a well at the rear of the village... But why did You give me everything? You could have given me half of Your bread... If You are not disgusted at taking it back... »

«Eat it. I can do without it. But to remove every possible doubt that I feel disgusted with you, give Me with your own hands just a mouthful and I will eat it to be your friend... »

The man's face, so far sad and gloomy, brightens in a smile of surprise and he says: «Oh! It is the first time since I became poor Oglā that anyone says to me that he wants to be my friend! » and he gives a mouthful of bread to Jesus. And he asks: «Who are

You? What is Your name? »

«I am Jesus of Nazareth, the Rabbi of Galilee. »

«Ah!... I heard of You from other people... But... are You not the Messiah?... »

«I am. »

«And You, the Messiah, are You so good to beggars? The Tetrarch gets his servants to beat us, if he sees us in his way... »

«I am the Saviour. I do not beat, I love. »

The man stares at Him. And he begins to weep slowly.

«Why are you weeping? »

«Because... I would like to be saved... <sup>387. 3</sup>Are You no longer thirsty, Lord? I could take You to the well and speak to You... »

Jesus understands that the man wishes to confess something and He gets up saying: «Let us go. »

«I am coming, too! » exclaims Peter.

«No. I shall be back at once, in any case... And we must respect those who repent. »

He goes with the man behind a house, beyond which there is the country.

«The well is over there... Have a drink and then You can listen to me. »

«No, man. Pour first your anxiety into Me and then... I will drink. And perhaps I shall have for My thirst a fountain even more pleasant than the water of this well. »

«Which, Master? »

«Your repentance. Let us go under those trees. The women are watching us here. Come» and laying His hand on the man's shoulder He leads him towards a thicket of olive-trees.

«How do You know that I am guilty and that I am repentant? »

«Oh!... Speak and be not afraid of Me. »

<sup>4</sup>«Lord... We were seven brothers born of one father, but I was <sup>387. 4</sup>born of the woman whom my father married when he became a widower. And I was hated by the other six. When my father died, he left the same amount to each of us. But after his death my six brothers bribed the judges, took everything away from me, and drove my mother and me away with infamous accusations. She died when I was sixteen years old... and she died of want... And since then no one has ever loved me... » he says weeping uncontrollably. He calms down and goes on: «My six brothers were

rich and happy and they thrive also with what belonged to me, while I was dying of starvation, because I was taken ill assisting my feeble mother... But God struck them one by one. I cursed and hated them so much, that I set the evil eye on them. Was I doing the wrong thing? Certainly. I know. And I knew. But how could I not hate them and curse them? The last one, who in actual fact was the third born, was withstanding all curses, nay he was prospering with the property of the other five, as he legally got the goods of the three younger brothers who had died without dependants, and he married the widow of the first born who had died childless, and he had fraudulently taken possession of the property of the second born, cheating his widow and orphans whom he deprived of most of their share with tricks and loans. And when he met me by chance at the market, where I used to go as the servant of a rich man to sell victuals, he insulted and beat me... I met him one evening... I was alone and he was alone. He was intoxicated with wine... I was intoxicated with recollections and hatred... It was the tenth anniversary of my mother's death... He insulted me and my dead mother... He called her "filthy bitch" and he called me "son of the hyena...". Lord... if he had not insulted my mother, I would have endured him... But he insulted her... I caught him by the neck. We struggled... I only wanted to beat him... But he slipped and fell on the ground... and the sloping ground was covered with slippery grass... and below there was a ravine and a torrent... Drunk as he was, he turned over and fell... They are still looking for him after so many years... He is buried among the stones and the sand of one of the torrents in Lebanon. I did not go back to my master. And he never went back to Caesarea Paneas. I have been wandering without peace... Ah! The curse of Cain! To be afraid of living... and to be afraid of dying... I was taken ill... And later... I heard of You... But I was afraid... They told me that You could read the hearts of men. And the rabbis of Israel are so bad!... They do not know what mercy is... You, the Rabbi of rabbis, were my terror... And I fled before You. And yet, I would like to be forgiven... » He is prostrated on the ground and is weeping...

387. 5 <sup>5</sup>Jesus looks at him and whispers: «I will take also those sins upon Me!... Listen, son! I am Mercy, not terror. I have come also for you. Be not ashamed before Me... I am the Redeemer. Do you

want to be forgiven? Of what? »

«Of my crime. Why ask me? I killed my brother. »

«You said: “I only wanted to beat him” because you had been offended and you were angry. But when you hated and cursed not one, but six brothers, you were not offended or angry. You did it as spontaneously as you breathe. Hatred and curses, and the delight in seeing them struck was your spiritual bread, is that right? »

«Yes, Lord. It was my bread for ten years »

«So, your greatest crime began the moment you hated and cursed. You are six times the murderer of your brothers. »

«But, Lord, they had ruined and hated me... And my mother died of starvation... »

«Do you mean that you had a reason to avenge yourself? »

«Yes, I do. »

«You had no reason. It was for God to punish. You should have loved. And God would have blessed you on the Earth and in Heaven. »

«So, will He never bless me? »

«Repentance brings blessings again. But how much grief, how much anxiety you caused yourself! You caused much more through your hatred than your brothers did!... »

«That is true! My horror has lasted twenty-six years. Oh! forgive me in the name of God. You can see that I am grieved for my sin! I am not asking anything for my life. I am a beggar and I am ill. And I wish to remain such, to suffer and expiate. But give me the peace of God! I offered sacrifices at the Temple and I starved to put together the money for the holocaust. But I could not confess my crime and I do not know whether the sacrifice was accepted. »

«It was not. Even if you offered one every day, what value could it have for you, when you were acting with falsehood? *A rite which is not preceded by a sincere confession of sins is superstitious and of no value.* It is sin added to sin, and thus more than useless. A sacrilegious offer. What did you say to the priest? »

«I used to say: “I have sinned out of ignorance, doing what the Lord had forbidden, and I want to expiate”. I used to think: “I know in what I have sinned, and God knows. But I cannot tell any man openly. God, Who sees all things, knows that I am

thinking of my sin”. »

«Mental reservations, mean expedients. The Most High hates them. When one sins, one must expiate. Never do that again. »

«No. Lord. And shall I be forgiven? Or must I go and confess everything? And pay with my life for the life I took? All I want is to die with God’s forgiveness. »

«Live to expiate. You cannot give her husband back to the widow or their father to the children... One ought to think before killing, before letting hatred become one’s master! But rise and walk along the new way. On your way, you will find My disciples. They are certainly in the mountains of Judaea and you will find them if you go from Tekoah to Bethlehem and farther towards Hebron. Tell them that Jesus has sent you and that He said that before Pentecost He will go up to Jerusalem via Bethzur and Bether. Look for Elias, Joseph, Levi, Matthias, John, Benjamin, Daniel, Isaac. Will you remember those names? Apply especially to them. Let us go now... »

«But are You not having a drink? »

«I have drunk your tears. A soul returning to God! There is nothing more refreshing for Me. »

«So, I am forgiven?! You said: “Returning to God”... »

«Yes. You are forgiven. But never hate anybody again. »

The man bends again, as he had stood up, and kisses Jesus’ feet.

‘They go back to the apostles and find them disputing with some scribes.

«Here is the Master. He will be able to reply to you and tell you that you are sinners. »

«What is the matter? » asks Jesus, Who greets respectfully but is not greeted in return.

«Master, they are harassing us with questions and mockery... »

«It is an act of mercy to put up with troublesome people. »

«But they are offending You. They are making You a laughing stock... and people hesitate. See? We had been successful in gathering many people... But who is left now? Two or three women... »

«Oh! no! You have also a man, a filthy man! He is even too much for you! But, Master, don’t You think that You are becom-

ing too contaminated, since You always say that filth disgusts You? » says scoffingly a young scribe pointing at the beggar beside Jesus.

«He is not filth. He is not the filth which disgusts Me. He is a “poor man”. Poor people do not disgust. Their misery must inspire souls with feelings of brotherly pity. I feel disgusted with moral miseries, with fetid hearts, with souls torn to shreds, with injured spirits. »

«And do You know that he is not such? »

«I know that he believes and hopes in God and in His mercy, now that he has become acquainted with it. »

«Acquainted? Where does it live? Tell us, that we may go as well to see its face. Ah! The terrible God, Whom Moses did not dare to look at, must have a dreadful face even in His mercy, even if His rigour has softened after so many centuries! » insists the young scribe laughing and his laughter is more negatory than blasphemy.

«I, Who am speaking to you, am the Mercy of God! » shouts Jesus, standing upright, dazzling with the power of His eyes and gesture.

I do not know why the other one is not terrified... But although he does not run away, he can no longer be sarcastic and he becomes silent, while another scribe replaces him: «Oh! how many useless words! We would only like to be able to believe. We could not ask for anything better. But in order to believe, we must have proof. <sup>7</sup>Master, do You know what Gilgal is to us? »

387. 7

«Do you think that I am stupid? » says Jesus. And in the tone of a psalm, in a slow rather drawling utterance, He begins\*: «“And Joshua, rising before daybreak, struck camp. And he set out from Shittim with all the Israelites and arrived at the Jordan where they stopped for three days, after which the heralds went through the camp shouting: ‘When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God carried by the levitical priests, you must leave as well and follow them, between you and the Ark, however, keep a distance of two thousand cubits, so that you may see from afar which road you have to take as you have never gone this way before and...’” »

\* **begins**, quoting the words read in: *Joshua 3, 1-4*. Subsequent quotations and notes include *Joshua 3-4*.

«That is enough. You know the lesson. Now, in order to believe, we would like a similar miracle from You. At Passover we were dined in the Temple with the news brought by a boatman that You had stopped the river in spate\*. Now, if for an ordinary man You did so much we who are much more than a common man, ask You to go down into the Jordan with Your disciples and cross it without wetting your feet, as Moses did at the Red Sea and Joshua at Gilgal. Come on! Sorcery serves only with ignorant people. But we shall not be deceived by Your necromancy, although it is well known that You are familiar with Egyptian secrets and magical formulae. »

«I do not need them. »

«Let us go down to the river and we will believe in You. »

«It is written\*\*: “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test”! »

«You are not God! You are a poor fool. You are one who subverts ignorant crowds. That is easy for You because Beelzebub is with You. But with us, who are adorned with the power of exorcism, You are less than nothing» says a scribe biting.

«Do not offend Him! Beg Him to satisfy our request. The way you treat Him, He will lose both heart and power. Come on, Rabbi of Nazareth! Give us proof and we will worship You» says a venomous old scribe, who is more hostile in his crooked flattery than the others in their open fierceness.

Jesus looks at him. He then turns south westwards and stretching His arms out He says: «The desert of Judah is over there and there the Evil Spirit asked Me to put the Lord My God to the test. And I replied: “Be off, Satan! It is written that God only is to be worshipped; He is not to be put to the test. And He is to be given priority over flesh and blood”. I say the same to you. »

«Are You giving us the name of Satan? Are You? Ah! Curse You! » and behaving more like urchins than doctors of the Law, they start picking up stones on the ground to strike Him, and they shout: «Go away! May You be damned forever! »

Jesus looks at them fearlessly. He paralyses them in their sacrilegious gesture, picks up His mantle and says: «Let us go! Man, go ahead of Me» and He goes back towards the well and into the

\* You had stopped the river in spate, in 361. 11/12.

\*\*It is written, in: *Deuteronomy*, 6, 16.

olive-grove of the confession... And He lowers His head, looking utterly crushed, while two unrestrainable tears stream down His pale face.

<sup>8</sup>They arrive at a road. Jesus stops and says to the beggar: <sup>387. 8</sup> «I cannot give you any money, because I have none. I bless You. Goodbye. Do what I told you. » They part...

The apostles are distressed. They cast furtive glances at one another.

Jesus breaks the silence resuming the tone of the psalm interrupted by the scribe: «“And the Lord said to Joshua: ‘Choose out twelve men, one man from each tribe, and tell them to take from mid-Jordan, where the feet of the priests stood, twelve very hard stones and to put them in the camp where you will put up your tents tonight’. And Joshua called twelve men chosen from the children of Israel, one from each tribe, and he said to them: ‘Pass on before the Ark of the Lord your God into mid-Jordan, and each of you take one stone on his shoulder, matching the number of the tribes of Israel, to make a memorial in your midst. And when in future your sons ask you: What do these stones mean? you will reply to them: The waters of the Jordan disappeared in front of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, when it crossed them, and these stones are an everlasting reminder of this to the Israelites’”.

He then raises His head, and turns His eyes towards the apostles who are looking at Him. In a different voice, the voice of the moments of deepest sadness, He says: «And the Ark was in the river. Not the waters, but the sky opened out of respect for the Word Who was sanctifying them and making them more holy than the Ark did, standing in the bed of the river. And the Word chose twelve stones. He chose very hard ones, because they are to last until the end of the world, and they are to be the foundation of the new Temple and of the eternal Jerusalem. Twelve. Remember that. That is to be the number. And then He chose twelve more as second witnesses. The first shepherd-disciples and Abel the leper and Samuel the cripple, those cured first... and grateful... They are very hard as well, because they will have to withstand the blows of Israel, who hates God!... Who hates God!... »

How sorrowful and feeble is Jesus' voice - it almost sounds like a boy's voice - as He weeps over the harshness of Israel. He resumes: «Time and men scattered the memorial stones in the



river... Hatred will scatter My twelve on the Earth. On the banks of the river, time and men have destroyed the remembrance altar... The first and the second stones can no longer be identified: the bitter hatred of demons, who dwell not only in hell, but also in the hearts of men, have used them for all purposes. Some have been used also for killing. And how do I know that among the stones lifted against Me, there were no splinters of the very hard stones chosen by Joshua? Very hard! Hostile! Oh! Very hard! Also among My followers some perverted ones will act as a pavement for the demons marching against Me... and they will become stones to strike Me... and they will no longer be the chosen stones... but demons... Oh! James, My dear brother! How hard is Israel to its Lord! » and, what has never been seen before, Jesus, overwhelmed by I do not know which impressively deep depression, leans on the shoulder of James of Alphaeus and embraces him weeping...

**388. In the areas struck by the divine punishment.  
Recommendations to Judas Iscariot  
who will go to Bethany with Simon Zealot.**

19<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

388. 1 <sup>1</sup>They must have continued their journey during the moonlit night, and after resting for a few hours in a cave, they have set out again at dawn. And they are obviously exhausted after walking on crushed stones, through thorny bushes and creeping liana, which often entangle their feet. Simon Zealot is leading the way, as he appears to be thoroughly familiar with the area and he apologises for the difficult road, as if he were the cause of the difficulty.

«When we are once again up on those mountains, which you can see, it will be easier and I promise you plenty of wild honey and ample water... »

388. 2 <sup>2</sup>Water? I will dive into it! The sand has corroded my feet as if I had been walking on salt and my skin is smarting. <sup>3</sup>How horrible these places are! Oh! One feels that we are close to the districts that Heaven punished with fire\*. The stench is still in the

\* **punished with fire**, as said in: *Genesis 19, 23-25*.

wind in the earth, in the thorns, everywhere! » exclaims Peter.

«And yet it was beautiful here once, is that right, Master? »

«Very beautiful indeed. In the early centuries of the world, this area was a little Eden. The soil was very fertile and rich in spring waters suitable for many purposes. But they were so well arranged that they were a blessing. Then... the disorder of men seemed to affect the elements. And it was the end. The wise men of the heathen world explain the dreadful punishment in many ways. That is, in human terms, at times with superstitious terror. But believe Me: it was only the will of God that changed the order of the elements; and those of the sky involved those of the abyss, they broke loose clashing one against the other in malefic turmoil, thunderbolts set on fire the bitumen that the open veins of the earth had scattered everywhere in great disorder and fire from the bowels of the earth and on the earth and thunderbolts struck the earth, which was shaken in dreadful convulsion, and burned, destroyed and corroded acres of ground, which were previously a paradise, and turned it into the hell that you now see and where existence is impossible. »

The apostles are listening carefully...

Bartholomew asks: «Do You think that, if we could drain the dense salty water, we would find the ruins of the punished towns on the bottom of the Great Sea? »

«Certainly. And almost intact; because the muddy water acts as mortar on the buried towns. But the Jordan has spread a great deal of sand on them. So they are buried twice, that they may never rise again, the symbol of those who, persisting in sin, are inexorably buried by God's malediction and by the overbearance of Satan, whom they served so keenly in this life. »

«And did Mattathias of John of Simeon seek refuge\* here: the just Hasmonean who is with his son the glory of Israel? »

«Yes, here. Among the mountains and in the deserts and here he reorganised the people and the army, and God was with him. »

«But, at least... It was easier for him, because the Hasidaeans were more just than the Pharisees are with You! »

«Oh! It is easy to be more just than Pharisees! Even easier than it is for this thorn to prick me and stick in my leg... Look

\* **seek refuge**, as said in: *1 Maccabees 2, 28*. For the other allusions consider the entire *1 Maccabees 2*.

here! » exclaims Peter, who, while listening did not look where he was walking and is entangled in a thorny bush which has made his leg bleed.

«There are not so many up in the mountains. See how they are already thinning out? » says Simon Zealot comforting him.

«H'm! You know the place well... »

«I lived here when I was in exile and persecuted... »

«Oh! In that case... »

388. 3

<sup>3</sup>In fact the greenery is becoming less troublesome on the little mountains, which, however, are not very shady and the herbs on them are rather short but sweet-smelling and are strewn with flowers forming a multi-coloured carpet. Bees suck them and then fly to the caves on the mountain sides where they deposit the honey in natural hives under curtains of ivy and honeysuckle.

Simon Zealot goes into one of the caves and comes out with combs of golden honey; he then goes into other caves until he has enough for everybody, and offers them to the Master and his friends who relish the sweet trickling substance.

«I wish we had some bread! It is delicious! » says Thomas.

«Oh! It is very good also without it! Much better than Philistine ears of corn. And... let us hope that no Pharisee will come to tell us that we cannot eat it! » says James of Zebedee.

They eat while walking and arrive at a reservoir, into which the waters of some streams flow and are then conveyed I know not where. The water that overflows from the basin is cool and clear, as it is protected from the sun and from pollution by the vault of the huge rock, in which the cistern has been dug; it flows down into a tiny lake in the blackish siliceous rock.

The apostles are evidently delighted in taking off their clothes and bathing in turns in the unexpected basin. But they wanted Jesus to be the first to enjoy it, «so that their bodies might be sanctified» says Matthew.

They resume walking, they are refreshed but more hungry than before, and the ones who are most hungry, in addition to the honey, nibble at the stalks of wild fennel and other edible shoots, the names of which I do not know.

One enjoys a beautiful view from the tablelands of these strange mountains, the peaks of which seem to have been cut off by a sword-thrust. Parts of other green mountains and of fer-

tile plains can be seen to the south, as well as stretches of the Dead Sea, which is visible to the east, with the remote mountains of the other side fading in the mist of light clouds rising from south-east; the remote green Jordan plain can be seen to the north between mountain crests, while the high mountains of Judaea are visible to the west.

The sun is turning hot and Peter states that «those clouds over the mountains of Moab are the sign of great heat. »

«We will now go down into the Kidron valley. It is shady... » says Simon.

«The Kidron?! Oh, how have we come so soon to the Kidron? »

«Yes, Simon of Jonas. It is a rough road, but it cuts the journey short! Going along its valley we shall soon be in Jerusalem» explains the Zealot.

«And in Bethany... <sup>4</sup>I should send some of you to Bethany, to tell the sisters to take Eglah to Nike. She begged Me so much, and quite rightly. The childless widow will also have a holy love and the orphan girl a true Israelite mother, who will bring her up in our old faith and in Mine. I would like to go too... A peaceful rest for My saddened spirit... In Lazarus' house the heart of the Christ finds but love... But the journey I want to make before Pentecost is a long one! » 388. 4

«Send me, Lord. And with me, someone with good legs. We will go to Bethany and then to Kerioth and we will meet there» says the Iscariot with enthusiasm. The others, instead, while waiting for someone to be selected for the journey, which would separate them from the Master, are not at all enthusiastic.

Jesus is thinking, and while thinking, He looks at Judas. He is undecided whether He should agree or not.

Judas insists: «Say yes, Master. Make me happy!... »

«You are the least suitable, Judas, to go to Jerusalem! »

«Why, Lord? I know the town better than anybody else! »

«That is why!... The town is not only well known to you, but it affects you more than anybody else. »

«Master, I give You my word that I will not stop in Jerusalem and I will not look for anybody from Israel... But let me go. I will arrive at Kerioth before You and... »

«And you will not put pressure on anybody to pay human homage to Me. »

«No, Master, I will not. I promise. »

Jesus is still pensive.

«Why do You hesitate so much, Master? Why do You not trust me? »

«You are so weak, Judas. And as soon as you go away from the Strength, you fall! You have been so good for some time! Why do you want to become upset and grieve Me? »

«No, Master, I do not want that! But one day I shall have to be without You! And then? What shall I do, if I do not prepare beforehand? »

«Judas is right» several of the apostles say.

«All right!... Go, then. Go with My brother James. »

The others give sighs of relief. James sighs heavily but he says kindly: «Yes, my Lord! Bless us and we will depart. »

Simon Zealot feels sorry for him and says: «Master, fathers willingly replace their children to make them happy. I took him as my son\* together with Judas. Time has gone by, but my mind is still the same. Listen to my prayer... Send me with Judas of Simon. I am old, but I am as strong as a young man, and Judas will not have to complain about me. »

«No, it is not fair that you should sacrifice yourself, leaving the Master, in my place. It would certainly grieve you not to be with Him... » says James of Alphaeus.

«Grief is relieved by the joy of leaving you with the Master. Later you will tell me what you have done... In any case... I go to Bethany willingly... » concludes the Zealot, as if he wished to be little the value of his offer.

<sup>388. 5</sup> «All right. You two will go. <sup>5</sup>In the meantime let us proceed towards that village. Who will go up to get some bread in the name of God? »

«I will! I will! » They all want to go.

But Jesus holds back Judas of Kerioth. When they have all gone, Jesus takes his hands and speaks to him face to face. He seems to be wanting to instill His thought into him, influencing him to such an extent that Judas may not have any other thoughts than those wanted by Jesus. «Judas... Do not harm yourself, My dear Judas! Have you not been calmer and happier for some time,

\* I took him as my son, in 100. 8.

free from the burden of your lower ego, of the human ego, which is so easily at the mercy of Satan and of the world? Of course you know that you have! Well, protect your peace and your welfare. Do not injure yourself, Judas. I can read you. You are in such a happy period at this moment! Oh! If I could only keep you thus, at the cost of all My Blood, and destroy the last bulwark in which a great enemy of yours hides, and make you completely spiritual, with spiritual intellect, spiritual love, completely a... spirit! »

Judas, face to face with Jesus, his hands in the hands of the Master, is almost dumbfounded. He whispers: «Injure myself? Last bulwark? Which one?... »

«Which one?! You know. You know how you injure yourself! By cherishing thoughts of human grandeur and friendships, which you suppose are useful to procure such grandeur. Believe Me, Israel does not love you. It hates you as it hates Me, as it hates whoever may seem a potential victor. And since you do not conceal your ambition to be such, you are hated. Do not believe their false words, their deceitful questions, by which they pretend to take an interest in your plans in order to help you. They circumvent you to hurt you, to find out and injure you. I am not begging you on My behalf, but only on your own. If I am the target of iniquity, I am still the Lord. They may torture My body and kill it. But not beyond that. But in your case, they would kill your soul... Shun temptation, My friend! Tell Me that you will shun it! Speak this word of peace to your poor persecuted worried Master! »

Jesus clasps him in His arms and, cheek to cheek, speaks in his ear and His golden hair mixes with the thick dark curls of Judas.

«I know that I have to suffer and die. I know that My crown will be the crown of a martyr. I am aware that My Blood will be My purple. I came for that. Because through such martyrdom I will redeem Mankind, and love has been urging Me for endless time to do so. But I would not like any of My followers to be lost. Oh! All men are dear to Me, because in them there is the image and likeness of My Father and the immortal souls that He created. But you, My loved and beloved ones, you, the blood of My blood and the apples of My eyes, must not be lost! Oh! No torture could be like that, not even if Satan, who is Sin, Horror, Disgust,

should pierce Me with his weapons burning with the sulphur of hell and should he bite and grasp Me, no torture could make Me suffer as much as I would for one of My chosen ones who should be lost... Judas, My Judas! Shall I ask My Father to let Me suffer My dreadful Passion three times, so that two of them may be offered to save you alone? Tell Me, My friend, and I will do that. I will ask Him to multiply My suffering infinitely for that purpose. I love you, Judas, I love you so much. And I would like to give you Myself, to make you Myself, to save you from yourself... »

«Do not weep, do not say that, Master. I love You, too. I also would give myself to see You strong, respected, feared, triumphant. I may not love You perfectly. I may not think perfectly. But I use and perhaps I misuse my whole being, because I am anxious to see You loved. But I swear to You, I swear on Jehovah, that I will not approach scribes, or Pharisees, or Sadducees, or Jews, or priests. They will say that I am mad. But it does not matter. I shall be quite happy provided You are not worried about me. Are You happy? A kiss, Master, as Your blessing and protection. »

388. 6     «They kiss each other and part while the others are running down the hill displaying cakes and fresh cheeses. They sit down on the green grass of the banks and divide the food, saying that they were made welcome, because the people of the few houses know the shepherd-disciples and are in favour of the Messiah.

«We did not tell them that You are here, otherwise... » concludes Thomas.

«We will endeavour to come back here some other time. We must not neglect anybody» replies Jesus.

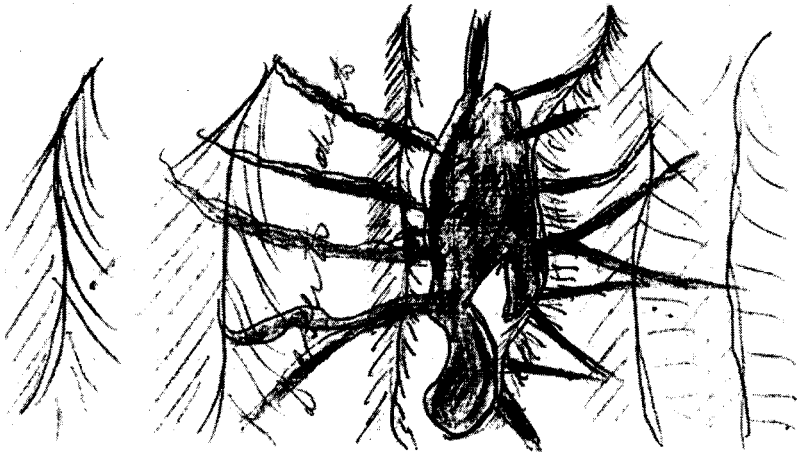
The meal is over. Jesus stands up and blesses the two who are going to Bethany and who do not wish to wait until evening to set out, as the valley is shady and rich in water.

Jesus and the ten who are staying with Him, lie down on the grass and rest awaiting sunset, when they will go back to the Engedi and Masada road, as I hear them say.

### 389. Arrival in Engedi with ten apostles.

20<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>The pilgrims, although tired after a long march, which they perhaps covered in two stages from sunset to today's dawn, along difficult roads, cannot help uttering exclamations of admiration when, after a long stretch of road along a hill-side, which sparkles like diamonds in the early morning sunshine, they encounter the full view of the Dead Sea displayed before them, from shore to shore\*.



The western side has a narrow plain between the sea and the Judaeen type of luxuriant hills in the hinterland, while on the west the mountains drop sheer to the sea basin. One gets the impression that the ground, in a frightful telluric catastrophe, slid down with a clean cut, leaving crevices vertical to the lake, from which torrents descend, more or less rich in waters, destined to evaporate into salt in the dark cursed water of the Dead Sea. In the distance, beyond the lake, and the first range of hills, there are many more slopes, which are beautiful in the morning sunshine. To the north one can see the green-blue mouth of the Jordan, and mountains framing the lake to the south.

It is grand, solemn, sad, majestically admonishing scenery,

\* **shore.** The drawing of M. V. follows, having put the *Dead Sea* in the middle, on the western bank *Engedi* in a red square, and again to the west the *desert* (written twice).



in which the charming view of the mountains mingles with the gloomy one of the Dead Sea, the sight of which seems to remind one of what sin and the wrath of the Lord can bring. Because such a large expansion of water without a sail, a boat, a bird, an animal crossing it, flying over it or drinking on its shores, is really frightening! And, in contrast to the punitive sight of the sea, there are the wonders of the sun on the little mountains, on the dunes, as far as the desert sands, where the salt crystals look like precious jaspers spread on the sand, on stones, on the rigid stems of desert plants, and thus everything is beautiful, brightened by the diamond dust. And even more wonderful is the fertile aspect of a tableland, about one hundred and fifty metres above sea level, with luxuriant palm-trees and all kinds of trees and vines, and where blue waters flow and a beautiful town has been built, surrounded by a flourishing countryside. When one looks at this landscape, which is so pleasant, charming and flowery, after contemplating the gloomy sight of the sea, the tormenting view of the eastern shore, which displays a sad tranquillity only in a low green strip of land jutting out into the south-eastern part of the sea, the desolate desert of Judah, the severe view of the Judaeian mountains, one seems to awake suddenly from an oppressive nightmare that turns into a gentle vision of peace.

389. 2      <sup>2</sup>«This is Engedi\*, celebrated by the poets of our Fatherland. Look how beautiful the district is, nourished by so much graceful water, in the midst of so much desolation! Let us go down and plunge into its gardens, because everything here is garden: meadow, forest, vineyard. This is the ancient Hazazon-Tamar, a name that evokes its beautiful palm-trees, under which it was even more beautiful to build huts and cultivate the land, love one another, and bring up children and raise flocks in the sweet-sounding rustling of palm leaves. This is the pleasant oasis, the survivor of the lands of Eden punished by God, surrounded, like a pearl in a bezel, by paths accessible only to goats and roe-deer, as is written in the Book of Kings, and along those paths there are caves for persecuted, tired and forlorn people. Remember David, our king, and how kind he was to his enemy Saul. This is

**Engedi**, celebrated for its beauty or mentioned as a place of historical events in: *1 Samuel 24, 26; 2 Chronicles 20, 1-30; Song to Songs 1, 14; Sirach, 24, 14; Ezekiel 47, 6-12.*

Hazazon-tamar, now Engedi, the fountain, the blessed town, the beauty from which the enemies moved against Jehoshaphat and the children of his people, who were frightened and were comforted by Jahaziel, son of Zechariah, through whom the Spirit of God spoke. And they won a great victory because they had faith in the Lord and they deserved His help, as they did penance and prayed before the battle. This is the town sung by Solomon, as a comparison of the beauty of the Most Beautiful of all beautiful women. It was mentioned by Ezekiel, because it was nourished by the waters of the Lord... Let us go down! Let us go and take the living Water, that descends from Heaven, to the gem of Israel. » And He starts running down a very steep path, which zig-zags down the reddish calcareous rock, that in the spots closest to the sea reaches the edge of the mountain, that is, its ledge. A path that would make giddy even the most expert mountaineers.

The apostles are hardly able to follow Him, and the older ones are left far behind when the Master stops at the first palm-trees and vineyards of the fertile tableland, where crystal-clear waters are gurgling and all kinds of birds are singing. White sheep are grazing under the rustling roofs of palm-trees, of mimosa, of balm-plants, of pistachio-trees and others exhaling sweet or pungent aromas, which mingle with those of rose-bushes, lavender in bloom, cinnamon, myrrh, incense, saffron, jasmynes, lilies, lilies of the valley, and of the flower of aloe, which is very big here, of cloves and benzoin, which exude with other resins from incisions in tree-trunks. This is\* really «the garden enclosed, the fountain of the garden», and fruit, flowers, sweet scents, beauty can be found everywhere! There is no place in Palestine as beautiful as this one, in size and natural charm. While contemplating it, one understands many writings of Eastern poets, where they celebrate the beauty of oases as if they were paradises spread over the Earth.

<sup>3</sup>The apostles, perspiring but full of admiration, join the Master and all together they go down a well-kept road towards the sea shore, where they arrive after crossing several cultivated embankments, from which beneficent waters flow in small smiling cascades to nourish all the vegetation as far as the plain, 389. 3

\* This is, as can be read in: *Song of Songs 4, 12-15.*

which ends at the beach. Half-way down the hill-side they enter the white town, among rustling palm-trees and sweet-smelling rose-bushes and thousands of flowers of its garden, and they look for lodgings, in the name of God, at the first houses. And the houses, as gentle as nature, open without any hesitation, while their inhabitants ask who is «the Prophet Who looks like Solomon, dressed in linen and beaming with beauty. »...

Jesus with John and Peter, enters a house where there is a widow with her son. The others scatter in various directions, after being blessed by the Master and agreeing to meet in the main square at sunset.

### **390. The faith of Abraham of Engedi and the parable of the seed of the palm.**

21<sup>st</sup> February 1946.

390. 1 <sup>1</sup>Towards sunset, a fiery one that ruddies the very white houses of Engedi and makes the Dead Sea a sheet of black nacre, Jesus sets out towards the main square. He is now with the boy who gave Him hospitality and who is now leading Him through the streets of the town, with its distinctly oriental architecture.

To protect themselves from the sun - which must be very strong in this place so exposed to the heavy expanse of the Salt Sea, which I understand must exhale hot fumes in the summer months, and is so isolated in the midst of a bare desert on which the sun blazes down mercilessly burning the ground - the inhabitants of Engedi built very narrow streets, which look even more narrow because of the projecting eaves and cornices of the dwellings, so that anyone looking up can see only a very thin strip of the deep blue sky.

The buildings are tall, most of them being two storey houses, with vine-clad roof terraces, giving shade and delightful grapes, which must be as sweet as raisins, when they fully ripen in the golden sun and the reflected heat of the walls and terrace-floors. And the vines compete in giving comfort to men and the many birds, from sparrows to doves, which nest in Engedi, with the towering palm-trees, which have grown everywhere, and with magnificent opulent fruit-trees, which have come up in yards,

in house gardens, and peep out over little lanes, hanging down white walls with their branches already laden with fruit ripening in the bright sun, reaching down below the numerous archivolts, which in some parts really form tunnels, interrupted here and there for architectonic reasons, and they rise towards the blue sky, a sky so uniform and mellow, that if it could be touched, it would be like touching thick velvet or smooth leather, painted and dyed by a cunning craftsman with that perfect, beautiful, unforgettable hue, which is darker than a turquoise and lighter than a sapphire.

And waters... How many fountains, large and small, must be gurgling in the yards and gardens of houses, among thousands of plants! Walking along the narrow streets, still deserted, as the people are either at work or at home, one can hear them dripping, gurgling, rustling like the notes of a harp played by a hidden harpist. And the charm is increased by the many archivolts and corners that gather together the sounds of the waters, amplifying them and increasing them through numerous echoes, composing a harmonious arpeggio.

And endless palm-trees!... Where there is a little square, even if only the size of a room, the very tall slender trunks rise towards the sky, and their tops, tufts of rustling leaves tied like brushes round the trunks, hardly move up there, and their shadows at midday fall perpendicular to the little square, covering it completely, whilst now they are forming fantastical designs on the higher terraces.

The town is clean as compared with Palestinian towns. Perhaps the fact that houses are so close together and each has a yard and cultivated garden has helped to teach the population not to throw garbage into the streets, but to gather such waste and animal excrement into special dunghills to be used as fertilizer for trees and flower-beds, or it is... a very rare case of cleanliness. The little streets are clean, dried by the sun and there is no unpleasant display of waste vegetables, old sandals, dirty rags, excrement and the like, as can be seen even in Jerusalem, in streets quite near the town centre.

<sup>2</sup>There is the first farmer coming back from his work, riding a little grey donkey. To protect the animal from flies, the man has caparisoned it with jasmine branches and the beast is now 390. 2

trotting away shaking its ears and harness-bells under the wavy scented screen of branches. When the man turns around and greets him, the boy says: «Come to the main square. You will hear the Rabbi who is staying with me. »

Now there is a flock of sheep invading the street coming from a little square beyond which one can see the country background. They proceed close to one another, each putting its feet in the places where the one preceding it puts them, with their heads stooped as if they were too heavy for their necks - so thin compared with their fat bodies - trotting in their strange fashion and their obese bodies looking like bundles resting on four sticks... Jesus, John and Peter imitate the man who is with them, and they lean against the warm wall of a house to let them pass. A man and a boy are following the flock. They look and greet. The young man says: «Put the sheep in the fold and come to the main square with your relatives. The Rabbi of Galilee is here with us and He is going to speak to us. »

And there is the first woman to come out, surrounded by a group of children, going I wonder where. The young man says: «Come with John and his sons to hear the Rabbi, Whom they call the Messiah. »

The houses open little by little in the oncoming evening, showing green backgrounds of gardens, or peaceful yards where doves are having their last feed. The youth peeps in at each door and shouts: «Come to listen to the Rabbi, the Lord. »

<sup>3</sup>They finally come to a straight road, the only straight one in this town, which was not built as people would have liked, but as palm-trees or the mighty age-old pistachio-trees wanted, and which are respected as notables by the citizens, who are indebted to them for not dying of sunstroke. At the end there is a square where many trunks of palm-trees act as columns. It looks like a hypo style hall of temples and ancient palaces, which consisted of a large room with columns placed at symmetrical intervals forming a stony forest to support the roof. The palm-trees here act as columns and, thick as they are, with their dense rustling foliage they form an emerald ceiling over the white square in the middle of which there is a tall square fountain full of crystal-clear water gushing out from a little column in the centre of the basin, and falling into lower basins, where animals can water.

Tame docile doves have rushed to it just now and they are drinking or dancing a minuet with their little pink legs on the upper edge, or they are spraying their feathers which shine increasing their iridescent hues as the drops of water rest for a moment on the barbs of the feathers.

There are many people. And there are the eight apostles who had gone in various directions looking for lodgings, and each of them has gathered some followers, who are anxious to hear Him, Whom the apostle has pointed out as the promised Messiah. The apostles hasten towards the Master from all directions trailing, like comets, the little groups they have conquered.

<sup>390. 4</sup>  
4Jesus raises His hand to bless His disciples and the people of Engedi.

Judas of Alphaeus speaks on behalf of everyone: «Here, Master and Lord. We have done what You told us and these people are aware that the Grace of God is among them. But they want also the Word. Many know You having heard of You. Many because they met You in Jerusalem. Everybody, and the women in particular, wish to know You, and first of all, their head of the synagogue. There he is. Come here, Abraham. »

The man, who is very old, comes forward. He is moved. He would like to speak, but moved as he is, he cannot find any of the words he had prepared. He stoops to kneel down, leaning on his stick, but Jesus stops him, embracing him at once and saying: «Peace to the old just servant of God! » and the man, who is more and more moved, can only reply: «Praise be to God! My eyes have seen the Promised Messiah! What else shall I ask of the Lord? » and raising his arms, in hieratic attitude, he intones David's 40<sup>th</sup> psalm\*: «“I waited anxiously for the Lord and He has stooped to me”. » But he does not recite it all. He repeats only the passages which are more appropriate to the occasion: «“He heard my cry and has pulled me out of the pit of misery, out of the slough of the marsh...

He has put a new song in my mouth.

Happy is the man who puts his trust in the Lord.

How many wonders You have done for us, o Lord my God! You have no equal. I would like to proclaim them again and

\* psalm, that is not the 34<sup>th</sup> but the 39<sup>th</sup> in the vulgate and the 40<sup>th</sup> in the neo-vulgate.

again, but they are more than I can count.

You, Who wanted no sacrifice or oblation, opened my ear... (he is moved more and more).

It is written that I must do Your will... I have always loved Your Law from the depths of my being.

I have always proclaimed Your righteousness in the Great Assembly. I did not close my lips, as You know well, o Lord.

I have never kept Your righteousness to myself, but I have proclaimed Your faithfulness and saving help...

For Your part, o Lord, do not withhold Your kindness from me...

More misfortunes beset me than I can count (he is now weeping copiously, uttering his words in a voice that is even more trembling and senile because of his tears)...

I am a poor wretch, but the Lord takes care of me. You are my help, my protector, my God, do not delay!... ”.

That is the psalm, my Lord, and I add one of my own: “Say to me: ‘Come’ and I will say to You what the psalm says: ‘Here I come!’ ”. »

He becomes silent and weeps with all his faith gathered in his eyes dimmed by age.

390. 5 <sup>5</sup>People explain: «His daughter died and left young grandchildren to him. His wife has become blind and dull-witted through grief, and they do not know what happened to their only son. He disappeared all of a sudden... »

Jesus lays His hand on the shoulder of the old man and says to him: «The sufferings of the just are as swift as a swallow, as compared with the duration of the eternal reward. But we shall give back to Sarah the eyesight of bygone days and the intelligence of her youth, so that she may comfort your old age. »

«Her name is Colomba» informs one of the people...

«She is his princess\*. But listen to the parable I am going to tell you... »

«Will You not free first from darkness the eyes and the mind of my wife, so that she also may relish Wisdom? » asks the old head of the synagogue anxiously.

«Do you believe that God can do everything and that His

**princess** is the meaning of the name *Sarai* (or *Sarah*).

power spreads over the universe? »

«Yes, my Lord, I do. <sup>390. 6</sup> I remember one evening many years ago. I was then happy, but even in joy I was a believer. Because that is what man is like! While he is happy, he can also forget about God. But I believed in God, also in those happy days, when my wife was young and healthy, and my daughter Eliza was growing as beautiful as a palm tree and was already engaged, and Elisha was as handsome as she was beautiful, but he exceeded her in strength as befits a man... I had gone with the boy to the fountains near the vineyard, which is Colomba's dowry, while my wife and daughter remained at home to weave the girl's trousseau... But perhaps I am boring You... A poor wretch dreams remembering his past happiness... but other people are not interested... »

«Go on, go on! »

«I had gone with the boy... The fountains... If You came along the western road, You know where they are... The fountains were at the boundary of the blessed place, and looking beyond the desert, one could see the white stones of the Roman road, which was then still visible among the sands of Judah... Later... that landmark also disappeared! It does not matter if a landmark disappears among sands! But it is bad that the sign of God, sent to point You out, should dissolve in the hearts of Israel. In too many hearts! My son said: "Father! Look! A great caravan, with horses and camels, and servants and gentlemen going towards Engedi. They are perhaps coming to the fountains before it gets dark... ". As I was attending to the vine-branches, I raised my eyes, so tired after the abundant vintage, and I saw... The men were really coming to the fountains. They dismounted, they saw me and they asked whether they could camp there for one night.

"Engedi has hospitable homes and it is not far" I replied.

"No. We will be keeping watch to be ready to flee, because Herod is pursuing us. Our guards will be able to control every road from here and it will be easy to escape from those seeking us".

"What sin have you committed? " I asked, as I was surprised and willing to show them the caves of our mountains, as is our sacred custom to assist those who are persecuted. And I added: "You are strangers and you come from different places... I do not see how you can have sinned against Herod... ".



“We have worshipped the Messiah Who was born in Bethlehem of Judah and to Whom we were led by the star of the Lord. Herod is looking for Him, and that is why he wants to find us, so that we may tell him where the Child is. But he is looking for Him to kill Him. We will perhaps die in the desert, on a long unknown road, but we will not reveal where the Holy Child is, Who descended from Heaven! ”.

The Messiah! The dream of every true Israelite! My dream! And He was in the world! In Bethlehem of Judah as it was foretold\*!... And pressing my son to my heart, I asked for more information and details, saying: “Listen, Elisha! Remember! You will certainly see Him! ”. I was already fifty years old and I no longer hoped to see Him... neither did I hope to live so long as to see Him grown into a man... Elisha... can no longer worship Him... »

The old man is weeping again. But he collects himself and says: «The three Wise Men spoke kindly and patiently and they described You in Your holy infancy, and Your Mother and father... I could have spent the night with them... but Elisha was falling asleep in my lap. I said goodbye to the three Wise Men and I promised that I would not say one word that might be detrimental to them. But I told Colomba everything in our bedroom and that was our only joyful expectation in our subsequent misfortunes. Later we heard of the slaughter... and for years I did not know whether You were alive. Now I know. But I am the only one, because Eliza died, Elisha is no longer with us, and Colomba cannot understand the happy news... But my faith in the power of God, which was already alive, became perfect after that remote evening, when three men, of different races, bore witness to the power of God by being united, through the voices of stars and of their souls, on the road of God, to worship His Word. »

390. 7 «And your faith will be rewarded. <sup>7</sup>Now listen.

What is faith? Like the hard seed of a palm-tree, at times it is tiny and consists in a short sentence: “God exists”, supported by one only statement: “I have seen Him”. As the faith Abraham had in Me, through the words of the three Wise Men from the East. Like the faith of our people, from the most ancient patriarchs, transmitted from one generation to the next one, from Adam to

\* foretold, in: *Micah 5, 1.*

his descendants, from Adam the sinner, who, however, was believed when he said: “God exists, and we exist because He created us. And I have known Him”. Like the faith that came later, and was more perfect because more deeply based on revelation, and is our heritage, shining with divine manifestations, with angelical apparitions and the light of the Spirit. But still a tiny seed as compared with the Infinite. A tiny seed. But it takes root, and splitting the hard bark of animal nature with its doubts and inclinations, and triumphing over the harmful herbs of passions, of sins, over stale discouragement and corroding vices, over everything, it rises in hearts, it grows, it rushes towards the sun, to Heaven, rising, rising... until it gets rid of the limitations of the flesh and merges with God, in its perfect knowledge and full possession, beyond life and death, in True Life.

Who possesses faith, possesses the way of Life. Who can believe, does not err. A believer sees, knows, serves the Lord and has eternal salvation. The Decalogue is of vital importance to him and each commandment is a gem, which will adorn his future crown. The promise of the Redeemer is salvation for him. It does not matter if the believer died before I came to the Earth. His faith makes him equal to those who now approach Me with faith and love. The deceased just will soon be rejoicing because their faith is about to be rewarded. After fulfilling the will of My Father, I will go to them and say: “Come!”, and all those who died in Faith will ascend with Me to the Kingdom of the Lord.

Let your faith be like the palm-trees of your country, which sprout from tiny seeds, but are so determined in growing up straight, that they forget the earth and are in love with the sun, the stars and the sky. Have faith in Me. Believe what too few people believe in Israel, and I promise that you will possess the heavenly Kingdom, through forgiveness of the original sin and the just reward to all those who practise My doctrine, which is the most sweet perfection of the perfect Decalogue of God.

<sup>390. 8</sup> I will stay with you today and tomorrow, which is the holy Sabbath, and I will leave at dawn the day after the Sabbath. Let those who suffer come to Me! Let those who are in doubt come to Me! Let those who want Life come to Me! Without any fear, because I am Mercy and Love. »

And Jesus makes a wide gesture to bless and dismiss His lis-

teners, so that they may go and have their evening meal and rest and He is about to set off, when a little old woman, so far concealed by the corner of a narrow street, makes her way through the crowds still around the Master, and amid the crying people, she goes and kneels at Jesus' feet shouting: «May You be blessed and the Most High Who has sent You! And blessed be the womb that bore You, as it is greater than the womb of women, if it was able to bear You! »

The shouting of a man mingles with the woman's: «Colomba! You see! You understand! You are speaking wisely recognising the Lord! Oh! God! God of my fathers! God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! God of the prophets! God of John, the Prophet! God! My God! Son of the Father! King like the Father! Saviour obedient to the Father! God like the Father, and my God, God of Your servant! May You be blessed, loved, followed, worshipped forever! »

And the old head of the synagogue kneels down beside his wife, embracing her with his left arm, pressing her to his heart, he stoops and makes her stoop to kiss the feet of the Saviour, while the joyful shouting of the crowds is so loud that it makes tree-trunks vibrate and frightens the doves, which take flight from the nests where they were already resting and fly over Engedi, as if they wished to spread over the whole town the news that the Saviour is within its walls.

### **391. Healing of the leper Elisha of Engedi.**

22<sup>nd</sup> February 1946.

391. 1 <sup>1</sup>They must have advanced the time of their departure, and perhaps the inhabitants of Engedi advised them to do so, because it is the dead of night and the moon almost full illuminates the town with a very bright light. The narrow streets look like silver ribbons lying among the cube-shaped houses and garden walls, the lime of which seems to have been changed into sculptural marble by the magic rays of moonlight. Palm-trees and other trees look mysterious, enveloped in the lunar phosphorescence. Fountains and rivulets are little waterfalls and diamond necklaces. And from tree branches nightingales pour forth strings of golden notes thus adding their wonderful voices to the gurgle of

waters, which can be heard very clearly in the night.

The town is asleep. But there are some people with Jesus, Who is departing. They are the men of the houses that gave hospitality to Jesus and His disciples and they have been joined by other people. The head of the synagogue is walking beside Jesus. Oh! He does not want to stop accompanying Him, not even when Jesus begs him to go back, before proceeding into the open country. They go straight towards the road leading to Masada, not the lower road along the Dead Sea, which I hear is unhealthy and dangerous at night; but to the internal one, built on the slopes, almost on the crests of the hills bordering the lake.

The oasis is wonderful in the lunar night! One seems to be walking in dream-land. Then the oasis comes to an end and palm-trees thin out. Then there is the real mountain, with its forest trees, its meadows and its slopes split by caves, like almost all the Palestinian mountains. But I would say that the caves are more numerous here and their strange mouths, long or flat, straight or slanting, round or like fissures, have a frightening look in the moonlight.

<sup>2</sup>«Abraham, the road is farther down. Why are you climbing <sup>39</sup><sup>12</sup> up, going the long way round, on such a difficult path? » says one of Engedi, warning the old head of the synagogue.

«Because I have to show something to the Master and ask Him to do one thing more, to be added to the great gifts He has already granted us. But if you are tired, go home, or wait for me here. I will go by myself» replies the old man, who plods on panting, along the difficult steep path.

«Oh! no! We will come with you. But it grieves us to see you tire so. You are breathless... »

«Oh! it is not the path!... It is something else! It is a sword piercing my heart... and it is hope swelling it. Come, my children, and you will see how much grief there was in the heart of the man who relieved all your sorrows! How much... not despair, certainly not, but... he who always told you to hope in the Lord Who can do everything, realized he could not possibly expect to have joy anymore... I taught you to believe in the Messiah... Do you remember when I used to speak of Him without any fear, when I could do so without harming Him? And you would say to me: “What about Herod’s slaughter? ”. Yes. It was a sore thorn in

my heart! But I clung to hope with my whole being... I used to say: "If God sent His star to three men, who were not even from Israel, to invite them to worship the Child Messiah, and He led them by it to the poor house unknown to the rabbis of Israel, to the princes of priests and scribes, if in a dream He informed them not to go back to Herod, in order to save the Child, is it possible that, even with greater power, He did not inform His father and Mother to flee taking the hope of God and of man to a safe place? ". And my faith in His safety grew stronger and was attacked in vain by human doubt and the words of other people...

<sup>391. 3</sup> And when... and when the deepest grief for a father seized me... when I had to take a living being to the sepulchre and say to him: "Remain here as long as your life lasts... and consider that if the desire for your mother's caresses or any other reason should urge you towards the town, I would have to curse you and be the first to strike you and relegate you where not even my most desolate love could relieve you", when I had to do that... I had to cling even more to my faith in God, the Saviour of His Saviour, and say to myself and to my son... to my leprous son... see?... leprous...: "Let us bow our heads to the will of the Lord and believe in His Messiah! I Abraham... you Isaac, immolated by disease, not by fire, let us offer our sorrow to have a miracle... ". And every month, at each new moon, when I came here secretly, laden with foodstuffs... clothes... love... which I had to leave far from my son... because I had to come back to you... my children... to my blind wife, to my feeble-minded wife, whom dreadful grief had made blind and dull... and I had to come back to my childless home... without the peace of reciprocal conscious love... and to my synagogue to speak to you of God... of His wonders... of the beautiful things He spread in the universe... and I could see with my eyes the corroded sight of my son... whom I could not even defend when I heard people speak ill of him, saying that he was an ungrateful son, or a criminal who had run away from home..., and every month, when making this pilgrimage to the sepulchre of my living son, as I was saying, I used to repeat to him, to encourage him: "The Messiah is on the earth. He will come. He will cure you... ". Last year at Passover, when I was looking for You in Jerusalem, during the short time that I was away from my blind wife, I was told: "He really exists. He was here yesterday. He al-

so cured some lepers. He is going round the whole of Palestine curing, comforting, teaching”. Oh! I came back so quickly that I looked like a young man going to a wedding! I did not even stop at Engedi, but I came here and I called my son, my boy, my dying seed, and I said to him: “He will come! ”. <sup>4</sup>Lord... You have done all sorts of good to our town. You are going away, but there are no sick people left... You have blessed even our trees and animals... And will You not... You have already cured my wife... but will You not have mercy on the fruit of her womb?... A son to a mother! Give back a son to his mother, You, the perfect Son of the Mother of all graces! In the name of Your Mother have mercy on me, on us!... » 391. 4

Everybody is weeping with the old man who has spoken with such powerful and heart-rending feelings...

And Jesus clasps him in His arms, while he is sobbing, and He says to him: «Do not weep anymore! Let us go to your Elisha. Your faith, justice and hope deserve that and much more. Do not weep, father! Do not let us delay any longer from freeing a man from such horror. »

«The moon is setting. The road is a difficult one. Could we not wait until dawn? » say some people.

«No. There are many resinous plants here around us. Pick some branches, light them and let us go» orders Jesus.

They climb up a narrow troublesome path; it looks like the dried bed of alluvial water. The reddish smoky torches crackle spreading a strong smell of resins through the air.

<sup>5</sup>A cave with a narrow opening, almost hidden by thick bushes which have grown near the edges of a spring, appears beyond a narrow tableland split in the middle by a crevice into which flows the water of the spring. 391. 5

«Elisha has been there, for years... awaiting death or the grace of God... » says the old man in a low voice, pointing at the cavern.

«Call your son. Console him. Tell him not to be afraid, to have faith. »

And Abraham shouts in a loud voice: «Elisha! Elisha! Son! » and he repeats his cry, trembling with fear because there is no reply.

«Is he perhaps dead? » some ask.

«No. Dead, just now, no! At the end of his torture! With no joy, no! Oh! my boy! » moans the father...

«Do not weep. Call him again. »

«Elisha! Elisha! Why are you not answering your... »

«Father! Father! Why have you come at this unusual time? Is mother perhaps dead, and you have come to... » the voice, which was previously far, has come nearer, and a spectre moves the branches concealing the entrance; a horrible spectre, a half-naked corroded skeleton... who seeing so many people with torches and sticks, imagines I wonder what, and withdraws shouting: «Father, why have you betrayed me? I have never left this place... Why have you brought people to stone me?! » The voice moves away and only the undulating branches are left to remind people of the apparition.

«Comfort him! Tell him that the Saviour is here! » urges Jesus.

But the old man has no strength left... He weeps desolately...

391. 6 Jesus then speaks: «Son of Abraham and of the Father in Heaven, listen. What your just father prophesied, is now being accomplished. The Saviour is here and your friends of Engedi are with Him and the disciples of the Messiah have come to rejoice at your resurrection. Come and be not afraid! Come as far as the crevice, and I will come, too, and I will touch you, and you will be cleansed. Do not be afraid, come to the Lord Who loves you! »

The branches are shifted once again and the frightened leper looks out. He looks at Jesus, a white figure walking on the grass of the tableland and stopping at the edge of the crevice... He looks at the others... and especially at his father who appears to be fascinated and follows Jesus with his arms stretched out and his eyes staring at the face of his leprous son. He is reassured and comes forward. He walks with a limp, because of the sores on his feet... he stretches out his arms with their corroded hands... He comes before Jesus... He looks at Him... And Jesus holds out His beautiful hands, He raises His eyes to Heaven, He gathers, He seems to be gathering within Himself all the light of the infinite stars, shedding its pure brightness on the impure, putrid, corroded flesh that looks even more dreadful in the red light of the burning branches, which people are waving to give more light.

Jesus leans over the crevice, with the tips of His fingers He

touches the tips of the leprous fingers and says: «1 want it! », with such a beautiful smile that it cannot be described. He repeats: «1 want it! » twice more. He prays and commands with that word...

He takes one step back opening His arms crosswise and says: «And when you have been cleansed preach the Lord, because you belong to Him. Remember that God loved you so that you might be a good Israelite and a good son. Get married and bring your children up for the Lord. Your very bitter bitterness has been cancelled. Bless the Lord and be happy! »

He then turns around and says: «You with torches, come forward and see what the Lord can do for those who deserve it. »

He lowers His arms, as open and covered by the mantle they prevented people from seeing the leper, and He moves aside.

<sup>7</sup>The first cry is from the old man kneeling behind Jesus: <sup>391. 7</sup> «Son! Son! You are as handsome as when you were twenty years old. And just as healthy! Handsome, Oh! you are more handsome now!... Oh! a board, a branch, something, that I may come to you! » and he is on the point of rushing forward.

But Jesus holds him back: «No! Joy must not make you infringe the Law. He is to be purified first. Look at him! Kiss him with your eyes and with your heart, but be strong now as you have been for so many years. And be happy... »

In fact this is a complete miracle. It not only cured, but it restored what had been destroyed by disease, and the man, about forty years old, is as whole as if he had not suffered from any disease; he is only very thin, which gives him an ascetic appearance, which is not common but supernatural. He waves his hands, kneels down and blesses... he does not know what to do to tell Jesus that he thanks Him. At last he sees some flowers among the grass, he picks them, kisses them and throws them beyond the crevice at the Saviour's feet.

<sup>8</sup>«Let us go! You people of Engedi, stay here with your head of <sup>391. 8</sup> the synagogue. We will go on towards Masada. »

«But you don't know... You cannot see... »

«1 know the way. I know everything! Both the ways of the Earth and those of hearts, along which God and the Enemy of God pass, and I see those who accept the latter or the Former. Remain here with My peace! In any case it will soon be daybreak



and with the burning branches we shall have light till dawn. Abraham, come here, that I may kiss you goodbye. May the Lord always be with you, as He has been so far, and with your family and your kind town. »

«Will you not come back to us again, Lord? To see my happy home? »

«No. My road is about to come to its end. But you will be in Heaven with Me, and your dear ones will be with you. Love me and bring the little ones up in the faith of the Christ... Goodbye to everybody. Peace and blessings to all those who are here and to their families. Peace to you, Elisha. Be perfect out of gratitude to the Lord. My apostles, come with Me... »

And He sets off at the head of the little procession, walking with burning branches held aloft. He turns round a projecting rock and disappears with His white mantle; then the apostles disappear one by one, the shuffling of their feet fades away, the reddish light of the branches vanishes...

Father and son remain on the tableland, sitting on the edges of the crevice, contemplating each other... Behind them, in a group, whispering their admiration, the people of Engedi... They await dawn to go back to the town with the news of the wonderful cure.

### **392. The hostility of Masada, a fortress town.**

25<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>392.1</sup> They are climbing up a very steep hill towards a town, which looks like an eagle's nest on an Alpine crest. They are proceeding with great difficulty, going eastwards and leaving behind a continuous chain of mountains, which are part of the Judaeen range and which, like the buttress of a huge wall, extend towards the southern end of the Dead Sea. The crest on which the town is built, is very high, solitary and steep, such as eagles are fond of for their regal lovemaking, as they disdain witnesses and community.

«What a road, my Lord! » moans Peter.

«It is even worse than the road to Jiphthahel» confirms Matthew.

«But it is not raining here, it is not damp and the road is not

slippery. And that is not so bad... » remarks Judas Thaddeus.

«Yes. That is a consolation... But it is the only one. Don't worry! Your enemies will not capture you! If an earthquake does not demolish you, no deed of man will ever destroy you» says Peter addressing the town-fortress, enclosed in the narrow circle of its defences, with its houses crowded one against the other, like the seeds of pomegranates in their tough rind.

«Do you think so, Peter? » asks Jesus.

«Do I think so? I see it. Which is better! »

Jesus shakes His head but does not reply.

«Perhaps it would have been better if we had, come along the sea. If Simon were here... he is familiar with this area» says Bartholomew sighing, as he is exhausted.

«When we are in town and you see the other road, you will thank Me for choosing this one. A man can climb up here, although with some difficulty. A goat can hardly climb up the other one» replies Jesus.

«How do You know? Did anybody tell You, or...? »

«I know. In any case Ananias' daughter-in-law lives here. I want to speak to her, as first thing. »

«Master... will there be no danger up there?... Because... we cannot get out in a hurry here, and if they should chase us... we will never see our homes again. Look at those fearful precipices! And the sharp rocks!... » says Thomas.

«Be not afraid. We shall not find another Engedi. Only few towns are like Engedi in Israel. But no harm will befall us. »

«It's because... Do You know that it is one of Herod's strongholds?... »

«So? Be not afraid, Tom! Until it is the hour, nothing serious will happen. »

<sup>2</sup>They proceed and they arrive at the not very attractive walls, <sup>392.2</sup> when the sun is already high. But the height moderates the heat.

They go into the town through the arch of a narrow gloomy gate. The bastion walls are huge, with frequent towers and narrow crenels.

«What a trap for game! » says Matthew.

«I am thinking of the poor wretches who had to carry all the materials up here, those blocks, these iron plates... » says James of Alphaeus.

«The holy love for their fatherland and independence made the weights light for the men\* of Jonathan Maccabee. Wicked selfishness and the fear of the people's wrath imposed a heavy yoke, not on subjects, but on people worse than slaves, by the will of Herod the Great. It was baptised in blood and tears, it will perish in blood and tears, when the hour of divine punishment comes. »

«Master, but what have the inhabitants got to do with it? »

«Nothing. And everything. Because when subjects vie with their leaders in faults or in merits, they receive the same prize or  
392. 3 punishment as their leaders. <sup>3</sup>But here is the house, the third one in the second street, with the well in front of it. Let us go... »

Jesus knocks at the door of a high narrow house. A boy opens the door.

«Are you a relative of Ananias? »

«I am called after him, because he is the father of my father. »

«Call your mother. Tell her that I have come from the town where Ananias lives and where is the tomb of her dead husband. »

The boy goes away and comes back. «She said that she does not care to have any news of the old man. That You can go. »

Jesus' countenance becomes very severe. «I will not go away unless I speak to her. Child, go and tell her that Jesus of Nazareth, in Whom her husband believed, is here and wishes to speak to her. Tell her not to be afraid. The old man is not here... »

The boy goes away again. The wait is long. People have stopped to watch and some of them ask the apostles questions. But the atmosphere is unpleasant or indifferent or ironical... The apostles try to be kind, but it is obvious that they are frightened. And they become more so when the notables of the town arrive with some soldiers. Both the former and the latter look like... real jail-birds and neither inspire confidence.

Jesus, engrossed in thought, waits patiently, leaning against the doorpost, with folded arms.

392. 4 <sup>4</sup>The woman comes at last. She is tall and swarthy, her eyes are hard and her profile sharp. She is neither ugly nor old, but her countenance makes her look old and ugly. «What do You

\* men, as mentioned in: *1 Maccabees 9, 62.*

want? Hurry up, because I am busy» she says haughtily.

«I do not want anything. You may be sure. I am only bringing you Ananias' forgiveness, his love and prayers... »

«I will not have him again with me! It's no good begging of me. I don't want old mournful people. It's all over with him, In any case I am getting married again and I cannot impose a coarse peasant like him on the house of a rich man. I have suffered enough through my mistake in marrying his son! But I was a silly girl then and I was only looking at the handsomeness of the man. Woe is me! Woe is me! Cursed be whatever brought him my way! Let even his memory be anathema... » she shouts looking really wild.

«That is enough! Respect the living and the dead whom you did not deserve to have; your heart, woman, is harder than a stone. Woe to you! Yes. Woe to you! Because there is no love for your neighbour in your heart, and consequently Satan is in you. But watch, woman. Watch, lest the tears of the old man and those of your husband, whom you certainly oppressed through your lack of love, should become fire raining on what is dear to you. You have children, woman!... »

«Children! I wish I did not have them! Also the last tie would be broken! But I do not want to hear anything. I do not want to hear You. Go away! I am in my house, in my brother's house. I don't know You. I don't want to remember the old man. I don't... » she shouts like a magpie plucked alive. She is a real harpy.

«Be careful» says Jesus.

«Are You threatening me? »

«I am calling you back to God, to His Law, as I feel sorry for your soul. How can you bring your children up, if you have such feelings? Are you not afraid of the judgement of God? »

«Oh! That's enough. Saul, go and call my brother and tell him to come here with Jonathan. I will show You! I... »

«Oh! no. It is not necessary. God will not compel your soul. Goodbye. » And Jesus goes away elbowing His way through the crowd. <sup>5</sup>The road is narrow, between high houses. The defence centre of the fortress town is in the eastern side, where everything falls sheer for hundreds of metres and where a narrow winding path, strikingly steep, climbs up to the top of the peak, from the plain and from the sea-shore. Jesus goes just there,

where there is an emplacement for engines of war, and He begins to speak, repeating once again His invitation to the Kingdom of Heaven, of which He describes the main features.

And He is about to elucidate them, when some notables come forward, forcing their way through the crowd and shouting to one another. As soon as they are before Jesus, they enjoin: «Go away! We are quite enough here to educate the children of Israel», but they say so rather confusedly, as they all speak at the same time and seem to agree only to drive away Jesus.

«Go away! Our women need not be reproached by You, a Galilean! »

«Go away, offender! How dare You offend the woman of a Herodian, in one of the favourite towns of the great Herod? Usurper, since Your birth, of his sovereign rights! Away from here! »

Jesus looks at them, at the last ones in particular, and He says one word only: «Hypocrites! »

«Go away! Away! »

There is a real uproar of discordant voices, each accusing or defending his own caste. It is impossible to understand anything. In the small square women shout and faint, children cry, soldiers try to make their way coming out from the fortress, and in doing so they hurt the people crushed in the square, who react cursing Herod and his soldiers, the Messiah and His followers. A real hubbub! The apostles, pressing around Jesus, are the only ones who defend Him more or less bravely and they also shout biting insults, and being sailors they are not in any way short of suitable vocabulary!

Jesus calls them saying: «Let us get out of here. We will go round the back of the town and will go away... »

«And for good, mind You! » shouts Peter, whose face is purple with anger.

«Yes, for good... »

They file off one after the other, and notwithstanding the pressure put on Him by the apostles, Jesus is the last. The guards, although they jeer at the «mocked prophet», as they say, playing all sorts of tricks on Him, have enough common sense to make haste and close the gate and lean against it, with their weapons turned towards the square.

Jesus takes a very narrow path along the walls, a tiny path about two palms wide, below which there is the void and death. The apostles follow Him avoiding looking down at the frightening abyss. They are now near the gate through which they entered the town. Jesus proceeds downhill, without stopping. The gate is closed also on this side of the town... <sup>392. 6</sup>

When they are at some distance from the town Jesus stops and lays His hand on the shoulder of Peter, who says wiping his perspiration: «We had a narrow escape! Cursed town! And cursed woman! Oh! poor Ananias! That woman is worse than my mother-in-law! What a viper! »

«Yes. She has the cold heart of a snake... Simon of Jonah, well, what do you think? Notwithstanding all its defences, do you think that this town is safe? »

«No, Lord! It does not have God in it. I say that it will be doomed with Sodom and Gomorrah. »

«You are right, Simon of Jonah! It is attracting upon itself the thunderbolts of divine wrath, not so much because it expelled Me, but because all the commandments of the Decalogue are infringed in it. Let us go now. A cave will receive us in its cool shade, during the hot hours. And at sunset we will go towards Kerioth, as far as moonlight will allow us... »

«My Master! » moans John bursting suddenly into tears.

«What is the matter with you? » they all ask him.

John does not reply. He is weeping covering his face with his hands, with his head lowered... He looks like the distressed John of Good Friday...

«Do not weep! Come here... There are still pleasant hours ahead of us» says Jesus drawing him to Himself. But what comforts the heart, increases also tears.

«Oh! Master! My Master! What shall I do? What shall I do? »

«For what, brother? », «For what, dear friend? » ask James and the others.

John has difficulty in speaking, then raising his face and throwing his arms round Jesus' neck, thus compelling Him to bend over his distressed face, he shouts and replies to Jesus instead of those who had asked him the question: «Seeing You dying! »

«God will help you, His beloved child! You will not be with-

out His help. Do not weep anymore. Let us go!... » and Jesus walks away holding by the hand the apostle blinded by tears...

### **393. In the country house of Mary of Kerioth.**

26<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

393.1 <sup>1</sup>They arrive at Judas' country house on a wonderful cool morning. The orchards are wet with dew and the grass beneath the trees is a flowery carpet over which bees are buzzing. The windows of the house are already open. The woman who manages it, a strong woman who moderates her command with great kindness, is giving orders to the servants and peasants and is herself handing out the food to each of them before sending them to their work. Through the large wide open door of the kitchen she can be seen passing backwards and forwards in her dark dress, speaking to this one and that one, and making portions according to the needs of each worker. A flock of doves are cooing before the door, waiting to have their share.

Jesus proceeds smiling and He is almost at the door, when Mary of Simon looks out, with a little bag of corn in her hand, saying: «It's your turn now, my doves. Here is your first meal, then go away happily, in the sunshine, praising the Lord. Be good, be good! There is enough for everyone and there is no need for you to peck one another...» And she scatters the corn in all directions to avoid violent brawls among the greedy doves. She does not see Jesus, because she has stooped to caress also some of the birds, which are pecking her toes out of affection. Mary takes one in her hands and caresses it. She then puts it down, and sighs.

Jesus takes a step forward saying: «Peace to you, Mary, and to your house! »

«The Master! » exclaims the woman, dropping the little bag she was holding under her arm, and she runs towards Jesus, putting the doves to flight, but they immediately alight on the ground and busy themselves pecking the string of the little bag and the bag itself to loosen and open it and thus satisfy their greed. «Oh! Lord! What a holy and happy day! » and she is about to kneel to kiss Jesus' feet.

But He stops her saying: «The mothers of My apostles and the Holy women of Israel must not lower themselves like slaves in My presence. They have given Me their faithful souls and their sons. I give them love of predilection. »

Judas' mother deeply moved kisses His hands whispering: «Thank You, Lord! »<sup>2</sup> She then raises her head and sees the group<sup>393 2</sup> of the apostles, who have stopped at the nearest trees, and as she is surprised that her son is not coming to meet her, she looks at them more closely. She turns pale with fear. She almost shouts asking: «My son, where is he? » and she looks at Jesus trembling with fright.

«Be not afraid, Mary. I have sent him with Simon Zealot to Lazarus' house on a mission. If I could have stopped at Masada as long as I had decided, I would have found him here. But I could not stop there. The hostile town rejected Me. And I came here at once to find comfort in a mother and to give her the pleasure of learning that her son is serving the Lord» says Jesus laying stress on the last words, to make them more impressive.

Mary resembles a withered flower that revives. Colour comes back to her cheeks and light to her eyes. She asks: «Really, Lord? Is he good? Are You happy with him? You are? Oh! what joy! Joy of his mother's heart! I have prayed so much! So hard! I gave so many alms! And I did so much penance... so much... And what would I not do to make my son holy? Thanks, my Lord! Thanks for loving him so much. Because it is Your love that saves my Judas... »

«Yes. It is "our" love that... supports him... »

«Our love! How kind You are, Lord! You put my poor love close, nay united to Your divine love!... Oh! what words You have told me! How much certainty, how much comfort and peace You are giving me! If it were only my poor love, Judas would not profit much by it. But You, with Your forgiveness... because You are aware of his faults, You... with Your infinite love, which seems to grow the more he needs it after committing an offence, Oh! You... my Judas will be able to control himself, at last, and forever. Is that right, Master? » The woman stares at Him with her deep serious eyes, her hands joined in prayer.

Jesus... Oh! Jesus Who cannot reply «yes» but does not wish to deprive her of this hour of peace, finds words, which are neither a lie nor a promise, but which the woman can accept with



relief. He says: «His goodwill joined to our love can work real miracles, Mary. Let peace prevail in your heart always thinking that God loves you so much. He understands you. And He will be your friend forever. »

Mary kisses His hands once again to thank Him. She then says: «Come, then, into my house, awaiting Judas. Love and peace are here, blessed Master. »

And Jesus calls His apostles and enters the house to take some refreshment and to rest.

393. 3     <sup>3</sup>It is evening. Night falls slowly in the country. Noises cease one after the other and only a light breeze can be heard among the leaves: there is deep silence. Then there is the first cricket in the field full of ripe crops. Then another one... and another... And the whole country chirrs in the monotonous sound... until a nightingale utters its first canorous question to the stars... it becomes silent, then resumes singing. It is silent once again... What is it awaiting? Perhaps the first ray of the moon?... It is now whispering in a low voice, it must have flown to the thick walnut-tree near the house, where perhaps is its nest. It seems to be chattering to its mate that is perhaps brooding... Insistent bleating in the distance. The sound of harness-bells on the Kerioth road. Then silence.

Jesus is seated near Mary on the benches in front of the house. He is resting peacefully among His disciples and the servants of the house. The atmosphere is pleasant and peaceful, relieving both bodies and spirits. Jesus is not talkative, He speaks now and again. He lets the apostles speak of Engedi, of the old head of the synagogue, of the miracle. Mary and the servants are listening diligently.

Something moves near the apple-trees. But whilst here, in the open space before the house, one can see faintly, because it is a clear starry evening, there is no light under the thick trees and one can hear only the noise of something moving.

«A night animal? A lost sheep? » asks several of the apostles. And the mention of a sheep reminds many of the sheep lamenting because they had taken her lamb to kill it.

«That poor sheep cannot resign herself! » says the farmer. «I am afraid her udders will harden. She has not eaten anything all

day and she does nothing but bleat... Listen to her!... »

«She'll get over it... They lamb so that we can eat their lambs» says a servant philosophically.

«But they are not all alike. This one is not so stupid and suffers more. Listen! Doesn't it sound like weeping? Don't say that I am silly, Master... It affects me like the weeping of a woman for her lost child... »

«Instead, mother, you have found your child! » says Judas of Kerioth appearing behind them with Simon and making everybody start with surprise. «Master! Bless our return as You blessed our departure. »

«Yes, Judas» and Jesus embraces them both.

<sup>4</sup>«And you, too, mother... » Mary also kisses and embraces her <sup>393</sup> 4 son.

«We were not expecting to find you here, Master. We walked untiringly, taking short cuts most of the time to avoid being held back. But we met some disciples and we informed Johanna and Eliza that we shall soon be calling on them» explains Simon.

«Yes. And Simon walked as fast as a young man. Master, we gave the message. Lazarus is very ill. And the heat increases his suffering. He implores You to go to him soon... Master, with the exception of the Antonia, where I went to please Eglah who wanted to thank Claudia before leaving for Jericho, I did not go anywhere else. Is that right, Simon? »

«Yes, that is true. And we went to the Antonia at the sixth hour, on a sultry day, when it was wise to stay at home. While Judas was speaking to Claudia, whom Albula Domitilla had called into the garden, I was asked questions by the other women. I do not think I did the wrong thing in explaining, as best I could, what they wanted to know. »

«You did the right thing. They are really anxious to know the truth. »

«And Claudia is really willing to help You. She dismissed Eglah, who went to greet Plautina and the other women, and she asked me many questions. If I understood her properly she wants to persuade Pontius not to believe the slander of Pharisees, Sadducees and so on. Pontius trusts his centurions only to a certain extent, as they are good warriors but not such good messengers. And he often makes use of his wife, who must be very intelligent

and shrewd, to have precise information. Claudia is really the true Proconsul. He must be a nonentity and keeps his position only because she is so powerful and advises him. They gave us some money for Your poor. Here it is. »

«When did you arrive? Are you not tired and dusty? » asks James of Zebedee.

«Between the third and the sixth hour. We went to Kerioth to see whether my mother was there and inform her of your arrival. But I behaved as You wish, Master. I did not give in to human desires. Is that true, Simon? »

«Yes, it is true. »

«Very well. Be always obedient and you will be saved. »

«Yes, Master. Oh! now that I know that Claudia is with us, I will no longer be led by my foolish haste. But it was all for the sake of love. You must agree. Disorderly love... because it felt as if it were not protected, as if it had no help to reach its purpose, which is to have You loved, respected as You deserve, and as it *must* be. Now I am calmer. I am no longer afraid. And it is pleasant also to wait... » says Judas day-dreaming.

«Do not give free course to dreams, Judas. Follow the truth. I am the Light of the world and light will always be disliked by darkness... » warns Jesus.

The moon has risen. In its white light the country shines, faces look pale, houses and trees are like silver. The eastern side of the walnut tree is fully lit. The nightingale accepts the lunar invitation and begins its long melodious song, which it had kept in reserve, to greet the moon and night.

### **394. The parable of the two wills and the farewell to the citizens of Kerioth.**

27<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

394.1

<sup>1</sup>Jesus is speaking in the synagogue of Kerioth, which is incredibly crowded. He is replying to several people who have asked Him for private advice, and is speaking to each separately. When He has satisfied them all, He begins to speak in a loud voice.

«People of Kerioth, listen to My farewell parable. We shall

call it: "The Two Wills".

A perfect father had two sons. He loved both with the same wise love, he directed both towards the right ways. Although there was no difference in the way he loved and taught them, there was a remarkable difference in the two sons. One, the first-born, was humble, obedient; he did his father's will without discussion, he was always joyful and happy in his work. The other one, although younger, was often unhappy, he argued with his father and with himself. He always pondered, with deep human meditation, on the advice and orders that he received. And instead of carrying them out exactly as they were given, he took the liberty of modifying them completely or partially, as if they had been imparted by a fool. His elder brother used to say to him: "Don't do that. You are grieving our father!". But he would reply: "You are foolish. A great big strapping man such as you are, first-born over and above, and grown up, Oh! I would not remain in the place where father put you. I would like to do more. I would impose myself on the servants, so that they might realize that I am the master. Owing to your perpetual meekness you look like a servant yourself. Can't you see that no one pays attention to you, notwithstanding your primogeniture? Some even laugh at you...". The second-born son, tempted by Satan, or rather, a disciple of Satan, whose advice he carried out diligently, tempted his brother. But the latter, faithful to the Lord and respecting His Law, was faithful also to his father, whom he honoured with his perfect behaviour.

Years went by and the younger brother, annoyed at not being in a position to rule, after imploring his father several times saying: "Authorise me to act in your name, for your own honour, instead of letting that fool do so, as he is meeker than a lamb", and after trying to urge his brother to do more than the father ordered, to impose himself on the servants, on fellow-citizens and neighbours, said to himself: "Oh! that's enough! Our good name is at stake! Since no one wants to do it, I will do it myself". And he began to do things his own way, yielding to pride and falsehood and disobeying without the slightest hesitation. His father used to say to him: "Son, listen to your brother. He knows what he does". Or he would say: "I have been told that you have done such a thing. Is it true?". And the younger son,

shrugging his shoulders would reply to his father's questions: "He knows, he knows! He is too shy and irresolute. He misses the opportunity to take command". Or he would reply: "I did not do such a thing". His father used to say to him: "Don't seek help from this one or that one. Who do you think can help more than we can, to give fame to our name? False friends influence you so that later they may laugh at you behind your back". But the second-born son replied: "Are you jealous because I am the one with spirit of enterprise? In any case I know that I am doing the right thing".

Time passed. The elder brother was growing more and more in justice, whilst the younger one fostered evil passions. At last the father said: "It's time to put an end to this. You either comply with what I order, or you will lose my love". And the rebel went and told his false friends. "Are you worried about that? Don't! There is a way to make it impossible for a father to prefer one son to another. Hand him over to us and we will see to it. You will be free from material blame and your property will flourish because, after removing him who is too good, you will be able to make it famous. Do you not know that forcible action, although painful, is better than inertness, which is harmful to property?" they replied. And the younger son, by now sated with wickedness, gave assent to the conspiracy.

Now tell Me. Can the father be blamed for educating his sons in two different ways? Can we say that he was an accomplice? No, we cannot. Why, then, was one son a saint, and the other wicked? Is the will of man perhaps given in advance in two different manners? No, it is not. It is given in one way only. But man is free to change it, and he who is good makes his will good, and who is wicked makes it wicked.

394. 2 <sup>2</sup>I exhort you, people of Kerioth - and this is the last time that I exhort you to follow the ways of wisdom - I exhort you to follow only your goodwill. Almost at the end of My ministry I repeat to you the words that were sung at My birth: "There is peace for men of goodwill". Peace! That is, success, victory on the Earth and in Heaven, *because God is with those who are willing to obey Him. God does not look so much at the high-sounding deeds that man does on his own initiative, as at the humble, prompt, faithful obedience to the work which He proposes.*

I would remind you of two episodes\* in the history of Israel, which prove that God is not with the man who wishes to act by himself, trampling on the order received.

Let us see the Maccabees. It is written that while Judas Maccabee was going with Jonathan to fight in Gilead and Simon was going to relieve his countrymen in Galilee, Joseph of Zechariah and the people's leader Azariah were ordered to remain in Judaea to guard it. And Judas said to them: "Take care of this people and do not engage the pagans until we return". But Joseph and Azariah, upon hearing of the great exploits of the Maccabees, wanted to do the same, and said: "Let us make a name for ourselves and go and fight the nations around us". But they were defeated and routed and "so the people met with a great reverse, because they had not listened to Judas and his brothers, but had relied on their own prowess". Pride and disobedience.

And what do we read in the Book of the Kings? We read that Saul was reproved a first time and the second he was reproved so much for his disobedience, that David was elected in his place. Because he had disobeyed! Remember! "Does the Lord perhaps want holocausts and victims or does He not prefer people to obey His voice? Obedience is worth more than sacrifices, and to listen is worth more than offering the fat of rams; because rebellion is a sin of sorcery, presumption a crime of idolatry. Now, since you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as king".

Remember! When Samuel obediently filled his horn with oil and went to Jesse of Bethlehem, because the Lord had chosen Himself another king there, Jesse went to the banquet with his sons after the sacrifice and his sons were introduced to Samuel. Eliab, handsome, young and tall, was the first one. But the Lord said to Samuel: "Take no notice of his appearance or his height, because I have rejected him. I do not see as man sees. Because man looks at appearances, but the Lord looks at the heart". And Samuel did not want Eliab as king. Abinadab was then presented to him. But Samuel said: "The Lord has not chosen this one either". And Jesse presented Shammah to him. But Samuel said: "He is not the chosen one of the Lord either". And he said the same with regards to all the seven sons of Jesse present at the

\* two episodes, that of *1 Maccabees 5, 9-62* and that of *1 Samuel 13, 1-14; 15; 16*.

banquet. And Samuel asked: "Are all your sons here? ". "No" replied Jesse. "There is still one left, the youngest, who is looking after the sheep". "Send for him, because we will not sit down to eat until he comes". And David came. He was a fair-haired boy, of fresh complexion and pleasant bearing. And the Lord said: "Anoint him, for he is the king". Because, and always bear this in mind, *God chooses whoever He wants, and He deprives those who forfeit His favour by depraving His win through pride and disobedience.*

394. 3     <sup>3</sup>I will not come back here again. The Master is about to fulfil His ministry. Afterwards, He will be more than Master. Prepare your souls for that hour, and remember that as My birth was salvation for those who had goodwill, so My accession will be salvation for those who had goodwill in following Me, as Master, in My doctrine, and for those who will follow Me in it, also after My accession.

Goodbye men, women and children of Kerioth! Goodbye. Let us look at one another straight in the eyes! Let us make our hearts, yours and Mine, blend in a loving embrace of farewell, and may our love be always alive, also when I shall no longer be among you... The first time I came here, a just man breathed\* his last in the kiss of his Saviour, in a vision of glory... And now, the last time I have come here, I bless you with love...

Goodbye!... May the Lord grant you faith, hope and charity in perfect measure. May He give you love, love, love. For Himself, for Me, for the good, for the unhappy, for the guilty, for those who are burdened with the weight of a fault which is not theirs...

Remember. Be good. Do not be unjust. Remember that I have always forgiven not only guilty people, but I have embraced the whole of Israel with My love. The whole of Israel, which consists of good and not good people, as in every family there are good and not good members, and it would be unfair to say that a whole family is bad, only because one member is so.

394. 4     <sup>4</sup>I am going... If anyone still wishes to speak to Me, let him come before evening to the country house of Mary of Simon. »

Jesus raises His hand and blesses, and then goes out quickly through the back door followed by His apostles.

\* a just man breathed... in 78. 8.

People whisper: «He is not coming back anymore! »  
 «What did He mean? »  
 «Tears welled in His eyes when saying goodbye... »  
 «Did you hear? He said that He will be raised! »  
 «So Judas is right! Of course, later, as king, He will not be  
 among us as now... »  
 «But I spoke to His brothers. They say that He will not be  
 king, as we imagine. But He will be the King of Redemption as  
 the prophets say. He will be the Messiah, of course! »  
 «Not at all! The King Redeemer. The man of sorrows. »  
 «Yes. »  
 «No»...  
 In the meantime Jesus is walking fast towards the country.

### **395. The two unhappy mothers of Keriath. Farewell to the mother of Judas.**

28<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

<sup>1</sup>«Lord, would You come with me, with me alone, to see an un<sup>—395. 1</sup>  
 happy mother. I desire this more than anything else» says Mary  
 of Simon, standing respectfully before Jesus, while after the  
 midday meal, the apostles have scattered to rest before resum-  
 ing their journey in the evening. Jesus instead is resting in the  
 shade of the apple-trees laden with small green apples about to  
 ripen and Mary seems to be resuming a conversation previously  
 begun.

«Yes, woman. I also wish to be with you, all alone in these last  
 hours, as it was the first time I came here. Let us go. » And they  
 go into the house where Jesus takes His mantle and Mary her  
 veil and mantle.

They follow paths through fields, orchards and forest trees.  
 It is still warm. Waves of warm air come from the fields where  
 the crops are ripe. But the mountain breeze moderates the heat  
 which would have been unbearable down in the plain.

«I am sorry to make You walk in this heat. But later... it would  
 no longer be possible. And I have always longed for this thing,  
 without ever daring to ask You. A short while ago You said to me:  
 “Mary, to show that I love you, as if you were My mother, I say



to you: ask Me whatever you wish to have and I will satisfy you”  
395. 2 and so I dared. <sup>2</sup>Lord, do You know where we are going? »

«No, woman. »

«We are going to the house of the woman, who was to be Judas’ mother-in-law... (Mary sighs heavily). She was to... She is not and never will be, because Judas left the girl who died of a broken heart... and her mother now bears me and my son ill-will. She always curses us... Judas is so... weak and inclined to Evil, that he needs blessings only!... I would like You to speak to her... You can convince her... and tell her that it was a mercy that the marriage did not take place... that it is no fault of mine... that she may die without any grudge; because she is dying slowly with such grief in her soul. I would like to be at peace with her... because I have suffered and I was ashamed of what happened and it grieves me to see that the person who has been my companion since I came here when I got married, is no longer my friend. In short, Lord, You know... »

«Yes, do not worry. Your request is an honest one and I will fulfil the task because it is a good thing. »

After crossing a little valley, they climb up another hill, on which there is a village.

«Anne has lived here since her daughter died. In her estate. Before she was at Kerioth. But while she lived there, her reproaches broke my heart every time we met. »

395. 3 <sup>3</sup>They take a side path just before the village and arrive at a low house, in the fields.

«Now! My heart is trembling, now that I am here! She will refuse to see me... she will reject me... she will be upset and her poor heart will suffer even more... Master... »

«Yes, I will go. You stay here, till I call you. And pray in order to assist Me. »

And Jesus goes, all alone, as far as the wide-open door of the house, which He enters greeting with His kind greeting.

A woman comes towards Him: «What do You want? Who are You? »

«I have come to bring relief to your mistress. Take Me to her. »

«Are You a doctor? It is of no avail! There is no hope. Her heart is dying. »

«There is still her soul to be saved. I am the Rabbi. »

«You are of no use even as such. She is displeased with the Eternal Father and does not want to listen to sermons. Leave her alone. »

«I have come just because she is in that frame of mind. Let me go in and she will not be so unhappy in her last days. »

The woman shrugs her shoulders and says: «Come in! »

<sup>395. 4</sup> «There is a cool half-dark corridor with several doors. At the end of the corridor the last door is half-open and moaning can be heard from it. The woman enters the room saying: «My mistress, there is a rabbi who wants to speak to you. »

«Why?... To tell me that I am cursed? That I will have no peace not even in the next life? » says the sick woman panting and upset.

«No. To tell you that your peace will be complete, if you only wish so, and you will be happy forever with your Johanna» says Jesus appearing at the door.

The sick woman, whose face is yellow and swollen, and who is panting in her little bed, leaning on many pillows, looks at Him and says: «Oh! What words! It is the first time that a rabbi does not reproach me... What hope!... My Johanna... with me... blessed... no more grief... the grief caused by a cursed man... she who gave birth to him did not avoid it... she betrayed me... after enticing me... My unhappy daughter... » she pants more and more.

«See? You are making her feel worse. I knew. Come away. »

«No. You go away. Leave me alone with her... »

The woman goes out shaking her head.

Jesus approaches the bed slowly. He kindly wipes the perspiration on the face of the woman, who finds difficulty in doing so because her hands are incredibly swollen, and He fans her head with a fan made with palm leaves. He helps her to drink as she seeks some refreshment in the liquor on the night table. He seems a son near a diseased mother. He finally sits down, kindly but firmly determined to fulfil His mission.

<sup>395. 5</sup> «The woman watches Him and calms down, and with an agonising smile she says: «You are handsome and kind. Who are You, Rabbi? You are as gentle as my beloved daughter was in comforting me. »

«I am Jesus of Nazareth! »

«You?!... And You have come to me?... Why?... »

«Because I love you. I have a mother, too, and in every mother I see Mine, and in the tears of mothers, I see My Mother's... »

«Why? Does Your Mother weep? Why? Has another son of Hers died? »

«Not yet... I am Her only Son and I am still alive. But She already weeps because She knows that I must die. »

«Oh! Poor woman! How dreadful to know before hand that a son must die. But how does She know? You are healthy. You are strong. You are good. I deluded myself until she died, and she was so ill!... How can Your Mother know that You must die? »

«Because I am the Son of man, foretold by the prophets. I am the Man of sorrows seen by Isaiah, the Messiah sung by David and described as the tortured Redeemer. I am the Saviour, the Redeemer, woman. And death, a dreadful death is awaiting Me... and My Mother will be present... and My Mother has been aware, since I was born, that Her heart will be broken by sorrow like My own... Do not weep... Through My death I will open the gates of Heaven to your Johanna... »

«Also to me! To me!... »

«Yes. In due course. But first you must learn to love and forgive. To begin to love again. To be just. And to forgive... Otherwise you will not be able to go to Heaven, with Johanna, and with Me... »

The woman weeps uncontrollably. She moans: «To love... To love when men have taught us to hate... when God has ceased to love us having no mercy on us... it is difficult... How can we love, when men have tortured us, and our friends have hurt us and God has abandoned us?... »

«No. He has not abandoned you. I am here. To make heavenly promises to you. To assure you that your grief will turn into joy, if you so wish. <sup>395. 6</sup> Listen to Me, Anne... You are weeping because the marriage was cancelled, and that has become the cause of all your grief, and because of that you say that a man is a murderer and his poor mother an accomplice. Listen, Anne. In the next few months you will realize that it was a grace from Heaven that Johanna did not get married to Judas... »

«Don't mention his name to me! » shouts the woman.

«I am mentioning it, to tell you that you must thank the Lord and you will be thanking Him in a few months' time... »

«I will be dead... »

«No. You will be alive and you will remember Me, and you will understand that there are sorrows greater than yours... »

«Greater? It's not possible! »

«What about My Mother Who will see Me die on a cross? »

Jesus has stood up. He is imposing. «And what about the grief of the mother of the betrayer of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Think, woman, of that mother... You... The whole of Kerioth, the country around it and beyond it have sympathised with you in your grief! You have been as proud of it as of the crown of a martyr. But that mother! Like Cain, without being Cain, being instead Abel: victim of her traitorous son, the killer of God, a sacrilegious cursed son, she will not be able to stand the look of men, because each glance will be like a stone of lapidation, and in every word, in every voice of man, she will seem to be hearing a curse, an abuse and she will never find shelter on the Earth until her death, until God, Who is just, takes the martyr with Himself making her forget that she is the mother of the murderer of God, by giving her the possession of God... Is that mother's sorrow not greater? »

«Oh! immense sorrow!... »

«You understand... Be good, Anne. Admit that God was good in what He did... »

«But my daughter is dead! Judas made her die, to have a richer dowry... His mother approved... »

«No. That is not true. I can assure you, and I read hearts. Judas - he is My apostle but I tell you - behaved badly and will be punished for it. But his mother is innocent. She loves you, and would like to be loved by you... Anne, you are two unhappy mothers. But you are proud of your dead child, who was innocent and pure, celebrated and honoured by the world... Mary of Simon *cannot* be proud of her son. His conduct is reproved by men. »

«That is true. But if he had married Johanna, he would not be reproved. »

«But in a short time you would see Johanna die of a broken heart, because Judas will die a violent death. »

«What are You saying? Oh! poor Mary! When? How? Where? »

«Soon. And in a dreadful way... <sup>7</sup>Anne! You are good! You are <sup>395. 7</sup>

a mother! You are aware of the sorrow of a mother! Anne, become Mary's friend once again! Let sorrow join you as joy was to unite you. Let me go away happily, knowing that she will have a friend, *one only, at least one...* »

«Lord... to love her... means to forgive her... It is very hard... I seem to be burying my daughter once again... to be killing her myself... »

«Such thoughts originate in Darkness! Do not listen to them. Listen to Me, the Light of the world. The Light of the world tells you that Johanna's destiny has been less bitter dying a virgin than dying the widow of Judas. Believe Me, Anne. And consider that Mary of Simon is more unhappy than you are... »

The woman is pensive, she struggles, weeps and says: «But I have cursed her, both her and the fruit of her womb! I have sinned... »

«And I absolve you. And the more you love her, the more you will be absolved in Heaven. »

«But if I become her friend... I will meet Judas. Lord, I cannot do that!... »

«You will never meet him again. I will never come back to Kerioth again, neither will Judas. We have already said goodbye to the people... »

«Oh! You said... »

«That I will not come back again. Judas said that he will not be able to come back until after My accession. But he believes he will be seeing Me ascending a throne. Instead death on a cross is waiting Me. And he thinks that he will become one of My ministers. Death instead is awaiting him. But You *shall not tell anybody that. Never.* His mother is not to know until everything has been accomplished. You said: "Poor woman! To know beforehand that her son *must* die". But if My Mother's suffering, also because of that, is already increasing the merits of My Sacrifice, silence is compassion for Mary of Simon. *You shall not speak.* »

«No, my Lord. I swear to it in the name of my Johanna. »

«I want another promise! A great, holy one! You are good. You already love Me... »

«Yes, so much. I have been at peace since You came here... »

«When Mary of Simon no longer has her son and the world insults her with sneering words, you, you only, will open your

heart and your house to her. Will you promise Me? In the names of God and of Johanna. She would have done that, because Mary was still the mother of the man she still loved» insists Jesus.

«... Yes! » replies the woman shedding tears.

«May God bless you, woman, and give you peace... and good health. <sup>8</sup>Come... let us go and meet Mary, and give her the kiss of <sup>395. 8</sup> peace... »

«But... Lord... I cannot walk. My legs are swollen and I cannot move them. See? I am here, all dressed, but I am just a trunk... »

«You were. Come! » and Jesus stretches out His hand invitingly.

The woman, staring at Jesus' eyes, moves her legs, she stretches them out of the little bed, lays her bare feet on the floor, stands up and walks... She seems fascinated. She is not even aware that she has already been cured... She goes out into the dim corridor, her hand still in Jesus'... She goes towards the door. She is almost there when she meets the servant seen previously, who utters a cry of joyful fear... Other servants rush there, fearing she was dying, whereas they see that their mistress, who shortly before was about to breathe her last breath and hated Mary of Simon, is now walking fast with her arms stretched out, after leaving Jesus' hand, towards poor Mary, whom she calls and embraces to her heart, while they both weep...

<sup>9</sup>... On their way back to the house, after the peaceful farewell, <sup>395. 9</sup> Mary of Simon thanks her Lord and asks: «When will You come back to do more good? »

«Never, woman. I have already told the citizens. But My heart will always be with you. Remember, always remember that I loved you and I love you. Remember that I know that you are good, and that is why God loves you. Always bear that in mind, also in the most dreadful hours. You must never think that God considers you guilty. In His eyes your soul appears and will always appear adorned with the gems of your virtues and the pearls of your suffering. Mary of Simon, mother of Judas, I want to bless you, I want to embrace you and kiss you so that your faithful sincere maternal kiss may compensate Me for any other one... and My kiss may make amends for all your sorrows. Come, mother of Judas. And thank you, thank you for all the love and honour you have given Me» and He embraces her and kisses her

forehead, as He does with Mary of Alphaeus.

«But we will meet again! I will come at Passover... »

«No. Do not come. I beseech you. Do you want to make Me happy? Do not come. Women at next Passover... no! »

«But why?... »

«Because... there will be a frightful rising in Jerusalem next Passover. It is no place for women! Nay... Mary, I will order your relative to join you. You must stay together. You need him because... Judas from now on will not be able to assist you or to come... »

«I will do as You say... So never again I shall see Your face which reflects the peace of Heaven? How much peace You have infused from Your eyes into my sorrowful heart!... » says Mary weeping.

«Do not weep. Life is short. Later you will see me forever in My Kingdom. »

«So You think that your humble servant will enter it?... »

«I already see your seat among the martyrs and co-redeemers. Do not be afraid, Mary. The Lord will be your eternal compensation. Let us go. Night is falling and it is time for Me to resume My journey... »

And they go back the same road through fields and orchards, towards the house, where the apostles are waiting.

Jesus bids goodbye hurriedly, blesses and sets out at the head of His apostles... While He goes away, Mary weeps, on her knees...

### **396. With children in Juttah. The healing hand of Jesus.**

7<sup>th</sup> february 1944, 6 p. m.

396. 1 <sup>1</sup>My joy today.

I see a place in the mountains. I do not know where it is\*. There is a gorge of mountains entering and emerging with their spurs from a valley on whose floor there flows a torrential stream entirely covered with foam on its jagged course. It is narrow, but,

\* **I do not know where it is**, as only in 1945 M. V. will have the visions of the two previous visits of Jesus in Juttah, which have formed chapters 76 (this vision is also included in 76. 8) and 212.

like all mountain currents, it is swift, a whole succession of re-sounding cascades. From where I am, it is heading south. Other, more distant mountains are beyond another steep slope and another valley.

I understand I am in a range of not extremely high peaks, which are, however, mountains, not hills. Just like our Apennines at so many points, such as the Magra Valley, for instance, or near Porretta. The vegetation is more suitable for sheep raising than for other forms of livelihood. I see green meadows plunging down or rising up here and there along the steep slopes, which at this hour - I think it is approaching sunset - seem to be turning an indigo violet. The season appears to be early summer, for the grass is beautiful, already tall, but not yet scorched by the sun.

From the point where I am, I see a mule track rising towards a town and entering among the houses there. A typical mountain road, pebbly and uneven all along. It rises from south to north (from where I am looking), in such a way that I see it heading in that direction into the town and running on to meet the stream, which is moving in the opposite direction, but not into the town, down into the valley.

There is also another little road which from the valley climbs up this spur where the town is nestled. A little road that is more a path than a road and that runs right along the mountain ridge. Further down, beyond it, the mountain slopes off steeply, with green pastures as far as the foaming little torrent, beyond which there are other pastures assailing other mountains grouped together to the east.

<sup>2</sup>Jesus is coming up from the path along with his disciples. 396. 2  
Not all of them. I see Peter and Andrew, John, and Judas Iscariot. I do not see the others. Jesus is dressed in white and wrapped in a dark blue cloak, more navy blue than a lighter shade. He is bare-headed and is climbing nimbly, alone. Behind, in a group, are the four disciples, who are speaking to one another. Jesus, who is a few meters ahead of them, is not speaking. He is thinking. He is looking around, but never speaking.

At a certain point, the little road runs alongside a low flat wall which marks the boundary of a piece of property (or so it seems to me), as if to keep the earth on this land from sliding down into the valley. Jesus enters this piece of property, with



very well-tended pasture land, on which there are scattered apple and walnut and fig trees. All of them are very well looked after and are already laden with fruit.

Jesus stops for an instant right at the spot where the mountain spur forms a sort of pointed triangle resembling a ship's cutwater. He leans on the wall and looks up and down and around Himself. He waits for the apostles, who are coming up rather slowly, especially Peter. Then, when they are together, He says a few words to them which I do not grasp. I see Him bend slightly to speak, for He is much taller than they are. I do not understand the words, but I sense their meaning, for I see Judas Iscariot heading briskly towards a house rising up at the end of the wall.

It is a house that is quite different from the one in Cana. This one does not have a terrace on the roof, but is crowned with a kind of rounded dome, perhaps to keep the winter snows from building up on the roof, for in this locality the winter must certainly be snowy, or at least very rainy. Instead of the missing terrace, it has a protruding wing on one side, a wing into which the stairs - also outside, but protected by a sort of overhanging roof - lead. This wing has a portico on the ground floor and a covered gallery above. The house is entirely white and stands out against the surrounding greenery. There is a large grass-covered open space in front with a well in the center surrounded by fruit trees which have been placed there with the intention of creating a garden, for little flowers have been planted around them forming circular flowerbeds. I get the impression the house belongs to people who are well off and more refined than the owners of the house in Cana.

The mule track passes in front of the house, which can thus be reached by both the shortcut and the track. The bramble hedge is not an insurmountable barrier, all the more so because the two rustic gates situated in it are barely closed.

<sup>396. 3</sup> <sup>3</sup>Judas uninhibitedly enters the house, as if quite well acquainted with those living there. A blooming mother surrounded by three children and holding the smallest one in her arms comes out at once. Smiling, she goes to meet Jesus, who in the meantime has continued towards the well.

I notice that this woman is very dark in complexion and shapely, about thirty years old. Her hair, quite black and rather

curly, is clasped in two braids surrounding her head. Her eyes are also black and large; her nose, aquiline; and her lips, rather thick and very red. She is tall and well built. I further notice that she is dressed differently from the way Mary and the other women seen in Cana dress. She, too, is wearing a long, light-blue dress which is nearly white, but she is also entirely wrapped in a sort of dark-blue, tightly-clinging shawl which follows the contours of her body. It passes under her armpits on both sides, and one border, the upper one, then bends behind her left shoulder and rises over her head, which it covers with its fringed point as far as her brow. Her overall appearance leads me to think she is not a Galilean, for her physical characteristics and clothing are different from what I have observed in the case of Galilean women.

The small child in her arms is two years old at the most. He is a beautiful child, dressed in a kind of shirt made of white wool. The other children are a little girl about six years old, with very curly, chestnut-blond hair and dressed in light pink, and two smaller boys, also wearing light-blue woolen tunics, like their mother. They must know Jesus very well, for they crowd around Him, laughing.

<sup>4</sup>The young mother greets Him, «Come in, Master, for my <sup>396</sup>.<sup>4</sup> house is yours, » and smiles.

Jesus replies, «May the Lord repay you, » and then extends his right arm - his left arm is bent over his chest, and He is holding back the edge of his cloak - to caress the baby. I see the beautiful hand of my Jesus touching the forehead of the tot, who plays the charmer and, laughing, hides his little head against his mother's neck and from that nesting place looks at Jesus and laughs - he laughs to lure Him to repeat the caress.

Near the well, under an apple tree laden with fruit which is starting to ripen, there is a stone bench, a seat. Jesus sits down there while the woman goes into the house and comes out with a pitcher.

Jesus tells her to let Him hold the child and sits him on his lap while the woman draws water and then comes back with one cup full of water and another with milk and gives them to Jesus; and she selects some ripe apples, passing over those that are still green and offers Him these, too, putting everything on a tray

placed on the bench, alongside Jesus. It is clear that she has previously done so on other occasions. She knows what Jesus likes.

The apostles have followed Jesus and are also drinking under the arcade.

Jesus first drinks the water. He continues to hold the child on his lap and is laughing, for the tot is tugging at his hair and beard. The other three are around Jesus. Jesus takes the apples and hands them one by one to the three older children, and, finally, He, too, takes one and eats it. He has the smallest one drink some of the milk in the cup and then drinks as well. Jesus is content. He is laughing as I have never seen Him laugh.

The girl nestles up to his knees and takes the liberty of resting her head in his lap. Jesus caresses her curls. The two boys, who had gone off on a run, come back - one with a dove clasped to his chest and the other dragging along by the ear a little lamb a few days old that is bleating desperately. They show Jesus their treasures.

Jesus shows interest, but, taking pity on the state of the two poor animals, has the dove handed to Him and, after having admired it, lets it fly off to its nest; and He lifts the little lamb onto the seat, caressing it and keeping it safe until the children's mother returns and takes it back to its spot.

The girl, who has nothing else, bends down and gathers a bouquet of flowers and gives it to Jesus.

396. 5 <sup>5</sup>The Master is a *teacher* with these children, too, and, continuing to hold the youngest in his arms, speaks to the older ones about the flowers: «So beautiful, made by the Heavenly Father, from the biggest to the smallest, the flowers, which, in the eyes of God, are as beautiful as children *when they are good*. And to be good it is necessary to be like flowers, which do no harm to anyone, but, rather, provide fragrance and joy for all and always do the will of the Lord in sprouting where He wills, in blossoming when He wills, and in letting themselves be picked if He so pleases. »

He speaks of the doves: «So faithful to their nests and so clean that they never perch on ugly things, always remembering their homes and loved by God because they are faithful and pure. The children of God must also be like this: like little turtledoves that love the house of the Lord and make their nests of love in it and

that, to be worthy of it, are able to keep themselves pure. »

He speaks of the little lambs: «So meek, so patient, so resigned, that provide wool and milk and meat and let themselves be immolated for our good, giving us such a great example of love and gentleness. The little lambs are loved so much by God that He will call his Son the “Lamb.” The good Lord loves those who are able to keep their souls like lambs until death as his dearest children. »

While Jesus speaks, other children come into the enclosure and form a crowd. And not only children, but there are also adults who listen. There are other mothers, who present the smallest ones and some who are suffering to Jesus so that He will caress them and take them onto his lap for a moment. The older ones approach on their own.

Jesus is surrounded by a brood of children. They are in front of Him, at his sides, on his shoulders, and between his legs. He cannot move. But He is laughing in the midst of that unruly and also rather wrangling hedge. They would all like the first place, and the little masters of the house do not intend to give it up, thereby providing Jesus with the occasion to be a teacher once more: «One must not be selfish even in what is good. I know that you love Me and am glad. I, too, love you, but I will love you more if you now let the others come to Me. A little for each one. Like good brothers and sisters. You are all brothers and sisters and equal in the eyes of God and in my eyes. Indeed, those who are obedient and loving towards their companions are the ones most loved by Me and by God. » 396. 6

The swarm, to show that... it is obedient and loving, withdraws at once. *They are all good!* Jesus laughs.

But the innocent swarm then returns. It returns in spite of the mothers - and especially the disciples - who do not like so much disrespectful invasiveness. Judas Iscariot is the most intransigent; John, the least. He has sat down on the grass and is laughing, too, surrounded by children. But Judas is frowning and grumbling. Peter is also complaining.

But the children, pressing in around Jesus, pay no attention. They look defiantly at the grumblers, and only respect for Jesus stops them from making faces at the two. They feel protected by Jesus, who has opened his arms and drawn to Himself as many

children as He can: a bouquet of live flowers.

There are children who show Jesus toys... that are broken. And Jesus, with a little piece of a branch, replaces the axle for the wheels of a small cart and, with a short cord and a piece of wood as reinforcement, repairs the leg of a wooden horse which a dark-complexioned boy shows Him. There are shepherd boys who, having left their flocks along the way for a moment (dusk is now setting in), approach Jesus, who caresses and blesses them. One of them brings a little wounded ewe lamb to Jesus, who, not wanting his young friend to be scolded by his master, stops her bleeding and gives her back to him.

396. 7 <sup>7</sup>A mother comes in and elbows her way through. She is holding a pale, sick child in her arms. The child is very ill, entirely desolate on the mother's breast. Jesus, who has already touched other infirm children presented to Him by their mothers, opens his arms and rests the half-dead child on his lap. The mother, in tears, implores Him.

Jesus listens to her and looks at her. He then gazes at the poor little child, bone-thin and pale. He caresses and kisses the child, whom He rocks a bit because the tot is crying. The boy - or girl (I do not know which because the child's hair extends down to his or her ears) - opens his eyes and looks at Jesus with a sad smile. Jesus speaks to him slowly. I do not understand what He is saying because it is spoken in a whisper. The sick child continues to smile.

Jesus gives him back to his weeping mother and looks steadily at her with his commanding eyes: «Woman, have faith. Tomorrow morning your child will play together with these others. Go in peace. » And He makes another gesture of blessing over the pale little face.

396. 8 <sup>8</sup>And here, o Father! And here I seem to be drawing near my Jesus and asking Him, «Master, what is there in your hand which makes everything that touches it be repaired or healed or changed in appearance? »

A very silly question, it's true, but my Jesus answers it with divine goodness: «Nothing, daughter, except the liquid of my *im-mense love*. Look at my hand. Observe it. » And He extends his right hand to me.

I take it with veneration, with my fingertips, on my finger-

tips. I do not dare to do anything else, while my heart is beating very forcefully. I have never touched Jesus. I have been touched by Him, but I never dared to. I am now touching Him. I feel the warmth of his fingers. I feel his smooth skin, his very long fingernails (long not in terms of jutting out, but in their shape in the last phalanx). I see his long, slender fingers and his markedly concave palm. I notice that his metacarpus is much shorter than his fingers. I observe the embroidery of his veins where his wrist begins.

With benignity Jesus lets me hold his hand. He is now standing, and I am kneeling. I thus do not see his face, but I feel He is smiling because the smile is in his voice:

«You see, soul that I love, that there is nothing. My years of work have left Me an ability to repair children's toys, and I use this ability of mine because it, too, serves to attract to Myself the creatures whom I love: children. My humanity, which remembers that it has been a worker, works in this. My divinity works in the other aspect of healing sick children, just as I heal sick toys and little lambs.

I have nothing *except my love and my power as God*. And I pour it upon no one with so much joy as upon these innocent ones, whom I give you as a model to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. I rest in their midst. They are simple and frank. And I, who am the Betrayed One and am filled with disgust by those who betray, find peace in the company of these, who are unable to betray; and I, who will be the One distrusted by so many, find joy in the company of these, who are unable to distrust. And I, who will be denied by those who, with adult reflection, think of getting out of harm's way in stormy hours, find comfort in the company of these, who believe in Me, without giving thought to whether good or evil may come to them from this believing. They believe because they love Me.

You, too, must be like a child. Like one of these, and you shall have the Kingdom of Heaven, which opens under the impatient push of Jesus, who is burning to have at his side those whom He has most loved because they have loved Him most.

Go in peace, now. I caress you like one of these little ones to make you happy. Go in peace. »

<sup>9</sup>Note that the vision came while, disgusted by a rude reply

396. 9

(not the first one today), I was weeping in discouragement and desolation, full of regret and repugnance over what I observe in the hearts of others. The vision calmed me from the outset and then brought me gladness. But when I later was able to have the joy of feeling Jesus' fingers, I felt the sweetness of ecstasy overwhelming all bitterness.

I look at my writing hand, which conserves the sensation of having touched Jesus' hand, and it seems holy to me, like something which has touched a relic. Blessed be my Jesus!

### **397. The farewell speech to the followers of Juttah.**

5<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

397. 1 <sup>1</sup>Jesus is speaking to the people of Juttah on a quiet morning. Oh! one can really say that the whole of Juttah is at His feet. Little shepherds, who are generally scattered on the slopes of mountains are also there with their sheep, at the edge of the crowd. Also those who usually go elsewhere, to fields, woods, markets, are there. Decrepit old people are there, and close to Jesus there are smiling children, and young girls, and new brides, and women about to give birth to a child, and those giving their children suck are all there. The whole of Juttah.

The mountain spur projecting southwards is the amphitheatre where the tranquil people are gathered. Sitting on the grass or sitting astride a low dry-stone wall, with the wide horizon around, the boundless sky above, the torrent below, which shines and smiles in the morning sunshine, the beautiful green woody mountains rising all around, the people of Juttah are listening to the Master, Who is speaking, standing against a very tall walnut-tree, His white linen garment outstanding against the dark tree-trunk, smiling, His eyes sparkling with the joy of being loved, His hair lit up by the caresses of sunbeams from the east. In the respectful heedful silence broken only by the twittering of birds and the torrent gurgling below, His words descend slowly into hearts, and His perfect voice fills the quiet air with its harmony.

While I am writing, He is repeating once again that it is necessary to comply with the Decalogue, perfected by His doctrine

of love in its application to hearts «to build in souls the abode where the Lord will dwell until those who have lived keeping the Law faithfully go to live in Him in the Kingdom of Heaven» He says. And He goes on:

«Because it is so. The inhabitation of God in men and of men in God is accomplished through obedience to His Law, which begins with a precept of love and is all love from the first to the last precept of the Decalogue. That is the true abode that God wants and in which God dwells, and the reward in Heaven, achieved through obedience to the Law, is the true Home in which you will live with God forever. Because - remember Isaiah's 66<sup>th</sup> chapter - God does not dwell on the Earth, which is only a footstool for His immensity, and His throne is Heaven, which is too small, a mere nothing, to contain the Infinite, but His abode is in the hearts of men. Only the most perfect goodness of the Father of all love can grant His children to receive Him, and it is an infinite mystery, which becomes more and more perfect, that the One and Trine God, the most pure Triform Spirit may be in the hearts of men. Oh! Holy Father, when will You allow Me to make of these people who love You, not just a temple for Our Spirit, but, through Your perfection of love and forgiveness, a tabernacle, so that each faithful heart may become an ark, in which the true Bread of Heaven will dwell, as it did in the womb of the Blessed Mother amongst all women?

<sup>397. 2</sup> Oh! dearest disciples of Juttah who were prepared for Me by a just soul, bear in mind the Prophet and what he says, as it is the Lord Who speaks, addressing those who build empty temples of stone, in which there is no justice or love, and they cannot build in themselves the throne of their Lord by obeying His commands. The Prophet says: "What house will you build Me, what place could you make for My rest? ". And He means: "Do you think that you can possess Me just because you build poor walls for Me? Do you think that you give Me joy by means of your false practices, which are not supported by a holy life? ". No. God cannot be possessed through vain appearances that conceal sores and emptiness, like a golden mantle thrown on a leper or on a clay statue, which is empty inside, without the life of the soul. And the Lord, the Master of the world, confessing that He is a poor King with too few subjects and a poor Father of too many



children who have run away from His residence, says: "To whom shall I turn My eyes, if not to the man of humble and contrite spirit, who trembles at My word? ". Why does he tremble? Only with fear of God? No. With deep respect and true love. Because he is a humble subject and son, who says and acknowledges that the Lord is Everything while he is nothing, and he trembles with emotion feeling that he is loved, forgiven and supported by the Lord Who is Everything.

Oh! do not look for God among proud people! He is not there. Do not look for Him among hard-hearted people. He is not there. Do not look for Him among unrepentant souls. He is not there. He is with the simple, the pure, the merciful, the poor in spirit, the meek people, with those who weep without cursing, with those who seek justice, with those who are persecuted, with peaceful souls. God is there. He is in those who repent and desire forgiveness and seek expiation. And none of these offer the sacrifice of a bull or a sheep or any other oblation, to be praised or from superstitious terror of punishment or motives of pride, that they might appear perfect. But they offer the sacrifice of their contrite and humbled hearts, if they are sinners; of their hearts obedient to the point of heroism, if they are just. That is what the Lord likes. Those are the offerings for which He grants Himself with His ineffable treasures of love and supernatural delights. He does not give Himself to the others. They already have their poor trite delights, and it is useless for God to call them to His ways, because they have already chosen their own. He will let them have nothing but neglect, fear and punishment, because they have not replied to the Lord, they have not obeyed, they have done evil in the eyes of God contemptuously and wickedly.

397. 3 <sup>3</sup>But you, beloved people of Juttah, who tremble with love in the knowledge of God, will be happy, whilst the others will be put to shame. Because you have been sneered at like fools by the mighty ones, and notwithstanding their mockery you have persisted in loving Me. Because you have been rejected because of My Name, and you will be rejected even more in future, nay, you will be disowned as outcasts of Israel, unacceptable to God, whereas the scion of eternal Life is grafted into you and into people like you, the scion of Him Who is rooted in the Father, and you are therefore part of God, living on His sap. And yet peo-

pie would like to convince you that you are in error and in your eyes, simple but enlightened by Grace, they would like to justify themselves in order not to appear impious and evil-doers. Because it was said to you: “Let the Lord show His glory and we shall acknowledge Him as joyfully as you do”. They will be confused.

Oh! I can already hear the vipers say, after the tumult in which they will be crushed without becoming any better, and they will cease being harmful only when their execrable heads are trodden on, and they will bite and kill even when they are broken into two and only their heads emerge after an overwhelming manifestation of God, I can already hear them shout: “How can the Lord have given birth to his new people all of a sudden; if we, who have been so long in His womb, are not yet born to Light? Can a woman be delivered of a child before filling the house with the cries of throes? Can the Lord have given birth before His time was due? Can the Earth give birth in one day and can the people of a country be born all together? ”.

This is My reply and remember it to give it to those who will persecute you scoffing at you: “Those who are dead fruit in the womb of God could never have been born to Light, because they became detached from the matrix and thus dried up remaining inert like something evil concealed in the womb, instead of being developing embryos. And to eject the dead seed from His womb and have children, so that His Name might not die on the Earth, God became prolific of new children, marked with His Tau and secretly and silently, so that Satan and his followers serving Lucifer could not be harmful, He gave birth to His Son before time, due to passionate love, and at the same time He gives birth to His new people, because the Lord can do everything”. Oh! He puts these words into the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: “Shall I not be able to bring forth, I who make other people give birth? Shall I be sterile, I who make other people prolific? ”.

Rejoice with the Jerusalem of Heaven, be glad with her, all you who love the Lord! Rejoice with her, you who are waiting, hoping and suffering!

<sup>4</sup>Oh! Come back to Me, words! Words spoken by the Word of <sup>397. 4</sup> God. Words spoken by the mouthpiece of God: Isaiah, His prophet. Come back to the Source, o eternal words, to be spread on this

flower-bed of God, on this flock, on this offspring! Oh! Come! This is one of the hours and of the meetings for which you were given, o prophetic words, sounds of love and voices of truth! Here they are! They are coming back to Him Who inspired them! I now repeat them, in the name of the Father, of My Being, and of the Spirit, to these people beloved by God, chosen among the flock of God, which was to consist entirely of lambs, and became corrupted with rams and even with more unclean animals. You will be suckled and filled from the breast of Divine Consolation and you will savour with delight the multifarious glory of God.

The Lord says to you: I will send towards you flowing peace, like a river, and like a stream in spate, a greater glory than that of the nations. The glory of Heaven will flood you. You will suck it, carried at His breast and you will be fondled in His lap. Yes, as a mother caresses her child, as I am fondling this little boy, whom I gave My name (and Jesus takes little Jesai from the arms of his mother, who is almost at His feet with her three children), so I will console you who love Me and will continue to love Me and you will soon be comforted forever in My Kingdom. You will see it and your hearts will be delighted, and your bones will re-vive like fresh grass, you who are free from fear because you are faithful to Me, when the Lord comes in a coach of fire like a whirlwind to lead souls in the fire of love and justice, to punish or to praise, separating lambs from wolves, that is, from those who thought that they were sanctifying themselves and becoming pure, whereas they were becoming idolaters.

The Lord, Who is now departing, will come back and blessed are those whom He will find persevering until the end. This is My farewell and My blessing. Kneel down that I may fortify you by it. May the Lord bless you and protect you. May He show His face to you and have mercy on you. May the Lord give you His peace. Go! Allow Me to take leave of the good people among the good inhabitants of Juttah. »

<sup>397. 5</sup> <sup>5</sup>The people go away reluctantly. But when a boy is the first to say: «Lord, allow me to kiss Your hand», and Jesus agrees, everybody wishes to kiss the holy body of the Lamb of God, and those who had already gone away towards the village, come back, and children kiss His cheeks, old people His hands, and women his bare feet on the grass, weeping and uttering words of

farewell and blessings.

Jesus receives them patiently and bids each of them goodbye.

At last they have all been satisfied... Only the hospitable family is left... And they gather round Jesus. And Sarah says: «Will You really not come back again? »

«No, woman. Never again. But we shall not be separated. My love will always be with you and your family, and yours with Me. You will not forget Me, I know. But I say to you: even in the most dreadful hours which are to come, do not welcome Falsehood, not even as a guest passing through or a sudden invader... Give me the baby, Sarah »

The woman hands Jesai to Him and Jesus sits on the grass with the child in His lap and He speaks with His face bent over the head of the little boy: «Always remember that I am the Lamb, Whom Isaac taught you to love even before you became acquainted with Me. And that a lamb is always innocent, like this child, even if they wrap it in the skin of a wolf to make it look like an evil-doer. Remember that I am even more innocent than this baby... who, fortunate fellow! because of his innocence and age will not be able to understand the slander of men about his Lord and, therefore will not be upset by it... and he will continue to love Me thus,... as now... Have hearts like his, for the Lamb, the Friend, the Innocent One, the Saviour, Who loves you and blesses you in a very special manner. Goodbye, Mary! Come and give Me a kiss... Goodbye, Immanuel! Come here as well... Goodbye, Jesai, little lamb of the Lamb... Be good... Love Me... »

«Are You weeping, Lord!? » asks the little girl who is surprised seeing a tear shine on Jesai's hair.

«Is He weeping? » asks Sarah's husband.

«Are You weeping, Master! Why? » asks the woman.

«Do not grieve at My tears. They are love and blessing... Goodbye, Sarah. Goodbye, man. Come, like the others, to kiss your departing Friend... » and after the two have kissed His hands, He puts the baby in his mother's arms, He blesses once again and then He quickly begins to descend the same road by which He came up.

He is followed by the farewell greetings of those who remained: by the deep voice of the man, the moved one of the woman, the trilling cries of the children, down to the foot of the hill.

Then only the torrent, on which He walks upstream northwards,  
greeted the Master, Who leaves the land of Juttah for good.

### **398. The farewell speech in Hebron and the illusions of Judas Iscariot.**

7<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

398. 1 <sup>1</sup>And here is Hebron in the middle of mountains covered with forests and meadows. On entering the town Jesus is greeted with cries of hosanna by the first people who see Him, some of whom run away to give the news to the whole village. The head of the synagogue, those who were miraculously cured the previous year and the notables, all rush towards Him. Everyone wishes to have the Lord as his guest.

But Jesus, thanking them all, says: «I am only stopping long enough to speak to you... So let us go to the poor holy house of the Baptist, so that I may pay My respects to it as well... It is the land of miracles. You are not aware. »

«Oh! We are, Master. The people who were cured are among us!... » say many.

«Long before last year it was the land of miracles. The first time was thirty-three years ago, when the Grace of the Lord revived the withered womb to make it the tree that bore the sweet apple of My Precursor. And it was thirty-two years ago, when by mysterious deed, I presanctified him, while he and I were two fruits maturing in deep wombs. And then again, when I loosened the tongue of John's father. But a great miracle of two years, ago, of which none of you is aware, is to be added to the secret deeds of the not yet born Incarnate. Do you remember the woman who lived in there?... »

«Who? Aglae? » ask many.

«Yes. I revived her, not her womb, but her soul withered by paganism and sin, and I made her prolific of justice, freeing her from her fetters, as I was assisted by her goodwill. And I propose her to you as a model. Do not be scandalised. I solemnly tell you that she is to be held up as an example to be imitated, because few people in Israel have gone as far as the heathen and sinner to reach the sources of God. »

«We thought that she had gone away with other lovers... Some people said that she had changed and had become good... But we said: “It’s a whim of hers! ”. There were also some people who said that she had come to You... to sin... » explains the head of the synagogue.

«She did come to Me. But to be redeemed. »

«We committed a sin of rash judgement... »

«That is why I say: “Do not judge”. »

«And where is she now? »

«God only knows. She is certainly doing severe penance. Pray to support her... I greet you, o holy house of My Relative and Precursor! Peace to you! Although you are now alone and desolate, may peace always be with you, o holy dwelling of peace and faith! » Jesus goes in, blessing the garden, which has become wild and He walks along what once were pergolas or tidy laurel or box espaliers and which are now ruffled clusters of plants oppressed by twining ivy, clematis and convulvi. He goes to the end, where are the remains of the sepulchre, and stops there.

<sup>2</sup>The people crowd around Him silently and orderly.

398. 2

«Children of God, people of Hebron, listen! I have come to confirm and fortify you in your faith, so that you may not be upset and deceived in judging your Saviour, as you were with regards to the woman who lived here in sin. I have come to give you the viaticum of My word, so that it may shine brightly in you in the hour of darkness and Satan may not make you lose the way to Heaven.

Before long your hearts will moan the words of the psalm of Asaph\*, the poet prophet, and you will say: “Why, o God, have You rejected us for good? Why are You raging at the flock You used to pasture? ”, and then you will really be able to raise the already accomplished Redemption as a right of protection, and shout: “This is Your people whom You redeemed! ” to implore protection against the enemies, who will have done all sorts of evil in the true Sanctuary where God is as in Heaven, in the Christ of the Lord, and after prostrating the Holy One, they will strive to demolish His wall: His believers. True desecrators and persecutors of God, worse than Nebuchadnezzar and

\* psalm of Asaph is the *Psalms* 74.

Antiochus\* and all future persecutors, they are already raising their hands to knock Me down in their limitless pride, which does not want to be converted and does not want to have faith, charity, justice, and like yeast in a heap of flour, it swells and overflows from the Sanctuary, which has become the citadel of the enemies of God.

Children, listen! When they will persecute you for loving Me, fortify your hearts considering that I was persecuted before you. Remember that they already have in their throats howling cries of triumph, and they are preparing flags to wave them in the hour of victory, and on each flag there will be a lie against Me, and I shall seem the Defeated One', the Evil-Doer, the Cursed One.

398. 3 <sup>3</sup>Are you shaking your heads? Do you not believe Me? Your love is preventing you from believing... Love is a great thing! A great strength... and a great danger! Yes, danger. *The impact of realities in the hour of darkness will be violent in a superhuman way in the hearts which love, not yet perfectly settled, blinds.* You cannot believe that I, the King, the Powerful One, can beat the mercy of nonentities. Above all, you will not be able to believe it later, and the doubt will arise: "Was it really Him? And if it was, how could He be defeated? "

Strengthen your hearts for that hour! Remember that if "in a moment" the enemies of the Holy One have knocked the doors down, demolishing everything, and set the fire of hatred to the Word of God, if they have pulled down the Tabernacle of the Most Holy Name, saying in their hearts: "Let us stop all the feasts of God on the Earth", because it is a feast to have God among you, and saying: "Let His insignia never be seen again, let there be no prophet who knows what we are", He Who gave the sea its boundaries and crushed the filthy heads of the sacred crocodiles and of their worshippers in the waters, He Who opened springs and torrents and dried up inexhaustible rivers, He Who is the master of day and night, of summer and springtime, of life and death, *of everything*, will make His Christ rise quickly, even more quickly, as it is written, and He will be King forever. And those who have been firm in their faith will reign

\* worse than Nebuchadnezzar, as narrated in *Daniel 1-4*; and Antiochus, as narrated in: *1 Maccabees 6, 1-16; 2 Maccabees 1, 11-17; 9; Daniel 11, 21-45.*

with Him in Heaven.

Remember that. And when you see Me raised and scorned, do not vacillate. And when you will be raised and despised, do not vacillate.

<sup>4</sup>Oh! Father! My Father! On behalf of these people, who are dear to You and to Me, I implore You. Hear Your Word, listen to the Propitiator! Do not leave to wild beasts the souls of those who praise You by loving Me, do not forget forever the souls of Your little children. Remember Your promises, O good God, because the dark places of the Earth are haunts of wickedness from which terror comes out to frighten Your little ones. Father! Oh! My Father! Do not let the humble who hope in You go away confused! Let the poor and the needy praise Your Name because of the assistance You will give them! Rise, O God! I implore You for that hour, for those hours! Rise, O God! For the sake of the sacrifice of John and of the holiness of Your patriarchs and prophets! For the sake of My sacrifice, O Father, defend this flock of Yours and Mine! Grant them light in darkness, faith and strength against seducers! Grant them Yourself, Father! Give them Us, now, tomorrow and always, until they enter Your Kingdom! Let Us be in their hearts until they will be forever and ever where We are. Amen. » 398. 4

And since there are no miracles to be worked, Jesus walks through the almost ecstatic crowds blessing His listeners one by one. And He resumes His journey in the sun, which is already high but is made tolerable by leafy trees and the cool mountain air.

<sup>5</sup>Behind Him, in a group, the apostles are talking. They are speaking eagerly to one another. 398. 5

«What sermons! They make one shudder! » says Bartholomew. «But how sad they are! They make you weep! » says Andrew with a sigh.

«Eh! It's His farewell. I am right. He is really moving towards His throne» exclaims Judas Iscariot.

«Throne! H'm! I think He refers to persecutions rather than honours! » remarks Peter.

«Not at all! The time of persecutions is over! Ah! I am happy! » shouts the Iscariot.

«You are lucky! I would like to be back in the days when we



were not known, two years ago... or at the Clear Water... I tremble thinking of future days... » says John.

«Because you are faint-hearted... But I! I already see the future... Processions!... Singers!... People prostrated!... Homage by other countries!... Oh! It's time! Camels will really come from Midian\* and crowds from everywhere... and there will be a multitude... not just the three poor Wise Men... Israel as great as Rome... Greater than Rome... The glory of the Maccabees, of Solomon... all glories will be exceeded... He... the King of kings... and we... His friends... Oh! Most High God! Who will give me strength for that hour?... I wish my father were still alive!... » Judas is elated. He is bright evoking the future which he dreams of living.

398. 6 «Jesus is far ahead. But He stops. The future king according to Judas, is thirsty and cups His hands to get some water from a little stream, and drink... like a bird or a grazing lamb. He then turns round and says: «There are some wild fruits here. Let us pick some to appease our appetite... »

«Are You hungry, Master? » asks the Zealot.

«Yes, I am» Jesus confesses humbly.

«No wonder! You gave everything to that poor wretch yesterday evening! » exclaims Peter.

«But why did You not want to stop at Hebron? » asks Philip.

«Because God calls Me elsewhere. You do not know. »

The apostles shrug their shoulders and begin to pick the sour fruits of wild plants scattered over the mountain slopes. They look like tiny wild apples. And the King of kings feeds on them with His companions, who make wry faces because of the sourness of the wild unripe fruit. Jesus, engrossed in thought, eats and smiles.

«You almost make me angry! » exclaims Peter.

«Why? »

«Because You could have been comfortable and the people of Hebron would have been happy, instead You are ruining Your stomach and teeth with this poison, which is more bitter and sour than grass dressed with vitriol. »

«Oh! I have you who love Me! When I am raised and I am hun-

\* Camels... Midian, as in: *Isaiah 60, 6.*

gry and thirsty, I will think with longing desire of this hour, of this food, of you who are now with Me, and who then... »

«But you will be neither hungry nor thirsty then! A king has everything! And we will be even closer to You! » exclaims the Is-carriot.

«You say so. »

«And do You think that that will not happen, Master? » asks Bartholomew.

«No, Bartholomew. When I saw you under the fig-tree\*, its fruit was so sour that any man who had eaten of it, would have had his tongue and throat scorched... But the sour fruit of a fig-tree or of these plants is sweeter than a honeycomb compared to what My accession will be for Me... Let us go... » and He sets forth again, ahead of everybody, meditating, while the apostles behind Him whisper...

### **399. The farewell speech in Bethzur and maternal love of Eliza.**

9<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

<sup>1</sup>It is hardly daybreak when the untiring walkers arrive in <sup>399. 1</sup>sight of Bethzur. Tired as they are, with their garments creased after an uncomfortable rest in a wood, they look at the little town now close at hand with joy, as they are sure that they will find hospitality there.

The peasants going to work are the first to meet Jesus, and they wisely think that it is better to forget about their work and go back to town to listen to the Master. And some shepherds do likewise after asking whether He is going to stop in town.

«I will leave Bethzur in the evening» replies Jesus.

«And are You going to speak, Master? »

«Certainly. »

«When? »

«At once. »

«We have our flocks... Could You not speak here, in the country? The sheep would graze and we would not miss Your word. »

\* under the fig-tree, in 50. 6.

«Follow Me. I will speak in the pastures north of the town. I must see Eliza first. »

With their sticks the shepherds make the sheep turn back and they follow the men with their bleating flocks. They go through the town.

399. 2 <sup>2</sup>But the news has already reached Eliza's house. And it is in the square before the house that Eliza and Anastasica pay their homage of disciples to the Master, Who blesses them.

«Come into my house, Lord. You relieved it of distress and now its inhabitants and everything in it wish to be of comfort to You» says Eliza.

«Yes, Eliza. But do you see how many people are following us? I will now speak to everybody and later, after the third hour, I will come and stay in your house, and I will depart in the evening. And we will be able to talk to each other... » promises Jesus to console Eliza, who was hoping He would be staying longer and thus looks disappointed hearing Jesus' intentions.

But Eliza is a good disciple and does not object. She only asks to be allowed to give instructions to the servants, before following Jesus. And she does so quickly. She is quite different from the inert woman of the previous year.

Jesus is standing in a large meadow on which the sun filters joyfully through the light leaves of forest-trees, which, if I am not mistaken, are ash-trees, and He is curing a boy and an old man, the former suffering from some internal disease, the latter from eye trouble. There are no other sick people, and Jesus blesses the little ones offered by their mothers, while waiting patiently for Eliza and Anastasica. They arrive at last.

399. 3 <sup>3</sup>Jesus begins to speak at once.

«People of Bethzur, listen. Last year I told you\* what is to be done to gain the Kingdom of God. I now wish to confirm it, so that you may not lose what you have earned. This is the last time that the Master speaks to you thus, in a meeting where no one is missing. Hereafter I may meet you by chance, one at a time, or in small groups, along the roads of our earthly fatherland. Later, much later, I will be able to see you in My Kingdom. But it will never be like this.

\* I told you, in 209. 5/7. The following speech appears to be based on *Isaiah 43*.

In the future you will be told many things about Me, against Me, about yourselves and against yourselves. They will try to terrorise you. I say to you with Isaiah: do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you and I have called you by your name. Only those who abandon Me, will have reason to fear. Not those, who being faithful, are Mine. Be not afraid! You are Mine and I am yours. Neither the waters of rivers, nor the fire of stakes, nor stones, nor swords will be able to separate you from Me, if you persevere in Me, on the contrary, fire, water, swords and stones will join you to Me more and more and you will be like Me and will receive My reward. I will be with you in the hours of torture, in your trials, I will be with you until the hour of death; and afterwards nothing will be able to separate us.

Oh! My people! People whom I have called and gathered, whom I will call and gather even more when I am raised, drawing everything to Me, O chosen people, holy people, do not be afraid, because I am and will be with you and you will announce Me and will be therefore called My ministers, and I will give you, nay, I give you now, the order to speak to the north, south, east and west, to make everybody become the children of God, also those at the farthest borders of the world, so that everybody may recognize Me as their King and invoke Me by My true Name, and may partake of the glory for which they were created and may be the glory of Him Who created them and perfected them! Isaiah says that tribes and nations will invoke witnesses of My glory in order to believe. And where shall I find witnesses if the Temple and the Royal Palace, and the mighty castes hate Me and lie because they do not want to say that I am Who I am? Where shall I find them? Here are, My God, My witnesses! These people to whom I taught the Law, whose bodies and souls I cured, who were blind and now see, were deaf and now hear, were dumb and now can pronounce Your Name, these who were oppressed and have been freed, all these people to whom Your Word has been Light, Truth, Way and Life. You are My witnesses, servants chosen by Me that you may understand and believe and know that it is I.

<sup>399. 4</sup>  
4I am the Lord, the Saviour. Believe that for your own welfare. Apart from Me there is no other Saviour. Believe that regardless of human or satanic innuendoes. Forget everything else

which you might have been told by a mouth that is not Mine and which differs from My word. Reject everything else which you may be told in the future. To anybody wishing you to abjure the Christ say: "His works speak to our souls" and persevere in your faith. I have done much to give you an intrepid faith. I cured your sick people and relieved your sorrows, I taught you like a good Master, I listened to you like a Friend, I broke bread with you and shared drinks with you. But those are still the deeds of a saint and a prophet. But I will work more and such deeds that will remove every doubt which darkness may raise, as a whirlwind raises stormy clouds in a clear summer sky. Let the cloud go by remaining firm in your love for your Jesus, for this Jesus Who left the Father to come and save you and Who will give His life to give you Health.

You, whom I loved and I still love more than Myself, because there is no greater love than sacrificing oneself for the sake of those whom one loves, must not be inferior to those who in the prophecy of Isaiah are called wild beasts, dragons and ostriches, that is, heathens, idolaters, pagans, unclean people. Because when by Myself I witness the power of My love and of My Nature, defeating even Death by Myself - which is something that can be verified and no one will be able to deny, unless one is falsehood personified - they will say: "He was the Son of God!" and overcoming obstacles, apparently insurmountable, of centuries and centuries of filthy paganism, of darkness, of vice, they will come to the Light, to the Source, to Life. Do not be like too many in Israel who do not offer Me holocausts, who do not honour Me with sacrifices, on the contrary they trouble Me with their iniquity and victimise Me with their hard hearts, and to My forgiving love they reply with their deceitful hatred, which undermines the ground to make Me fall and thus be able to say: "See? He fell because God struck Him".

Citizens of Bethzur, be strong. Love My word, because it is true, and love My Sign, because it is holy. May the Lord be always with you and may you be with the servants of the Lord, all together, so that each of you may be where I am going and an eternal abode may be made in Heaven for all those who, after overcoming affliction and winning the battle, die in the Lord and rise in the Lord forever! »

<sup>5</sup>«Lord, what do You mean? There are cries of triumph and cries of sorrow in Your words! » say some citizens. <sup>399. 5</sup>

«Yes. You are like one who is surrounded by his enemies» other people remark.

«And You almost infer that we shall be, too» others say.

«What is there in Your future, Lord? » ask some.

«Glory! » shouts Judas of Kerioth.

«Death! » whispers Eliza sighing and weeping.

«Redemption. The fulfilment of My mission. Be not afraid. Do not weep. Love Me. I am happy to be the Redeemer. Come, Eliza. Let us go to your house... » and He is the first to set out, squeezing through the crowd, which is upset by contrasting emotions.

«But why, Lord, do You always deliver such speeches? » asks Judas grumbling and reproaching. And he adds: «They do not befit a king. »

Jesus does not reply to him. He instead replies to His cousin James who asks Him, with tears shining in his eyes: «Brother, why do You always quote passages of the Bible in Your farewell speeches? »

«So that those accusing Me may not say that I talk nonsense or I blaspheme, and those who do not want to yield to the reality of facts may realize that from the very beginning Revelation has always shown Me as the King of a Kingdom that is *not human*, but is intended, built and cemented by the immolation of the Victim, of the only Victim capable of re-creating the Kingdom of Heaven, destroyed by Satan and the First Parents. Pride, hatred, falsehood, lust, disobedience destroyed it. Humbleness, obedience, love, purity, sacrifice will rebuild it... Do not weep, woman. Those whom you love and who are waiting, are pining for the hour of My immolation... »

<sup>6</sup>«They enter the house and while the apostles are busy refreshing themselves and appeasing their appetite, Jesus goes into the tidy flowery garden with Eliza, who says to Him: «Master, I am the only one who knows that Johanna wants to speak to You secretly. She sent Jonathan to me. He said: “For very serious matters”. Not even the daughter You gave me - and may You be blessed for Your gift - knows about it. Johanna sent servants everywhere looking for You. But they could not find You... » <sup>399. 6</sup>

«I was very far away, and I would have gone even farther, if

My spirit had not urged Me to come back... Eliza, you will come with Me and the Zealot to Johanna's. The others will remain here for two days' rest and then they will come to Bether. You will come back here with Jonathan. »

«Yes, my Lord... » Eliza looks at Him with motherly love, she scans His face. She cannot help saying: «Are You suffering? »

Jesus shakes His head and although His gesture is not denial it is a clear sign of depression.

«I am a mother... You are my God... but... Oh! my Lord! What do You think Johanna wants? You have been speaking of death, and I understood because in the Temple the virgins often read the Scriptures which mention You Saviour, and I remember those words. You were speaking of death and Your face was shining with heavenly joy... But it is not shining now... Mary was like a daughter to me... and You are Her Son... So, if it is not a sin to say so, I see You somehow as my son... Your Mother is far away... But a mother is beside You. Blessed Son of God, can I not relieve Your grief? »

«You are already relieving it, because You love Me. What do I think about what Johanna wants to tell Me? My life is like this rosery. You good women disciples are the roses. But if you take the roses away, what is left? Thorns... »

«But we will remain with You until death. »

«That is true. Until death! And the Father will bless you for the comfort you give Me. Let us go home and rest. At sunset we will leave for Bether. »

#### **400. In Bether in the estate of Johanna of Chuza. Harmful effects of an encounter between the Iscariot and Claudia.**

12<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

400. 1 <sup>1</sup>Jesus, followed by the Zealot who is leading by the reins the little donkey on which Eliza is riding, knocks at the door of the keeper at Bether. They have not taken the same road as the last time and they have arrived at Johanna's estate from the village spread on the western slopes of the mountain on which the castle rises.

The keeper, who recognizes the Lord, hastens to open the

gate wide, which is beside his little house and lets you into to the garden before the residence and is the beginning of the land of dreams, that is, of the rose gardens of Johanna. A strong scent of fresh roses and of attar of roses stagnates in the warm air at twilight and when the first evening breeze blows from the east causing the rose-bushes to undulate, the scent becomes stronger, fresher and more genuine, because it comes from the hillocks planted with rosarium and it overwhelms the heavy smell of the essence coming from a low wide shed placed against the western wall of the estate.

The keeper says: «My mistress is over there. She goes there every evening, where the workers, who pluck the flowers and make the essence, gather. She speaks to them, asks them questions, cures them and comforts them. Oh! our mistress is good. She has always been. But... since she has been Your disciple... I will call her now... This is a very busy time and the usual workers are not enough, although since Passover she has taken on new servants and maidservants. Wait here, Lord... »

«No, I will go to her. May God bless you and give you peace» says Jesus raising His hand to bless the old keeper, to whom He has been listening patiently. And He goes towards the low wide shed.

<sup>2</sup>The noise of His steps on the hard ground makes Matthias - a rather curious little boy - look out and rush out with a cry, arms outstretched, inviting and desiring an embrace. «Jesus is here! Jesus is here!» he shouts while running. And when he is already in the arms of the Lord, Who kisses him, Johanna looks out from the middle of her servants. 400. 2

«The Lord!» she shouts, too, and falls on her knees on the spot to venerate Him at once. She prostrates herself and then stands up, with her face tinged purple with emotion, like the petal of a bright rose. She then moves towards Jesus. And she stoops to kiss His feet.

«Peace to you, Johanna. Did you want Me? I have come. »

«Yes, I wanted You, Lord... » Johanna turns pale and serious. Jesus notices it. «Stand up, Johanna. Is Chuza well? »

«Yes, my Lord. »

«And little Mary, whom I do not see here? »

«Also, Lord... She has gone with Esther to take some medi-



cines to a servant who is ill. »

«Is that why you called Me? »

«No Lord... It was for... You. » Johanna clearly does not want to speak in the presence of all the people who have crowded round them.

Jesus understands and says: «All right. Let us go and see your roseries... »

«You must be tired, Lord. You will have to eat... You must be thirsty... »

«No. During the hot hours we stopped in the house of disciples of the shepherds. I am not tired... »

«Let us go then... Jonathan, prepare everything for the Lord and for those who are with Him... Come down, Matthias... » she orders the steward, who is standing respectfully beside her, and the little boy, who has cuddled in Jesus' arms, resting his dark-haired head in the hollow of Jesus' neck, like a little dove under its father's wing. The boy sighs heavily, but he hastens to obey.

But Jesus says: «No. He will come with us and will give us no trouble. He will be the little angel in whose presence nothing scandalous can be said or done and will thus prevent the least suspicion from arising in anybody's heart. Let us go... »

«Master, shall Eliza and I go into the house, or do You want us to come with You? » asks the Zealot.

«You may go. »

<sup>400. 3</sup> Johanna leads Jesus along the wide avenue, which divides the garden towards the roseries that climb up and down the opposite slopes of her flowery estate. And she proceeds further, as if she wished to stand aloof where there are only rose-bushes, trees and little birds among the branches, in their last quarrels to find a place where to sleep or preparing their nestlings for the night. The roses which this evening are closed buds and will open tomorrow and be cut with shears, smell sweetly before resting in the dew. They stop in a little valley between two undulations of the ground, where festoons of flesh-coloured roses smile on one side, and roses as red as congealing blood on the other. There is a rock that is used as a seat, or as a table on which gatherers place their baskets. Shrivelled roses and petals lying among the grass and on the rock witness the day's work.

With her ring-adorned hand Johanna sweeps the waste flow-

ers off the seat and says: «Sit down, Master. I have quite a lot to tell You. »

Jesus sits down and Matthias begins to run about on the grass until he finds it very interesting to chase a big frog, which had come there to enjoy the cool of the evening and he follows the poor creature, shouting and jumping joyfully, until his attention is attracted by the hole of a cricket and he begins to rummage in it with a little stick.

«Johanna, I am here to listen to you... Are you not going to speak? » asks Jesus after a moment's silence and He stops watching the boy, to look at the disciple who is standing before Him serious and silent.

«Yes, Master. But... it is very difficult... and I think it will be painful to hear... »

«Speak with simplicity and confidence... »

<sup>400. 4</sup> Johanna kneels on the grass half-sitting on her heels, below Jesus, Who is sat higher up, on the seat, in an austere rigid attitude; as a man, He is more distant than if He were separated quite away by several obstacles, but as God and a Friend, He is close because of the kindness of His glance and His smile. And Johanna looks at Him in the mild twilight of a May evening. At last she speaks: «My Lord... before speaking... I must ask You a question... to know what You think... to ascertain whether I have misunderstood Your words... I am a woman, a foolish woman... perhaps I have dreamed... and only now I know the real situation... as You explained things, as You prepared them, as You want them for Your Kingdom... Perhaps Chuza is right... and I am wrong... »

«Has Chuza reproached you? »

«He has and he has not, Lord. He only said to me, with the authority of a husband, that if the situation is as recent facts make him think it is, I must leave You, because he, as Herod's dignitary, cannot allow his wife to conspire against Herod. »

«And when have you been a conspirator? Who is thinking of harming Herod? His poor throne, which is so filthy, is inferior to this seat among these rose-bushes. I am sitting here, but I would not sit there. Chuza need not worry! I have no desire for Caesar's throne, never mind Herod's. They are not My thrones, or My kingdoms. »

«Oh! Is that so, Lord? May You be blessed! How much peace You give me! I have been suffering for days because of that! My holy and divine Master, my dear Master, my Master as I always understood, saw and loved You, so high, so high above the Earth, so... so divine, O my Lord and heavenly King! » and Johanna takes Jesus' hand and respectfully kisses the back of it, on her knees, as if she were in adoration.

«But what happened? Something of which I am unaware, which could upset you so much as to dim in you the pellucidity of My moral and spiritual figure? Tell Me! »

«What? Master, the fumes of error, of pride, of greed, of stubbornness have risen as if from fetid craters and have obscured You in the opinion of some men and women... and they tried to do the same with me. But I am Your Johanna, Your grace, O God. And I would not have got lost. At least I hope so, knowing how good is God. But who is only the embryo of a soul struggling to improve, may die through deceit. And he who is in an oozy sea, roughened by heavy currents, and strives to reach the shore: the harbour, to be purified and find other places of peace and Justice, may be overcome by tiredness, if he loses confidence in the shore and those places, and may be swept away again by the currents and the mud. And I was sorry for and worried about the ruin of such souls, for whom I implore Your Light. The souls we perfect in the eternal Light are dearer to us than the bodies we give birth to in the earthly light. I now understand what it is to be the mother of a body and the mother of a soul. We mourn over the death of a child of ours. But it is only our grief. But for a soul which, we have endeavoured to perfect in Your Light and which dies, we do not suffer by ourselves. We suffer with You, with God... because in our grief for the spiritual death of a soul there is also Your sorrow, the infinite sorrow of God... I do not know whether I have made myself understood... »

400.5 «Yes, you have. <sup>5</sup>But give Me a precise account, if you want Me to comfort you. »

«Yes Master. You sent Simon Zealot and Judas of Kerieth to Bethany, did You not? It was in regard to that Jewish girl who was given to You by the Roman ladies and who was sent by You to Nike... »

«Yes, I did. So?... »

«And she wanted to say goodbye to her good mistresses, and Simon and Judas took her to the Antonia. Did You know? »

«I did. Well? »

«Master... I am afraid I must grieve You... Master, You are really only a spiritual King? You are not aiming at earthly kingdoms? »

«Of course not Johanna. How can you still doubt that? »

«Master, only to have once again the joy of seeing You as a divine being, nothing but a divine being. And just because You are such, I must give deep sorrow to You... Master, the man from Kerioth does not understand You, neither does he understand those who respect You as a wise man, a great philosopher, as Virtue on the Earth, and admire You and promise to protect You as such. It is strange that heathen ladies should understand what one of Your apostles does not understand, after being such a long time with You... »

«His human nature, his human love blind him. »

«You excuse him... But he is injuring You, Master. While Simon was speaking to Plautina, Lydia and Valeria, Judas spoke to Claudia on Your behalf, as Your ambassador. He wanted to wring from her promises for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Claudia asked him many questions... And he told her a good lot. He certainly thinks that he is on the threshold of his silly dream, when a dream becomes reality. Master, Claudia was irritated. She is a daughter of Rome... The empire is in her blood... Is it possible that a daughter of the Claudi family would plot against Rome? She was so shocked that she began to doubt about You and the holiness of Your doctrine. She still cannot conceive or understand the holiness of Your Origin... But she eventually will, because she is full of goodwill. She will understand, when she is reassured about You. For the time being You seem a false greedy rebel and usurper to her... Plautina and the other ladies have tried to reassure her... But she wants an immediate reply from You. »

«Tell her not to fear. I am the King of kings, I create them and Judge them, and I will have no other throne but that of the Lamb first sacrificed and then triumphant in Heaven. Let her know at once. » <sup>400. 6</sup>

«Yes, Master. I will go personally. Before they leave Jerusa-

lem, because Claudia is so irritated that she does not want to stay any longer at the Antonia, as she says... that she does not want to see the enemies of Rome. »

«Who told you that? »

«Plautina and Lydia. They came... and Chuza was present... and later... he put me in the dilemma: either You are the spiritual Messiah or I must leave You for good. »

A sad smile appears on Jesus' face, which has turned pale with grief at the report of Johanna and He asks: «Is Chuza not coming here? »

«Tomorrow is the Sabbath and he will come. »

«And I will reassure him. Do not fear. Let no one fear. Chuza must not fear for his position at Court, or Herod for possible usurpations, or Claudia for the sake of Rome, and you must not be afraid of being deceived or of the possibility of being separated... Let no one be afraid... I only must fear... and suffer... »

«Master, I wish I could not have grieved You thus. But not informing You, would have been as good as deceiving You... Master, how will You behave with Judas?... I am afraid of his reactions... only and always for Your sake... »

«With sincerity. I will make him understand that I know and that I disapprove of his action and his obstinacy. »

«He will hate me because he will understand that I told You... »

«Are you sorry for that? »

«Your hatred would upset me. Not his. I am a woman. But I am more virile in serving You than is he. I serve You because I love You, not to receive favours from You. If because of You in future I should lose my wealth, the love of my husband, and my very freedom and life I would love You even more. Because in that case I would have but You to love and to be loved by» says Johanna impulsively, standing up.

400.7 <sup>7</sup>Jesus also stands up and says: «May you be blessed, Johanna, for what you have said. And be in peace. Neither Judas' hatred nor his love can change what is written in Heaven. My mission will be accomplished, as it was decided. Feel no remorse, never. Be as tranquil as little Matthias, who after working to make a house - a nicer one, according to him - for his cricket, has fallen asleep with his forehead on petals of roses, and is smiling...

thinking that it is on roses. Because life is beautiful when one is innocent. I also smile, even if My human life has no flowers, but only withered petals that have fallen. But in Heaven I shall have all the roses of those who have been saved... Come. Night is falling. We shall soon not be able to see the path. »

Johanna is about to take the boy in her arms.

«Leave him... I will take him. Look how he smiles! He is certainly dreaming of Heaven... of his mother... of you... I also, in My grief of every hour, dream of Heaven... of My Mother and of good women disciples. »

And they slowly set out towards the house...

#### **401. Peter and Bartholomew in Bethzur for a serious reason. Ecstasy of the writer.**

13<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus is walking through the rose thickets where the gather- 401.1  
ers are busy. He has thus the opportunity of speaking to this person and that one, and also to the widow, whom Johanna charitably employed as a servant at Passover, after the poor people's banquet. Her children are also there and they now look better. Thriving and serene they are working happily, each according to his own ability, while the younger ones, who cannot yet tell one rose from another or choose them according to their shades and freshness, are playing with other little children in the quietest places and their chattering mingles with the chirruping of nestlings greeting from tree branches the return of their parents with beakfuls of food.

Jesus moves towards these little ones, bending over them, caressing them, settling little quarrels and lifting up those who have fallen and are whimpering, as they have dirtied themselves with earth or have scratched their hands or faces on the ground. And tears, quarrels, jealousies subside at once under the caresses and the words spoken by the Innocent One to innocents, and the cause of the quarrel or of the fall, that is a golden scarab, a coloured or shiny little stone, a flower... becomes an offer made to Jesus, Who has hands and belt full of them and Who, without being noticed, puts scarabs and ladybirds on the leaves of plants

releasing them.

How many times I have now noticed Jesus' perfect tact towards little ones, in order not to mortify and disappoint them! With fascinating art He knows how to improve them and He makes Himself loved with what is apparently a mere trifle, but is instead the perfection of love adapted to the smallness of children... and to me.

401.2     <sup>2</sup>Oh! He has always treated me as a «baby» to improve my misery, to make Himself loved! Afterwards, when I loved Him with my whole self, He treated me with a heavy hand, as an adult, turning a deaf ear to my entreaties: «Can You not see that I am a good-for-nothing? » He smiled and compelled me to perform the work of adults... Oh! only when poor Mary is thoroughly distressed, He becomes once again the Jesus of children for my poor soul, which is so incapable, and He is pleased with... my scarabs, little stones... flowers... with what I can give Him... and He makes me understand that He finds that they are lovely... and that He loves me because I am «a nonentity that relies on and is lost in The Infinite. »

My dear Jesus! Loved, madly loved! Loved with my whole self! Yes, I can declare it! On the eve of my forty-ninth birthday, on the eve of men's judgement on my work as mouthpiece, if I examine myself carefully, if I diligently search my spirit and my whole self to decipher the true words that are in me, I can now say that I love God, I realize that I love my God with my whole self. It took me forty-eight years to reach this total love, so total as not to have one thought of personal fear in the prevision of a condemnation, as I only worried about the repercussions such conviction might have in the souls that were led to God by me, and are convinced that they were redeemed by Jesus living in me, and would break off from the Church, the link joining mankind to God. Some people may say: «Are you not ashamed of having taken such a long time? » No, not in the least. I was so weak, such a mere nothing, that it took me all that time. In any case I am convinced that it took me exactly the time that Jesus wanted. Not one minute more, not one less; because I can say this: since I began to understand what is God, I have never refused God anything. Since the time, when I - a four-year-old girl - felt Him to be so omnipresent that I believed Him to be even in

the wood of the back of the chair on which I sat and I apologized to Him for turning my back on Him and leaning on Him; since the time when - still a four-year-old girl - even in my sleep I pondered on how our sins had wounded and killed Him, and I would stand up on my bed, in my long night-gown, and without looking at any holy picture, but addressing my beloved Jesus killed on our behalf, I would implore Him: «Not I! Not I! Let me die but don't tell me that I wounded You!» And my heart rose...

You are aware, O my Love, of my fervent emotions. You are acquainted with everyone of them... You know that a simple hint of a proposal of Yours was accepted at once by Your Mary. Even if You proposed that I should give You the love of a sweetheart (nay just then, at Christmas in 1921, my love for You was confirmed) or the love of relatives, or my life, health, wealth... and that I should become more and more a «nonentity» in social life, a piece of wreckage looked upon with pity or derision by the world, one that cannot take a glass of water by herself if she is thirsty and there is no one who hands it to her, one nailed like You, yes like You, and as I have so eagerly wished to be, and as I would like to become immediately once again, if You should cure me. Everything! The nonentity has given everything, her whole being as a creature... Well, even now, yes even now, when I may be judged badly and interdicted and I may be struck, what shall I say to You? «Remain with me, You and Your Grace. All the rest is nothing. I only beg You not to deprive me of Your love and not to allow those, whom I brought to You, to fall back into darkness.»

But where have I gone, O my Sun, while You are walking around the rose thickets? Where my heart, that has made an effort of love for You, leads me. And it throbs and inflames the blood in my veins. And people will say: «She has a temperature and is suffering from palpitations.» No. The fact is that this morning You are rushing into me with the strength of a divine hurricane of love, and I... and I vanish in You as You pervade me, and I no longer think straight as a human creature, but I experience what it must be to live as seraphim... and I am inflamed and delirious and I love You, I love You, I love You. Have pity, in Your love! Have pity, if You want me to live on and serve You, O most divine eternal Love, O most sweet Love, O Love of Heaven and



of Creation, God, God, God... No! Do not have pity! Even more love! Even more! To the extent of death on the stake of love! Let us melt into each other! Let us love each other! That we may be in the Father, as You said praying for us: «Let those who love Me be where We are. *One thing only.* » *One thing only!* That is one of the words of the Gospel that have always made me sink into an abyss of loving adoration. What You asked for us, O my Divine Master and Redeemer! What You asked, O my Divine Master, mad in love! That we may *be one only* with You, with the Father, with the Holy Spirit, because who is in One is in the Three, O inseparable and yet free Trinity of the God One and Trine! Blessed! Blessed! Blessed with each throb and breath of mine!...

401. 3     <sup>3</sup>But let us go back to the vision since... I now see Peter coming forward with so rapid a step that his garments flutter like a sail swollen by the wind. He is followed by Bartholomew who is proceeding more calmly. Peter arrives unexpectedly behind Jesus, Who is bent fondling some sucklings, the children of the gatherers, lying on folding seats in the shade of trees. «Master! »

«Simon! How come you are here? And you, too, Bartholomew? You were to leave tomorrow evening, after the sunset of the Sabbath... »

«Master, do not reproach us... Listen to us first. »

«I will listen to you. And I do not reproach you because I believe that you must have a serious reason for disobeying. But reassure Me that none of you is ill or hurt. »

«No, no, Lord. No harm befell us» Bartholomew hastens to add. But Peter, always sincere and impulsive, states: «H'm! As far as I am concerned, it would have been better if each of us had broken legs, or even if our heads were injured, rather than... »

«But what happened? »

«Master, we thought that it was better to come to put an end to... » Bartholomew is saying, when Peter interrupts him: «Hurry up in telling Him! » And he concludes: «Judas has become a demon since You left. We could no longer speak or reason. He has quarrelled with everybody... And he has scandalised all the servants of Eliza and other people as well... »

«Perhaps he has become jealous because You took Simon with You... » says Bartholomew apologetically, when he sees that Jesus' countenance has become very severe.

Nonsense! What jealousy?! Stop excusing him!... Or I will start quarrelling with you to give vent to my feelings, since I did not brawl with him... Because, Master, I succeeded in being quiet! Just imagine! Quiet! To obey You and for Your sake... What an effort! Well. When Judas went away slamming the door, we consulted with one another... and we thought it was better to leave in order to put an end to the scandal in Bethzur and... to avoid boxing his ears... And Bartholomew and I left at once. I asked the others to let me go at once, before he came back... because... because I felt that I could not control myself any longer... Well. I have told You. You can now reproach me if You think that I made a mistake. »

«You have done the right thing. You have all done the right thing. »

«Also Judas? Oh! no, my Lord! Don't say that! He made a deplorable spectacle of himself! »

«No. He did not do the right thing. But it is not for you to judge him. »

«No, Lord... » His «no» is uttered with great difficulty.

<sup>401. 4</sup>There is a moment's silence. Then Peter asks: «But will You at least tell me why Judas has become thus all of a sudden? He seemed to have become so good! Everything was so pleasant! I said prayers and made sacrifices that it might last... Because I cannot see You depressed. And You are distressed when we misbehave... And since the feast of the Dedication I know that even the sacrifice of a spoonful of honey is of great value... A disciple, the youngest disciple, a poor boy, had to teach\* this truth to me, Your stupid apostle. But I did not neglect it. Because I saw its fruit. Because I also, although a blockhead, have understood something through the light of Wisdom that bent benignly over me, touching me, a coarse fisherman, a sinner. I have understood that we must love You not only with words, but by saving souls with our sacrifice, in order to give You joy, and not see You as You are now, as You were at Shebat. February You are so pale and sad, my Master and Lord, Whom we are not worthy to have, Whom we do not understand, as we are worms near You, the Son of God, we are mud near You, the Star, we are darkness, You are Light.

\* had to teach..., in 311. 3/5.

But it was of no avail! It is true! My poor offerings... so poor... so badly made... What purpose could they serve? It was pride on my part to believe that they might serve... Forgive me. But I gave You what I had. I offered myself to give You what I have. And I thought that I was justified, because I love You, my God, with *all* myself, with all my heart, and with all my soul, with all my strength, as it is written\*. And now I understand also this and I also say what John\*\*, our angel, always says, and I beg You (and he kneels at Jesus' feet) to increase Your love in Your poor Simon, so that my love may increase for You, my God. » And Peter prostrates himself to kiss Jesus' feet, and remains thus.

Bartholomew, who has been listening admiring and assenting, imitates him.

«Stand up, My friends. My love grows deeper and deeper in you and will grow more and more. And may you be blessed because of your hearts. <sup>401. 5</sup>When are the others coming? »

«Before sunset. »

«Very well. Also Johanna, Eliza and Chuza will come back before sunset. We shall spend the Sabbath here, and then we shall leave. »

«Yes, my Lord. But why did Johanna send for You so urgently? Could she not have waited? It had been arranged for us to come here! Through her imprudence she has caused all this trouble!... »

«Do not reproach her, Simon of Jonah. She acted out of prudence and love. She sent for Me because there were souls to be confirmed in their goodwill. »

«Ah! In that case I will say no more... But, my Lord, why has Judas changed so much? »

«Forget about it! Enjoy this Eden, so full of flowers and peace. Enjoy your Lord. Leave and forget about humanity in all its worse forms, in its attacks against the soul of your poor companion. Remember only to pray for him... very hard. Come. Let us go to those little ones who are looking at us full of amazement. I was speaking to them of God, a little while ago, from soul to soul, with love, and I was talking to the bigger ones through the beautiful things of God... » And He embraces the waists of His

\* as it is written, in: *Deuteronomy*, 6, 5.

\*\* I also say what John, specifically in 149. 6.

two apostles and turns His steps towards a group of children waiting for Him.

#### **402. Judas Iscariot feels exposed in the farewell speech in Bethel.**

16<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

<sup>1</sup>I do not know how I shall manage to write, worn out as I am <sup>402. 1</sup> with continual heart attacks by day and by night... But I am beginning to see and I must write.

I see Jesus before the mansion-house of Johanna at Bethel. The garden in front of it widens out forming a semicircular open space by means of two green pincer-shaped wings. The central part of the open space is bare and is bordered by old tall leafy trees rustling in the light breeze blowing on the top of this hill, and casting a pleasant shade that protects from the sun in afternoons. Hedges of roses beneath the trees form a colourful sweet-smelling semicircle around the open space.

The sun is about to set and, as this castle is on a high position, one can clearly see that it is descending towards the horizon and is about to hide behind the western mountains. Andrew points those mountains to Philip, reminding him of their fear, when they had to announce the Lord at Bethganna. Bethganna is in fact on those mountains, where the Lord the previous year cured\* the daughter of the hotel-keeper, at the beginning of His pilgrimage towards the Mediterranean shores, if my memory does not fail me. I am all alone, so I cannot get anyone to give me the copy-books of months ago to check, and my head just cannot remember.

All the apostles are present. I do not know what happened when Jesus and Judas met. Apparently everything went very well, because I do not see any stand-offishness or excitement in anybody and Judas is free and easy and cheerful, as if nothing had happened. In fact he is very kind also to the most humble servants, which is most unusual of him, particularly when he is upset.

\* cured, in 215. 7.

Eliza is still here and also Anastasica, who has certainly come here with the apostles and Eliza's maid servant. And there is Chuza, who is very ceremonious and is holding Matthias by the hand. Johanna is near Eliza and little Mary is beside her. Jonathan is behind his mistress.

Jesus is protected from the sun, which is still shining on the western side of the house, by a tent that has been stretched out on ropes and poles, like a canopy. All the servants and gardeners of Bether, including casual labourers from the village, which comes under the castle, are before Jesus. They are in the shade of the leafy trees of the semicircle, protected from the sun and are standing in silence, lined up, awaiting the blessing of the Master, Who seems to be on the point of departing and is only waiting for sunset to indicate the end of the Sabbath.

402. 2 <sup>2</sup>Jesus is now speaking to Chuza a little aside. I do not know what He is saying to him, because they are speaking in low voices. But I see that Chuza is lavish in bows and protestations, and presses his right hand against his breast, as if to say: «Upon my word, You may rest assured that as far as I am concerned» etc.

The apostles have gathered discreetly in a corner. But no one can prevent them from watching, and if Peter and Bartholomew are watching with the simple naturalness of people who are already somehow aware of the situation, the others, and particularly James of Alphaeus, John, Simon and Andrew, appear to be anxious and sad, while Judas of Alphaeus looks upset and severe. The Iscariot is the only exception, as he wishes to appear free and easy, whereas he watches more keenly than the others, and he seems to be anxious to make out, from the gestures of their hands and from their lips, what Jesus and Chuza are saying.

The women disciples are also watching silently and respectfully, and Johanna smiles unintentionally, a somewhat ironical smile in its sadness, and she seems to be pitying her husband when Chuza, raising his voice at the end of the conversation, declares: «My debt of gratitude is such that in no way will I ever be able to free myself from my obligation. I, therefore, give You what is dearest to me: my Johanna... But You must understand my provident love for her... Herod's wrath... her self-defence... They would have given vent to their anger by taking reprisals upon our property,... and our influence... and Johanna is accus-

tomed to these things she is delicate... she needs them... I protect her interests. But I swear to You that now that I am sure that Herod will not be angry at me, as if I were an accomplice of his enemy, although his servant, I will do nothing but serve You with perfect joy, granting complete freedom to Johanna... »

«Very well. But remember that to barter eternal goods for a fleeting human honour, is like bartering one's birthright for a dish of lentils. And it, is even much worse... »

The women disciples have heard the words. The apostles have also heard them. And while most of them consider it an academic speech, Judas of Kerioth perceives a special purport and he changes colour and countenance, casting a frightened angry glance at Johanna... I realize that so far Jesus has not spoken of what happened, and that only now Judas begins to suspect that his trick has been found out.

<sup>3</sup>Jesus addresses Johanna saying: «Well, let us make our good <sup>402. 3</sup>disciple happy. As you wished, I will speak to your servants before leaving. »

He comes forward, as far as the limit of the shade, which is growing longer and longer as the sun sets slowly, and now looks like an orange mutilated of its lower part; and the mutilation increases as the sun sets behind the mountains of Bethinna setting the clear sky ablaze.

«My beloved friends Chuza and Johanna, and you, her good-servants, who have known the Lord for many years through the words of My disciple Jonathan, and through Johanna's, since she has been My faithful disciple, listen.

I have taken leave of all the Judaeen villages, where My disciples are more numerous through the work of the first disciples, the shepherds, and because they have responded to the Word, Who passed by teaching them in order to save them. I am now taking leave of you because I will never come back to this Eden, which is so beautiful, not only because of the rose-bushes and peace reigning here, not only because of the excellent mastery which is sovereign here, but above all because you believe in the Lord and you live according to His Word. A paradise! Yes. What was the paradise of Adam and Eve? A wonderful garden where they lived without sin, where the voice of God resounded and His first two children loved and listened to it with joy...

<sup>4</sup>Well, I exhort you to watch that what happened in Eden may not happen to you: that the serpent of falsehood, of calumny, of sin may creep in and bite your hearts separating you from God. Be watchful and firm in your Faith... Do not fret. Do not be incredulous. That might happen because the Cursed One will enter, will strive to enter everywhere, as he has already entered many places, to destroy the work of God. And as long as the Sly, Cunning, Indefatigable One enters places, and searches, eavesdrops, lies in wait, slavers, endeavours to seduce, there is no great harm. Nothing and no one can prevent him from doing that. He did that in the Earthly Paradise... *But it is much worse to let him stay there without driving him out.* The enemy who is not chased away ends up by becoming the master of the place as he settles there and builds his defensive and offensive structures. Pursue him at once, put him to flight using the weapons of Faith, Charity, Hope in the Lord. But the greatest evil, the supreme evil is to let him live not only undisturbed amongst men, but to allow him to penetrate inside from the outside, and let him build his nest in the hearts of men. Oh! Then!!

And yet many men have already received him in their hearts, against the Christ. They have welcomed Satan with his wicked passions driving away the Christ. If they had not yet known Christ in all His truth, if their knowledge of Him had been only superficial, as wayfarers know one another, when they meet by chance on a road, looking very often at one another just for a moment, people unknown to one another who meet for the first and last time, at times exchanging only few words to inquire about the right road, to ask for a pinch of salt, for tinder to light a fire, or a knife to cut some meat, if such were the knowledge of the Christ in such hearts, which today, and even more tomorrow drive the Christ away, more and more, to make room for Satan, they might still be pitied and treated mercifully because they did not know the Christ. But woe to those who know Me for what I really am, who have been nourished with My word and My love, and now drive Me away, receiving Satan who allures them with false promises of human triumphs, the reality of which will be eternal damnation.

You who are humble and do not dream of thrones and crowns, who do not seek human glory, but the peace and triumph of God,

His Kingdom, love and eternal life, and nothing else, do not imitate them. Be vigilant! Keep free from corruption, be strong against insinuations, against threats, against everything. »

Judas, who has realized that Jesus knows something, has become livid with anger. He darts angry looks at the Master and at Johanna... He withdraws behind his companions, as if he wished to lean against the wall. In actual fact he does so to conceal his disappointment.

<sup>5</sup>After a short interruption, which serves to separate the first <sup>402. 5</sup> part of His speech from the second one, Jesus goes on. He says:

«There was once\* Naboth, a Jezreelite, who had a vineyard close by the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria. It was the vineyard of his ancestors, therefore most dear and almost sacred to him, as it had been bequeathed to him by his father, who had inherited it from his father, who in turn, had received it by inheritance from his father and so on. Generations of relatives had worked hard in that vineyard to make it more flourishing and beautiful. Naboth was very fond of it. Ahab said to him: “Give me your vineyard that is near my house, as I want to use it as a vegetable garden for myself and my family. In exchange for it I will give you a better vineyard, or if you prefer, I will give you its worth in money”. But Naboth replied: “I am sorry to disappoint you, king. But I cannot satisfy your request. I received that vineyard by inheritance from my ancestors and it is sacred to me. God forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my ancestors”.

Let us meditate on that reply. It has been meditated on too little and by too few Israelites. Those whom I mentioned before, the majority of people, who are inclined to drive away the Christ to welcome Satan, do not have much respect for the inheritance of their ancestors, and provided they get much money or a great deal of land, that is, honours and the certainty that they will not be easily supplanted, they agree to give away the inheritance of their ancestors: that is, the Messianic idea for what it really is, as it was revealed to the saints of Israel, and should be held sacred in all its details, also the least ones, without tampering with it, or altering it, or degrading it with human limitations. How many

\* **There was once...** is the start of the episode narrated in: *1 King 21*.



barter the bright Messianic idea, entirely holy and spiritual, for a puppet of human regality, which they agitate as a bugaboo to injure and curse authorities and truth!

402. 6 <sup>6</sup>I, Mercy, do not go to the extent of anathematising them with the dreadful maledictions of Moses against the transgressors of the Law. But behind Mercy there is Justice. Let everybody bear that in mind! I, as far as I am concerned, remind them - and if there is anyone present here, let him accept My warning with good grace - I remind them of other words\* of Moses, addressed to those who wanted to count more than God had decided for them.

Moses said to Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who said that they were equal to Moses and Aaron and rebelled against being considered only as the sons of Levi among the people of Israel: "Tomorrow the Lord will reveal who is His, who are the consecrated men that He will allow to come near Him. Those He allows to come near Him are the ones He has chosen. Put fire in your censers and incense on the fire before the Lord, and come, you and your followers with Aaron. And we shall see whom the Lord chooses. You take too much on yourselves, sons of Levi! "

My good Israelites, you know how God answered those who wanted to extol themselves too much, forgetting that God only allots positions to His children, electing them with justice to the right position. I also must say: "There are some who wish to exalt themselves too much and they will be punished so that good people will understand that they cursed the Lord".

Those who barter the Messianic idea, as it was revealed by the Most High, for their poor, human, dull, limited, revengeful idea, are they not like those who wanted to judge the sacredness of Moses and Aaron? Do you not think that those who want to take initiatives of their own, proudly stating that they are better than God's, so that they may attain their object and have their poor plans accomplished, do you not think that they want to exalt themselves too much and pass illegally from the stock of Levi to the stock of Aaron? Those who dream of a poor king of Israel and prefer him to the spiritual King of kings, those whose eyes are diseased with pride and greed, whereby they see the eternal

\* **other words**, as those in: *Numbers 16, 4-7.*

truth written in the holy books distorted, and those who cannot understand the most clear words of the revealed Truth because of the fever of their lustful humanity, are they not the ones who barter the heritage of the whole race, the most sacred heritage, for a worthless nothing?

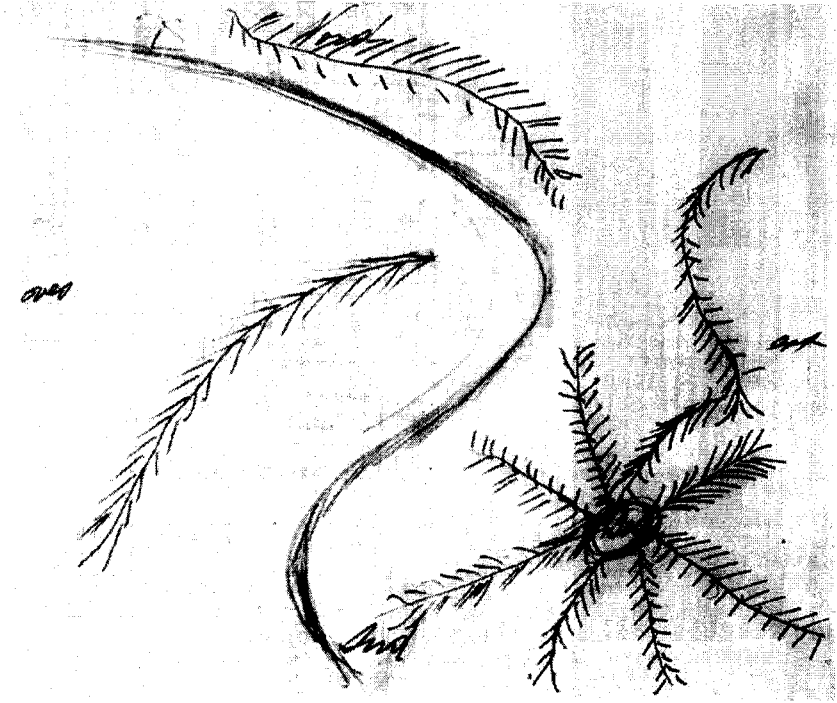
But if they do so, *I will not barter* the inheritance of the Father and of our ancestors, and I will die faithful to the promise, which has been alive since there was the need for redemption, and I will be faithful to the obedience which has always existed, because I have never disappointed My Father, and I will never disappoint Him for fear of death, however dreadful death may be. Let My enemies produce false witnesses, let them feign zeal and perfect practices. That will not change their crime or affect My holiness. But he and those who, after corrupting him, have become his accomplices, think that they can take possession of what is Mine, will find dogs and vultures feeding on their blood and bodies on the Earth, and demons feeding on their sacrilegious deicide souls in Hell.

<sup>402. 7</sup> I told you that, so that you may know. So that everybody may know. So that who is wicked may repent, while he is still in time, imitating Ahab, and who is good may not be upset in the hour of darkness.

Goodbye, children of Bether. May the God of Israel always be with you and may Redemption let dew descend on a clean field, so that all the seed, sown in your hearts by the Master, Who loved you even unto death, may germinate. »

Jesus blesses them and watches them go away slowly. The sun has set. Only a red hue, which slowly fades into violet, remains as remembrance of the sun. The Sabbath rest is over. Jesus can leave. He kisses the little ones, greets the women disciples and Chuza. And when He is near the gate, He turns around again and says in a loud voice, so that everybody may hear: «I will speak, when I can, to those people. But you, Johanna, do the necessary to let them know that I am the enemy of Sin only and the King of the spirit. And remember that, too, Chuza. And be not afraid. No one must be afraid of Me. Not even sinners, because I am Salvation. Only those who are unrepentant unto death must fear the Christ, Who will be Judge after being Infinite Love... Peace be with you» and He is the first to go out and

begin to descend...\*



### **403. The lesson of silence. Simon of Jonah in his own battle and spiritual victory.**

25<sup>th</sup> March 1946. In Nomine Domini.

403. 1 <sup>1</sup>And I am resuming, at long last, to write about you, O sweet Gospel, following my Master holily along the roads of Palestine! I resume you after fulfilling all my tasks in obedience to the orders. It would be better to say: «You resume me. »

I do not know whether anyone ponders on the mute, but so instructive lesson that the Lord gives through His silence, brought about by three different reasons: \*

\* **begin to descend...** The sketch by M. V. illustrated here is on a piece of paper sewn to the last hand-written page of the following chapter. The four main cardinal points can be read in this and in the circle towards the South-East, *Bether*.

First, pity for the weakness of His sick mouthpiece who at times is almost dying; Second, silence as a punishment for those who do not conform properly to His gift; Third, the lesson that He gives me, and of which I wish to speak, of our duty to *always* obey, even if obedience may seem inferior to the work we have to interrupt in order to obey.

Oh! it is not easy to be a «mouthpiece»! One lives in continuous vigilance and obedience. And Jesus, Who is the Master of the world, does not take the liberty of allowing His instrument to disobey an order, when obedience is exacted by a person authorised to do so.

During the past days I had to obey the orders given to me by Father Migliorini. They were bureaucratic matters and thus rather boring. But Jesus never interfered because *I had to* obey. And my obedience was to be precise and *complete*, as Azariah said yesterday\* explaining Holy Mass.

But now, as I have done everything, I can contemplate You, my Lord, while You descend the steep path towards the fertile valley, leaving behind the castle of Bether, still bright in the dying day, up there, on the flowery hill... leaving there the love of the women disciples, of the little ones, of the humble people, descending towards the roads that take to Jerusalem, towards the world, towards the lower part... And it is darker there not only because it is a «valley» and thus sunshine and light are no longer there, but above all because down there, in the world, there are snares, bitter hatred, so much evil waiting for You, my Lord...

<sup>2</sup>Jesus is ahead of them all: a white silent figure, walking stately also while descending uncomfortable abrupt paths, taken to shorten the journey. In the descent His long tunic and wide mantle trail on the ground and Jesus seems already wrapped in a royal mantle with a train behind His steps.

Behind Him, not so majestic, but equally silent, are the apostles... Judas, a little more distant, is last: he looks ugly in his rage. Now and again the more simple ones: Andrew, Thomas, turn around and look at him, and Andrew says to him: «Why are you remaining all alone, so far behind? Are you not feeling well? ». His question brings about a sharp reply: «Mind your own

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\* as Azariah said yesterday, in one of the comments to the festive Masses, that belong to the “Book of Azariah”.

business» that surprises Andrew, also because it is followed by a rude epithet.

Peter is second in the line of the apostles, behind James of Alphaeus, who is immediately behind the Master. And Peter hears the rude reply, in the deep silence of the evening. And he turns around abruptly and is about to go back towards Judas. But he stops. He is pensive for a moment, then runs towards Jesus, He takes Him brusquely by the arm and shakes Him saying eagerly: «Master, can You assure me that what You told me the other evening is really true? That sacrifices and prayers never lack success, even if they seem to serve no purpose?... »

Jesus, meek, sad, pale, looks at His Simon who is perspiring in the effort not to react at once to the insult, and is purple and trembling, and perhaps is hurting Him as he is holding His arm so roughly, and He replies with a peaceful sad smile: «They are never without reward. You may rest assured. »

403. 3 <sup>3</sup>Peter leaves Him and goes away, not to his place, but to the slope of the mountain, among the trees and he gives vent to his feelings by breaking shrubs and young plants with a violence that was directed elsewhere but is discharged here on tree-trunks.

«What are you doing? Are you mad? » many ask him.

Peter does not reply. He goes on breaking. He lets all the apostles, including Judas, overtake him, while he breaks... and breaks. He is so fast that he seems to be on piece-work. At his feet there is a bundle of sticks that would suffice to roast a veal. He loads it on to his shoulder with some difficulty and he strives to reach his companions. I do not know how he can manage - hampered as he is by his mantle - the weight, his haversack and the uncomfortable path. But he proceeds with a stoop, as if he were under the yoke.

And Judas laughs seeing him and says: «You look like a slave! »

Peter looks up with difficulty from under the yoke and is about to say something. But he remains silent, he grinds his teeth and goes on.

«I will help you, brother» says Andrew.

«No. »

«But that wood is too much for a lamb» remarks James of Zebedee.

Peter does not reply. He proceeds. He must be exhausted. But he does not give up.

<sup>4</sup>At last, at a grotto almost at the bottom of the descent, Jesus stops with all the apostles. «We are staying here, and we will leave at daybreak» orders the Master. «Prepare the supper. » 403. 4

Peter then throws his load on the ground and sits on it, without explaining to anybody the reason for his great effort, while there is plenty of firewood about.

But when the apostles move around, some to get drinking water, some to clean the floor of the grotto, some to wash the lamb before cooking it, and Peter is left alone with his Master, Jesus, standing up, lays His hand on Simon's grey-haired head, and caresses that honest head... Peter then clasps that hand and kisses it, he holds it against his cheek, kisses it again and caresses it... A drop falls on the white hand, a drop which is not perspiration of the coarse honest apostle, but a silent tear of love and suffering, of victory after the struggle. And Jesus bends and kisses him saying: «Thank you, Simon! »

Peter is certainly not a handsome man. But when he throws back his head to look at his Jesus Who has kissed him and thanked him, because He only has understood, veneration and joy do make him handsome...

And the vision ends on this transformation.

#### **404. Towards Emmaus of the plain.**

27<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Dawn is casting a milky-green luminosity on the vault of heaven, high above the cool silent valley. And its glimmer, which is and is not yet light, reaches the top of the two slopes. It seems to be caressing lightly the highest parts of the Judaeian mountains, saying to the old trees which crown them: «Here I am, I am descending from heaven, I am coming from the east, preceding daybreak, and I drive away darkness and bring light, activity and the blessing of a new day granted to you by God. » And the mountain tops are roused by the rustling leaves and the chirping of the first birds awakened by the trembling branches and the first faint light. And dawn descends lower, down to the under- 404. 1

growth, to the grass, to declivities, lower and lower, greeted by the increasing chirping among branches and the rustling noise of green lizards among the grass. And it finally reaches the little stream, down at the bottom, and changes its dark waters into a dull silvery sparkling that becomes steadily clearer and clearer and more and more brilliant. And in the meantime, up there, in the sky, where the indigo of the night has faded into a greenish pale blue, the first announcement of sunrise appears, making it azure tinged with pink... And a cirrus appears, small, fluffy, already rosy foam...

Jesus comes out of the grotto and looks... He then washes in the stream, He tidies Himself, puts on His clothes, looks into the grotto... But He does not call... Instead He climbs the mountain, and goes to pray on a protruding peak, which is so high that it is possible to see a wide view to the east, now completely rosy at dawn, and to the west still tinged with indigo. He prays... ardently, on His knees, with His elbows on the ground, almost prostrate... And He prays thus, until He hears the voices of the awakened disciples calling Him.

He stands up and replies: «I am coming!» And the echo of the narrow valley repeats several times the echo of the perfect voice. And the valley seems to be spreading over the plain, dimly visible to the west, the promise of the Lord: «I am coming» so that the plain may rejoice in advance.

Jesus sets out with a sigh and a sentence that summarises His long prayer and clarifies it: «Father, comfort Me...»

He descends quickly and when He arrives at the bottom, He greets His apostles with a most kind smile and the usual words: «Peace be with you on this new day.»

«And with You, Master» they all reply.

404. 2 <sup>2</sup>Judas also is not so grim and solitary, I do not know whether because he is reassured by Jesus' silence, Who has not reproached him and treats him exactly as the others, or because during the night he has worked out a plan to his own advantage. In fact he asks on behalf of everybody: «Are we going to Jerusalem? If we are, we will have to go back a little and cross that bridge. On the other side there is a road that takes one straight to Jerusalem.»

«No. We are going to Emmaus on the plain.»

«Why? And what about Pentecost? »

«There is time. I want to go to see Nicodemus and Joseph, along the plains, towards the sea... »

«But why? »

«Because I have not been there yet and those people are waiting for Me... And because the good disciples wish so. We shall have time for everything. »

«Is that what Johanna told You? Is that why she called You? »

«There was no need for that. They told Me personally at Passover. And I keep My promises. »

«I would not go there... Perhaps they are already in Jerusalem... The festivity is close at hand.. And in any case... You might meet some enemies, and... »

«I meet enemies everywhere, they are always close to Me... » and Jesus darts a glance at the apostle, who is His grief...

Judas speaks no more. It is too dangerous to go into detail! He realizes it and becomes silent.

<sup>3</sup>John and Andrew come back with some little fruits, which seem to belong to the raspberry or strawberry families, but are a little darker, almost like unripe blackberries, and they offer them to Jesus: «You like them. We saw them yesterday evening and we went up now to pick them for You. Eat them, Master. They are good. » 404. 3

Jesus caresses the two good young apostles who are offering Him the fruit on a large leaf washed in the stream, and who, more than their fruit, offer Him their love. Jesus picks the nicest ones and gives some to each of the apostles who eat them with some bread.

«We tried to get some milk for You. But there are no shepherds about as yet... » says Andrew apologizing.

«It does not matter. Let us walk fast so that we may be at Emmaus before it gets very warm. »

And they set out and those who are more hungry continue to eat, while walking along the cool valley, which becomes wider and wider, ending in a very fertile plain, where reapers are already working hard.

«I did not know that Nicodemus had houses at Emmaus» remarks Bartholomew.

«Not at Emmaus. Farther on. Relatives' fields which he in-



herited... » explains Jesus.

«How beautiful the country is! » exclaims Thaddeus.

It is in fact a sea of golden ears interlaced with orchards, which are a real dream, and with vineyards already promising glorious grapes. Well-watered as it is, because the nearby mountains pour numberless little torrents into it in the months when irrigation is required most, and because it is provided with underground streams, it is a real agricultural Eden.

«H'm! It is more beautiful than last year's» grumbles Peter. «At least there is water and fruit... »

«The plain of Sharron is even more beautiful» replies the Zealot.

«But is this not it? »

«No, it is after this one. But this one is already affected by it... » The two apostles move away from the group speaking to each other.

404. 4     4«It belongs to Pharisees, does it not» asks James of Zebedee, pointing at the beautiful country.

«It certainly belongs to Judaeans. They usurped the best estates, taking them off the previous owners in many ways» replies Thaddeus, who perhaps remembers his ancestors' property in Judaea, from which they were driven away suffering a severe loss.

The Iscariot takes offence at the remark and says: «If they were taken off you it is because you, Galileans, are less holy, you are inferior... »

«May I remind you that Alphaeus and Joseph were of the house of David. So much so that the Edict compelled them to go and register at Bethlehem in Judah. And that is why *He* was born there» calmly replies James of Alphaeus, anticipating a biting reply from his impetuous brother, and pointing at the Lord Who is speaking to Matthew and Philip.

«Oh! Well! I would say that there is good and bad everywhere. In our trade we approached people of all races and I assure you that I have found honest and dishonest people in every race. In any case... why boast of being Judaeans? Did *we* perhaps want that? H'm! When I was in my mother's womb I knew nothing about being Judaeans or Galileans! I was there... and that was all. And when I was born, I was wrapped comfortably in swaddling clothes, without worrying whether I was breathing Judaeans or

Galilean air... I was aware only of my mother's breast... And you were all like me. So why be upset now, because one was born in the north and another in the south? Do we not all belong to Israel? » says Thomas kindly and rightly.

«You are right, Thomas» replies John. And he concludes: «And now we belong to one stock only: to Jesus. »

«And He is of Judaeon extraction, but was conceived and resides in Galilee, after He was born in Bethlehem, as if He wanted to tell us, through the evidence of events, that He is the Redeemer of all Israel, from the north to the south. And I think that the Most High wanted that to teach us that divisions are against the love for our neighbour and that He has been sent to gather everybody like the brooding-hen mentioned\* in the Holy Books. Just because He is called “the Galilean”, one ought not to disregard Galileans» says James of Alphaeus kindly but firmly.

Jesus, Who seemed inattentive while speaking to Matthew and Philip, a few steps ahead of the others, turns around and says: «You are right, James of Alphaeus. You understand the Truth and the truths, and the justice of every act of God. Because God, and this should be always borne in mind by everyone, never does anything aimlessly, as He never leaves without a reward what upright people do. Blessed are those who can see the reasons of God even in the least events and the answers of God to the sacrifices of men. »

Peter turns around and is about to speak. But he remains silent and he only smiles at his Master, Who is back in the group of His apostles, as they are now walking on a wide main road between golden fields.

<sup>5</sup>They proceed towards Emmaus, which is already close at hand, a group of white dazzling houses among the golden hue of ripe corn and the green of fertile orchards. 404. 5

«Master! Master! Stop! Here are Your disciples! » shout voices from afar, and a handful of men, departing from some peasants resting in the shade of an apple-orchard, run towards Jesus along a sunny path. They are Matthias and John, formerly shepherds and later disciples of the Baptist, and with them there are Nicolaus, Abel once a leper, Samuel, Ermasteus and others.

\* mentioned, with similar images in: *Deuteronomy* 32, 12; *Ruth* 2, 12; *Psalms* 17, 8; 36, 8; 61, 5; 63, 8; 91, 4.

«Peace to you. You are here? »

«Yes, Master. We have been along all the shores of the sea. We are now going towards Jerusalem. Farther north there is Stephen with other disciples. And farther up there is Hermas with others. And Isaac, our little master, is even farther north. At least he was. As Timoneus was in the region beyond the Jordan. But by now they are all about to come to the feast of Pentecost. We thus formed many groups, small ones, but active. And if they should persecute us, they may capture some, but not all of us» explains Matthias.

«You have done the right thing. I was surprised at not finding you anywhere in southern Judaea... »

«Master... You were going there... Who could do better than You? In any case... Oh! Judaea has had more than is needed to become holy!... And yet!... They throw stones at those who take the word of Heaven to them. Elias and Joseph were beaten in the gorges of the Kidron and they went beyond the Jordan to Solomon's house. Joseph was almost killed by a stone that struck his head. They lived for eight days in a deep grotto, with the man You sent and who knew all the secrets of the mountains. That night, they slowly passed to the other side... »

The disciples and apostles are excited in recalling and hearing of such persecutions. But Jesus calms them saying «The Innocents tinged with the purple of their innocent blood pave the way of the Christ. But that way is to be purpled over and over again, to erase the traces of Evil from the way of God. It is a regal road. Martyrs purple it for My sake. Blessed among the blessed are those who suffer persecutions for My sake. »

«Master, we were speaking to those peasants. Will You speak to them now? » asks John, the ex-shepherd.

«Go and tell them that I will speak at sunset near the gate of Emmaus. The sun prevents Me now. Go. And may God be with you. I will be at the end of this road. »

He blesses them and sets out again seeking shade, because the sun is very warm on the white road, on the sides of which two rows of plane-trees give very little shade.

**405. Best in a hay-shed and the speech  
in Emmaus of the plain. The little Michael.**

28<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Near the gate of Emmaus there is a house of peasants. It is <sup>405. 1</sup> silent, because they are all in the fields working. The sheaves of the previous day are already piled up on the threshing-floor. And hay is heaped in rustic hay-lofts. A warm smell comes from the hay and the sheaves in the scorching midday sun. With the exception of the cooing of doves and the chirping of gossipy quarrelsome sparrows, no other noise can be heard. Both fly unrelentingly from the roof or the nearby trees to the piles of sheaves and hay and first among those who will enjoy those products, they peck the stiff ears, they deal one another blows with their wings, they struggle to snatch more seed or to steal the most tender blades of hay, like greedy unscrupulous warriors. They are the only thieves in Israel, where I noticed there is the greatest respect for other people's property. Houses may be left open and threshing-floors and vineyards unguarded! Apart from true robbers, the highwaymen who attack people in the gorges of mountains, there are no petty thieves, not even greedy people who would steal fruit or a little pigeon belonging to other people. Everybody goes his own way and also when they walk through their neighbour's property, they seem to have no eyes or hands. It is true that hospitality is so widely practised, that there is no need to steal in order to get something to eat. Only with regards to Jesus, and because hatred is so bitter as to compel people to neglect the age-old habit of being hospitable to pilgrims, only with regard to Him it happens that houses deny hospitality and food. But, generally speaking, they feel pity for other people, and the lower classes in particular do so.

Thus, after knocking at a door and not getting any answer, the apostles without any fear have taken shelter in a shed, where there are agricultural tools and empty pitchers and, as if everything belonged to them, they have taken some hay to sit on, some buckets to draw water from the well and pitchers to drink, and thus moisten the stale bread and cold lamb, which they eat almost in silence, as they are so sleepy and stupefied by the sun. And with the same freedom with which they used hay and pitch-

ers, they lie down on the sweet-smelling hay and there is soon a snoring chorus varied in tone and duration.

Jesus also is tired. More than tired, He is sad. He looks at the sleeping apostles for some time. He is praying and thinking... He is thinking while His eyes follow mechanically the quarrelling sparrows and doves and the swallows darting over the sunny threshing-floor. The screams of those swift masters of flight seem to be resolute positive answers to the grievous questions that Jesus is asking Himself. Then He lies on the hay, too, and His sweet sad sapphire eyes are soon covered by His eyelids. And His face becomes motionless in sleep, and perhaps because He has fallen asleep with a heavy heart, His countenance is very much as tired and grievous as it will be at His death...

405. 2     <sup>2</sup>The peasants who own the house have come back: men, women and children. And the disciples seen previously are with them. They see Jesus and His apostles sleeping on the hay and their voices fade into whispers not to awake them. Some mothers smack their children who will not keep quiet, or they threaten to do so.

A little fellow, with the steps of a little dove and a finger in his mouth, approaches Jesus and watches Him - «He is the nicest» he says - while He sleeps with His head resting on His folded arm as on a pillow. And all the rest, barefooted, on the tips of their toes, end up by imitating him, Matthias and John being the first, and they are deeply moved seeing Him sleep on the hay and Matthias remarks: «As in His first sleep... He is now... our Master, but less happy than then... He misses His Mother also... »

«Yes, He does. Only persecution is always close to Him. But we will always love Him, we have always loved Him as we did then. .. » replies John.

«Even more, Matthias. Much more. Then we loved Him only out of faith and because it is pleasant to love a baby. But now we love Him also because we know Him... »

«He has been hated since He was a baby, John, Remember what they did in order to strike Him!... » and Matthias goes pale remembering.

«That is true... But blessed be that sorrow! We lost everything but Him. And that is what matters. What use would it have been to us if we still had relatives, our homes and our little prop-

erties, if He were dead? »

«That's true. You are right, Matthias. And of what avail will it be to us to have the whole world, when He will no longer be in the world? »

«Don't tell me... Then we shall really be forlorn... You may all go. We are staying here near the Master» says John dismissing the peasants.

«We are sorry that we never thought of giving them the key. They could have come in and have been more comfortable... » says the oldest man of the household.

«We will tell Him... But He will be happy also because of your love. Go now... »

The peasants go home and the smoke rising from the chimney tells everybody that they are preparing food. But they do so gracefully, checking the children, making little noise... and likewise, they noiselessly take the food to the disciples and whisper: «We have kept theirs aside... for when they awake. »

Then silence envelops the house once again. Perhaps the reapers, who have worked since dawn, are lying on their beds to rest during these hours when it would be impossible to remain in the fields in the scorching sun. The disciples also are dozing... And doves and sparrows are also resting... Only the swallows keep darting indefatigably, and their swift flights write azure words in the sky and shadowy words on the white threshing-floor...

<sup>3</sup>The little fellow seen a short time ago, who is now beautiful <sup>405. 3</sup> in his very short shirt, the only garment he has on in this torrid hour, puts his little dark head out of the kitchen door, watches closely, and comes forward cautiously with his tender little feet aching on the hot ground. His loose little shirt almost slips off his plump shoulders. He reaches the disciples and tries to step over them to go and look at Jesus once again. But his little legs are too short to get over the sturdy bodies of adults, and he stumbles falling on Matthias who awakes and sees the little face of the mortified child, ready to cry. He smiles and understanding the reason for the little fellow's manoeuvre, he says: «Come here, I will put you between Jesus and myself. But you must be silent and still. Let Him sleep, because He is tired. »

And the child sits down happily, adoring Jesus' beautiful face. He looks at Him, studies Him, and is dying to caress Him and

touch His golden hair. But Matthias is vigilant smiling and does not allow him. The child then asks in a low voice: «Does He always sleep like that? »

«Always like that» replies Matthias.

«Is He tired? Why? »

«Because He walks and talks so much. »

«Why does He talk and walk? »

«To teach children to be good and to love the Lord to go to Heaven with Him. »

«Up there? How does one do that? It's far... »

«Your soul, do you know what a soul is? »

«No! »

«It is the nicest thing we have, and... »

«More than our eyes? My mummy says that my eyes are two stars. Stars are beautiful, you know?! »

The disciple smiles and replies: «It is more beautiful than the little stars of your eyes, because a good soul is more beautiful than the sun. »

«Oh! Where is it? Where have I got it? »

«Here. In your little heart. And it hears and sees everything and it never dies. And when one is never bad and dies as a just person, one's soul flies up there, with the Lord. »

«With Him? » and the child points at Jesus.

«With Him. »

«But has He got a soul? »

«He has soul and divinity. Because that Man you are looking at is God. »

«How do you know? Who told you? »

«The angels did. »

The boy, who was sitting leaning on Matthias, cannot take in the news quietly, and he jumps to his feet asking: «Have you seen the angels? » and he looks at Matthias opening his big eyes wide. The news is so astonishing that he forgets Jesus for a moment and thus he does not see that He has half-opened His eyes, awakened by the boy's exclamation. Jesus closes His eyes once again smiling and turns His head round to the other side.

«Be quiet! See? You are waking Him up... I will send you away. »

«I'll be good. But what are the angels like? When did you see

them? » His voice is a whisper again.

And Matthias patiently tells the boy, who is sitting again in an ecstasy on his chest, what happened on Christmas Night. And he patiently replies to all the boy's questions: «Why was He born in a stable? Had He no home? Was He so poor that He could not find a house? Has He got a house now? Has He no Mother? Where is His Mother? Why does She leave Him all alone, since She knows that they wanted to kill Him? Does She not love Him?... » A hail of questions and one of answers. And the last one - to which Matthias replies: «His holy Mother loves Her Divine Son very much, but She makes a sacrifice of Her sorrow for letting Him go about, so that men may be saved. And to console Herself She considers that there are still good men capable of loving Him» - brings about this reply: «Does She not know that there are good children who love Him? Where is She? Tell me, because I will go and say to Her: "Do not weep. I will give all my love to Your Son". What do you think? Will She be pleased? »

«So much, my child» says Matthias kissing him.

«And will He be glad? »

«Yes, very much. You will tell Him when He awakes. »

«Oh! yes!... But when will He awake? » The boy is anxious...

<sup>405. 4</sup>Jesus can resist no longer. He turns round, with His eyes wide open and a bright smile, and He says: «You have already told Me, because I have heard everything. Come here, child. »

Oh! the boy does not need to be told twice and he throws himself on Jesus, caressing and kissing Him, touching His forehead, His golden eyebrows and eyelids with his little finger, looking at himself in His blue eyes, rubbing himself against His soft beard and silky hair, repeating at each discovery: «How lovely You are! Lovely! Lovely! » Jesus and Matthias smile.

Then as the others wake up, because the boy is not so careful now about making too much noise, the disciples and apostles smile seeing such an accurate examination by the little man in the bud, half-naked, plump, who moves blissfully up and down Jesus' body, scanning it from head to foot and ends up by saying: «Turn round! » and he explains why: «to see Your wings» and when he is disappointed he asks: «Why have You not got them? »

«I am not an angel, My child. »



«But You are God! How can You be God if You are not full of wings? How will You be able to go up to Heaven? »

«I am God. Just because I am God I do not need wings. I do what I want and I can do everything. »

«Well, then, make my eyes like Yours. They are beautiful. »

«No. I gave you the ones you have and I like them as they are. Ask Me, instead, to make your soul just, so that you can love Me more and more. »

«You gave me that as well, so You must like it as it is» replies the little one with childish logic.

«Yes, I like it very much now because it is innocent. But while your eyes will always be the hue of ripe olives, your soul may change from white to black, if you are bad. »

«No, not bad. I love You and I want to do what the angels said when You were born: “Peace to God in Heaven and glory to men of goodwill”» says the boy mistakenly, which makes the adults guffaw, and the little fellow mortified becomes dumb.

But Jesus comforts him while correcting him: «God is always Peace, My child. He is the Peace. But the angels were giving Him glory because the Saviour was born and they were giving men the first rule to obtain the peace, which was to derive from My birth: “to have goodwill”. The one you want. »

«Yes, give me it. Put it here where that man said that I have my soul» and with his forefingers he beats his little chest several times. «Yes, My little friend. What is your name? »

«Michael! »

«The name of the powerful Archangel. Well, I give goodwill to you, Michael. And may you be a confessor of the true God, saying to persecutors what your angelic patron said: “Who is like God? ”. May you be blessed now and always» and He imposes His hands on him.

But the little one is not convinced. He says: «No, kiss me here. On my soul. And Your blessing will go into it and will remain closed in it» and he uncovers his chest to be kissed without anything being interposed between his body and Jesus’ divine lips.

All those who are present smile and are moved at the same time. And quite rightly! The wonderful faith of the innocent child, who has gone to Jesus, some may say by instinct, but I say: urged by his soul, is really touching, and Jesus points it out say-

ing: «Eh! if everybody had the heart of a child!... »

<sup>5</sup>Hours have gone by in the meanwhile. The house becomes <sup>405. 5</sup> busy again. The voices of women, children and men can be heard. And a mother calls: «Michael! Michael! Where are you? » and she appears at the door and with fear in her eyes she looks at the low well with a dreadful thought in her heart.

«Be not afraid, woman. Your son is with Me. »

«Oh! I was afraid... He likes to play with water so much... »

«And in fact he came to the Living Water that descends from Heaven to give Life to men. »

«He has troubled You... But he slipped away so silently that I did not hear him... » says the woman apologizing.

«Oh! no! He has not disturbed Me. He comforted Me! Children never grieve Jesus. »

Men and other women approach Jesus. The head of the family says: «Come in and take some food. And forgive us if we did not make You the master of our house the first moment we saw You... »

«I have nothing to forgive you. I have been very comfortable here. I feel honoured by your respect. We had food, and your well is cool and your hay soft. More than what is necessary for the Son of Man. I am not a Syrian satrap. »

And Jesus followed by His apostles enters the wide kitchen to take some food while the men prepare the threshing-floor to make room for those who are already coming from all around to hear the Master, and others are busy preparing food and drinks and skinning a little lamb to be given to the evangelizers as provisions for their journey. Some women bring eggs and butter, which brings a protest from Peter who says rightly that butter cannot be carried in their haversacks as it would melt immediately in the heat. But jugs can be useful... And the women fill one with butter, which they cover and lower into the well to keep as cool as possible.

Jesus thanks them and would like to limit the offerings. Impossible! He wastes His breath. More presents arrive from everywhere and everyone apologizes for giving so little...

Peter whispers: «It is well seen that the shepherds have been here. Reclaimed ground... good ground. »

The threshing-floor is crowded with undaunted people al-

though the day is still warm and the last rays of the sun shine on the floor.

405. 6     <sup>6</sup>Jesus begins to speak: «Peace be with you! I will not repeat what you already know, as I see that the doctrine of the Master of Israel is already known here, through the work of My good disciples. I leave to them the glory and the task of teaching you and of doing so more and more in order to make you perfectly certain that I am the One Promised by God, and that My Word is from God. »

«And Your miracles are from God, may You be blessed! » shouts a woman from the middle of the crowd, and many turn around to look in her direction. The woman lifts up in her arms a ruddy smiling boy and shouts: «Master, this is little John whom You cured\* at the Clear Water. The little boy with fractured legs whom no doctor could cure and I brought to You with faith and You cured him and You held him in Your lap. »

«I remember, woman. Your faith deserved the miracle. »

«My faith has increased, Master. All my relatives believe in You. Go, son, and thank the Saviour. Let him go to Him... » begs the woman.

And the crowds part to let him through and he runs towards Jesus, his arms outstretched to embrace Him. And they embrace each other in the middle of the hosannas and comments of the townsfolk and of foreigners, because the country people are already aware of the fact and are not surprised.

Jesus resumes on speaking holding the boy by the hand.

«And thus a grateful mother has confirmed My Nature and the power of faith in the heart of God, Who never disappoints the trustful just requests of His children.

405. 7     <sup>7</sup>I ask you to remember Judas Maccabee\*\* when he appeared on this plain to study the formidable encampment of Gorgias, which was five thousand foot and one thousand cavalry strong, all trained to battle, well protected by armour and weapons and war towers. Judas was watching with his three thousand men who had neither shields nor swords, and he could perceive fear insinuate itself into the hearts of his soldiers. He then spoke,

\* cured, in 125. 5.

\*\* I ask you to remember Judas Maccabee in the episode of the battle of Emmaus referred to *1 Maccabees 4, 1-25*.

strong with the right that was approved of by God, because it aimed not at abuse of power, but at defence of their invaded and desecrated Fatherland. And he said: "Do not be afraid of their numbers, and do not flinch at their attack. Remember how our ancestors were delivered at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh was pursuing them in force". And after reviving their faith in the power of God, Who is always on the side of just people, he taught them how to obtain assistance. He said: "Now let us raise our voices to Heaven, and the Lord will have mercy on us, and remembering His covenant with our ancestors, He will destroy this army confronting us today, and all the nations will know for certain that there is a Saviour Who delivers Israel".

Now, I will show you two capital points to have God with you, to assist you in just undertakings. The first: to have Him as your ally, you must have the upright souls of our ancestors. Remember the holiness and prompt obedience of the patriarchs to the Lord, whether the request was of little or great importance. Remember with what loyalty they remained faithful to the Lord. We complain bitterly in Israel that the Lord is no longer as benign to us as He was in the past. But has Israel the spirit of her ancestors? Who broke and repeatedly breaks off the alliance with the Father?

The second capital thing to have God with you: humbleness. Judas Maccabee was a great Israelite, he was a valiant soldier. But he does not say: "I will destroy that army today and the nations will know that I am the saviour of Israel". No. He says: "And the Lord will destroy that army confronting us, because we are not able to do that, weak as we are". Because God is a Father and He takes care of His little ones and to prevent them from perishing, He sends His powerful formations to fight the enemies of His children with superhuman weapons. When God is with us, who can defeat us? Always bear that in mind, now and even more in future, when they will endeavour to beat you, and not in matters of relative importance, such as a national battle, but in things of wider interest both in time and consequences, concerning your souls. Do not be overcome by dismay or pride. They are both harmful. God will be with you if you are persecuted because of My Name and He will give you strength in persecutions? God will be with you if you are humble, if you admit that by

yourselves you can do nothing, whereas you can do everything if you are united to the Father.

Judas does not show off adorning himself with the title of Saviour of Israel. But he gives that title to the Eternal Father. In fact men busy themselves in vain, if God does not assist their efforts. Whereas he wins without bustling about, who trusts in the Lord, Who knows when it is right to reward people with victories, and when it is just to punish with defeats. Foolish is the man who wants to judge God, advising or criticising Him. Can you imagine an ant, which watching the work of a marble-cutter, should say: "You are no good at doing that. I could do better and quicker than you"? He who wants to teach God, cuts the same poor figure. And to his ridiculous figure he adds ingratitude and arrogance, forgetting what he is: a creature, and what God is: the Creator. Now if God created such a perfect creature, who may think that he can advise God Himself, what will the perfection of the Author of all creatures be like? That simple thought should be enough to abase pride, destroying that wicked satanic plant, the parasite which creeps into man's intellect and destroys it, and supplants, suffocates and kills every good tree, every virtue which makes man great on the Earth, really great, not because of great wealth or coronets, but because of justice and supernatural wisdom, and makes him happy in Heaven forever and ever.

405. 8 <sup>8</sup>And let us consider another good piece of advice given to us by the great Judas Maccabee and by the events of that day in this plain. When they joined battle, Judas' troops, with whom God was, defeated and routed their enemies, pursuing some as far as Gezer, Azotus, Idumaea and Jamnia, as history tells us, and killing some by the sword, leaving over three thousand men dead in the fields. But Judas said to his warriors excited with the victory: "Never mind the booty, for we have another battle ahead of us. Gorgias and his forces are in the mountains not far from us. We must go on fighting against our enemies and defeat them completely and then we can collect the booty at leisure". And they did so. And they won a great victory and they carried off rich booty, and they returned chanting praises to God because "He is good, and His mercy is everlasting".

Man also, every man, is like the fields around the holy city of the Judaeans. He is surrounded by external and internal en-

emies, who are all cruel and anxious to join battle with the holy city of each man: that is, with his soul, and to do so all of a sudden, to take it by surprise by means of numberless tricks and destroy it. Passions, which Satan cultivates and instigates, and which man does not watch with all his will to check, as they are dangerous if one does not bridle them, whereas they are harmless if one keeps a check on them as on a robber enchained, and the world that from outside conspires with passions through the allurements of the flesh, of wealth, of pride, are very much like the powerful armies of Gorgias, armoured, equipped with war towers, skilled bowmen, fast cavalymen, always ready to attack under Evil's orders. But what can Evil do if God is with the man who wants to be just? Man may suffer and be wounded, but his freedom and life will be saved and he will enjoy victory after the good battle. But that does not happen once only, but it happens again and again as long as life lasts, or until man divests himself of his humanity and becomes spirit more than body, a spirit so united to God so that arrows, bites, the fire of war can no longer injure him severely, and they fall after striking him superficially, as a drop of water falls on a hard brilliant jasper.

Do not stop to plunder, do not divert your attention, until you are on the threshold of life, not of this life on the Earth, but of the true Life in Heaven. Then, having won, you can carry off your booty and go in, and move forward, gloriously, before the King of kings and say: "I have won. Here is my booty. I collected it with Your help and my goodwill and I bless You, Lord, because You are good and Your mercy is everlasting".

<sup>9</sup>This applies to everybody in general. But for you who believe <sup>405. 9</sup> in Me there is another battle lying in wait. Nay, several battles. The battle against doubt. The battle against the words you will be told. And the battle against persecutions.

I am about to be raised to the place, for which I came from Heaven. That place will frighten you, and will seem to disprove My words. No. Look at the event with spiritual eyes. And you will see that what happens is the confirmation of what I really am. Not the poor king of a poor kingdom. But the King foretold by the prophets, to the foot of Whose only immortal throne, all the nations of the Earth will come, as rivers flow to the ocean, and will say: "We worship You, King of kings and eternal Judge,

because through Your holy Sacrifice You have redeemed the world”.

Resist doubt. I do not lie. I am He of Whom the prophets speak. Like John’s mother a little while ago, raise the remembrance of what I have done for you, and say: “These deeds come from God. He left them with us in memory, as confirmation and assistance to believe, and believe in this very hour”. Fight and you will win against doubt that chokes the breath of souls. Fight against the words that you will be told. Remember the prophets and My works. And reply to hostile words with the prophets and the miracles, which you have seen Me work. Be not afraid. And do not be ungrateful out of fear, being silent about what I have done for you. Fight against persecutions. But do not fight by persecuting your persecutors, but by making a heroic confession to those who, with threats of death, will try to convince you to deny Me. Always fight against all your enemies. Against your humanity, your fears, unworthy compromises, utilitarian alliances, pressure, threats, torture, death.

405. 10 <sup>10</sup>Death! I am not a leader who says to his people: “Suffer for Me, while I have a good time”. No. I am the first to suffer to set the example for you. I am not the commander of armies who says to his soldiers: “Fight to defend Me. Die to save My life”. No. I am the first to fight. I will be the first to die, to teach you how to die. As I have always done what I told people to do, and preaching poverty, continence, moderation, justice, forgiveness, I have remained poor, chaste, moderate, just, and I have forgiven and will forgive; as I have done all that, I will do the last thing. I will teach you how to redeem. I will teach you not by words, but by deeds. I will teach you to obey, by obeying the hardest obedience: the obedience of My death.

I will teach you to forgive, forgiving in My last torture, as on the straw of My cradle I forgave Mankind for tearing Me from Heaven. I will forgive as I have always forgiven. *Everybody. Everybody as far as I am concerned.* I will forgive My little enemies, the inert, indifferent, changeable, and My big enemies, who not only grieve Me by being apathetic to My power and desire to save them, but they deeply distress and will distress Me by being deicides. But I will forgive. And as I will not be able to absolve unrepentant deicides, I will still pray, in My final distress, the Father

for them... that He may forgive them... as they are intoxicated with a satanic liqueur... I will forgive... And I ask you to forgive in My name. And love. Love as I love, as I love you and will love you forever.

<sup>11</sup>Goodbye. It is growing dark. Let us pray together, and then you may all go back to your homes with the words of the Lord in your hearts, and may they become well-shaped ears of corn for your future hunger, when you will be wishing to hear again your Friend, the Master, your Saviour, and only by elevating your souls to Heaven you will be able to find Him Who loved you more than Himself. 405. 11

«Our Father Who are in Heaven... » and Jesus, with outstretched arms, like a majestic white cross against the dark wall of the northern facade, says the Our Father slowly.

He then blesses with the Mosaic blessing. He kisses the children and blesses them once again. He takes leave and goes northwards, going round the town-walls of Emmaus, without entering the town. The violet hues of twilight slowly absorb the gentle vision of Jesus, Who proceeds more and more towards His destiny.

In the half-dark yard there is the silence of sorrowful peace... Almost of expectation. Then the weeping of little Michael, like the plaintive bleating of a little lamb which is all alone, breaks the spell and tears well up in many eyes while many lips repeat the innocent words of the little boy: «Oh! Why has He gone away? Come back! Come back!... Lord, make Him come back! » And when Jesus disappears completely, there is the desolate ascertainment of reality: «Jesus is no longer here! » In vain his mother tries to comfort little Michael, who is weeping as if he had lost more than his mother, and from her arms he cannot take his eyes off the spot where Jesus disappeared and with his arms outstretched he calls: «Jesus! Jesus! »

<sup>12</sup>... Jesus waits to be at a little distance, then He says: «We shall go to Joppa. The disciples have worked hard there and the people are awaiting the word of the Lord. » 405. 12

There is not much enthusiasm for the proposed further prolongation of the road but Simon Zealot points out that it is a quick journey and on a good road from Joppa to the estates of Nicodemus and Joseph, and John is happy to be going towards



the sea. And the others, convinced by such considerations, end up by going more willingly along the road that takes to the sea.

Jesus says: «You will put here the vision of September 20<sup>th</sup> 1944: “Jesus and the Gentiles in a seaside-town”, which you will entitle: “At Joppa Jesus speaks to Judas of Kerioth and to some Gentiles”, because the episode took place there after a day of miracles and preaching. »

#### **406. At Jeppa. A useless sermon to Judas of Kerioth and dialogue on the soul with some Gentiles.**

20<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

406. 1 <sup>1</sup>I see Jesus sitting in the inner yard of a house, which is modest although not splendid. He looks very tired. He is sitting on a stone bench near a well with a low parapet, above which a green pergola forms an arch. The bunches of grapes are just beginning to form. The flowers must have fallen off recently and the tiny grapes are like millet-seeds hanging from small green stalks. Jesus has put His right elbow on His right knee and His chin is resting in the hollow of His hand. At times, He lays His folded arm on the edge of the well and His head on His arm, as if He wished to be more comfortable: as if He wanted to sleep. His hair then falls down veiling His tired face, which, when visible, looks pale and serious, framed by curly red-blondish locks.

A woman goes backwards and forwards, her hands covered with flour, and she passes from a room in the house to a smaller room on the other side of the yard where the oven must be. She looks at Jesus every time she passes, but she does not disturb Him. It must be almost evening, because the sunbeams skim the top of the terraced roof more and more faintly and soon vanish completely.

406. 2 <sup>2</sup>About a dozen doves are about to descend cooing to the yard for a last meal. They wheel around Jesus, as if they wished to ascertain who is the stranger and distrustfully dare not land on the ground. Jesus forgets His worries and smiles, He stretches out one hand, palm upwards, and says: «Are you hungry? Come» as if He were speaking to human beings. The most daring one

alights on His hand, followed by two more. Jesus smiles: «I have nothing» He says in reply to their cooing requests. He then calls in a loud voice: «Woman? Your doves are hungry. Have you any corn for them? »

«Yes, Master. It's in the sack under the porch. I'll come at once. »

«Never mind. I will give it to them. I like doing it. »

«They will not come to You. They do not know You. »

«Oh! They are on My shoulders and even on My head!... »

Jesus is in fact walking with a strange crest: a leaden dove, the breast of which is so iridescent that it seems a precious breast-plate.

The woman looks out of the door incredulously and exclaims: «Oh! »

«See? Doves are better than men, woman. They perceive who loves them. Men... do not. »

«Master, forget about what happened. Only a few people hate You. The others, if they do not all love You, at least respect You. »

«Oh! I will not lose heart because of that. I only wish to point out to you that animals are often better than men. »

Jesus has opened the sack, He puts His long hand into it and pulls out some golden corn, which He places in the folded edge of His mantle. He closes the sack again and returns to the yard, defending Himself from the intrusive doves that want to help themselves. He unfolds His mantle and scatters the corn on the floor and laughs at the bustle and brawl of the greedy birds. The meal is soon over. The doves drink from a hollow dish near the well and look at Jesus again.

«Go now. I have nothing else. »

They fly about for a little while landing on Jesus' shoulders and knees and then go back to their nests. Jesus becomes engrossed in meditation again.

<sup>3</sup>There is a loud knocking at the door. The woman rushes to <sup>406. 3</sup> open. It is the disciples.

«Come» says Jesus. «Have you given the money to the poor? »

«Yes, Master, we have. »

«To the last coin? Remember that what is given to us is not for us, but it is to be given in Charity. We are poor and we live on the mercy of other people. *Miserable is the apostle who exploits his*

*mission for human ends! »*

«And if one day we are without bread and we are accused of infringing the Law because we imitate sparrows, eating grains of corn as they do, what shall we do? »

«Have you ever lacked anything, Judas? Anything essential since you have been with Me? Have you ever fallen exhausted along the road? »

«No, Master. »

«When I said to you: “Come” did I promise you comfort and riches? And speaking to those who listen to Me, have I ever said that I will give “My disciples” profit on the Earth? »

«No, Master. »

«Well, Judas? Why have you changed so much? Do you not know, do you not realize that your dissatisfaction and your indifference grieve Me? Do you not see that your discontent affects also your brothers? Why, Judas, My friend, are you forsaking Me now, whereas you have been called to so great a destiny, and you came to My love and to My Light with so much enthusiasm? »

«Master, I am not forsaking You. I am the one who takes most care of You, of Your interests, of Your success. I would like to see You triumph everywhere, believe me. »

«I know. You want that in a human way. It is a great thing. But I do not want that, Judas, My friend... I have come for something by far greater than a human triumph and a human kingdom... I have not come to give My friends the crumbs of a human triumph. But I have come to give you a great, substantial, abundant reward, a reward that is no longer a reward, as it is so complete: it is participation in My eternal Kingdom, it is union in the rights of the children of God... Oh! Judas! Why are you not elated by this sublime inheritance, which one achieves through renunciation, but which knows no decline?

406. 4     4Come closer to Me, Judas. See? We are alone. The others have understood that I wanted to speak to you, the dispenser of My... riches, of the alms that the Son of Man, the Son of God receives to give them, in the name of God and of Man, to man. And they have withdrawn into the house. We are alone, Judas, in this sweet hour of the evening, when our hearts fly to our remote homes, to our mothers, who certainly think of us, while preparing their solitary supper, and they caress with their hands the place where

we used to sit before this hour of God, when His Most Holy Will took us to make Him loved in spirit and truth.

Our mothers! Mine, so holy and pure, Who is so fond of you all and prays for you, the friends of Her Jesus... Mine, Who has but this peace, in the anxiety of Her Maternity of Mother of the Christ: to know that I am Surrounded by your love... Do not disappoint, do not injure that heart of a Mother, My dear friends. Do not break it through any evil action of yours! Your mother, Judas. Your mother, who the last time we passed through Kerioth could not stop blessing Me and wanted to kiss My feet, because she is happy that her Judas is in the Light of God, and she used to say to Me: "Oh! Master! Make my Judas holy! What does the heart of a mother seek, but the welfare of her child? And which welfare is better than the eternal Good? ". In fact! And which welfare, Judas, is there greater than the one to which I want to lead you all, and which one reaches following My Way? Your mother is a holy woman, Judas. A true daughter of Israel. I did not allow her to kiss My feet. Because you are My friends and because in each of your mothers, in every good mother, I see Mine, Judas. And I would like you to see in your mothers Mine, with Her tremendous destiny of Co-Redeemer, and I would like you not to wish to kill Her because... because you would feel that you were killing your own.

<sup>406. 5</sup>Judas, do not weep. Why weep? If you feel no remorse in your heart with regards to your mother or Mine, why shed those tears? Come here, rest your head on My shoulder and tell your Friend your anxiety. Have you done wrong? Do you feel you are about to do wrong? Oh! do not remain alone! Defeat Satan with the help of Him Who loves you. I am Jesus, Judas. I am the Jesus Who cures diseases and expels demons. I am the Jesus Who saves... and Who loves you so much, that He worries at seeing you so enfeebled. I am the Jesus Who teaches to forgive seventy times seven. But I, personally, forgive you not seventy, but seven hundred, seven thousand times... *and there is no fault, Judas, there is no fault, Judas, there is no fault, Judas, that I do not forgive, that I do not forgive, that I do not forgive*, if the repentant culprit says to Me: "Jesus, I have sinned". Even less: if he only says: "Jesus! ". And even less: if he only looks at Me imploringly. And the first faults that I forgive, do you know, My friend, whom I forgive them? *The*

*most guilty and the most repentant.* And do you know which are the very first ones that I forgive? *Those committed against Me.*

Judas?... Can you not find one word to reply to your Master?... Is your anguish so severe that it makes words die on your lips? Are you afraid that I may denounce you? Be not afraid! I have been longing for such a long time to speak to you thus, holding you on My heart, like twins in a cradle, born of the same mother, almost one flesh only, two babies who have sucked in turn the same warm nipple, each savouring his brother's saliva together with his mother's sweet milk. I now have you and I will not let you go away until you tell Me that I have cured you. Be not afraid, Judas. I want your confession. But your companions will think that this is a friendly conversation, because after it our faces will beam so much with mutual peace and love. And I will get them to believe so more and more, by holding you against My chest at supper this evening, dipping in the dish My own bread for you and offering it to you as to a favourite, and you will be the first to whom I will give the cup, after giving thanks to God. You will be the king of the banquet, Judas. And you will really be so. You will be the Bride of the Groom, O soul that I love, if you become clean and free, depositing your dust in My purifying lap.

406. 6      ‘Are you not going to speak to tell Me your grief?’ »

«You have spoken so kindly to me... of my mother... of home... of Your love... A moment of weakness... I am so tired!... And I thought that You had not loved me thus for some time... »

«No. *It is not so.* Only one thing of what you said is true, and that is that you are tired. But you are not tired of the road, of dust, of the sun, of mud, of crowds. *You are tired of yourself.* Your soul is tired of your body and of your mind. So tired that it will end extinguished by deadly tiredness. Poor soul, which I called to eternal brightness! Poor soul, which is aware of My love for you and reproaches you for tearing it away from My love! Poor soul, which reproaches you in vain - as in vain I caress you - for acting underhandedly with your Master. But it is not you who acts. It is he who hates you and Me. That is why I said to you: “Do not remain alone”. Now, listen. You know that I spend most of My nights in prayer. If one day you should feel the courage of being a man and you wanted to be Mine, come to Me when your companions are sleeping. Stars, flowers, birds are good wise witnesses.

And they are discreet and compassionate. They are struck with horror at the crime committed in their presence, but they do not utter any word to say to men: “This man is the Cain of his brother”. Have you understood, Judas? »

«Yes, Master, I have. But believe Me: I am only tired and deeply moved. I love You with all my heart and... »

«All right. That is enough. »

«Will You give me a kiss, Master? »

«Yes, Judas. I will give you a kiss now and many in the future... »

Jesus draws a heavy sigh, with grief. But He kisses Judas on the cheek. He then takes his head between the palms of His hands, and holding it tight, in front of Himself, only a few inches from His face, gazes at him, scrutinises him, pierces him with His magnetic eyes. And Judas, a wretched miserable man, does not turn a hair. He seemingly remains impassive while being examined. He only grows wan and closes his eyes for a moment. And Jesus kisses his closed eyelids, his lips and then his heart, bending His head to look for the heart of His disciple... and He says: «There you are: to dispel haze, to make you feel Jesus’ kindness and fortify your heart. » He then lets him go and directs His steps towards the house, followed by Judas.

<sup>7</sup>«You have come at the right moment, Master! Everything is ready. We were waiting only for You» says Peter. <sup>406. 7</sup>

«Well. I was speaking to Judas about many things... Is that right, Judas? We will also have to see to that poor old man whose son was killed. »

«Ah! » Judas leaps at the good opportunity to recover completely and divert the suspicion of the others, if they had any. «Ah! You know, Master? We were stopped today by a group of Gentiles along with Jews of the Roman colonies in Greece. They asked many questions. We replied as best we could. But we certainly did not convince them. However they were kind to us and gave us much money. Here it is, Master. We will be able to do much good with it. » And Judas produces a large purse of soft leather that gives a silvery sound when laid on the table. It is the size of a child’s head.

«All right, Judas. You will distribute the money impartially. What did the Gentiles want to know? »

«Information on future life... whether man has a soul and whether it is immortal. They mentioned the names of their masters. But... what could we say? »

«You should have told them to come. »

«We told them. Perhaps they will come. »

They continue to eat. Judas is near Jesus Who gives him some bread dipped into the sauce in the dish containing some roast meat.

They are eating small black olives, when they hear someone knock at the door. And shortly afterwards the landlady enters saying: «Master, You are wanted. »

«Who are they? »

«Strangers. »

«But it's not possible! », «The Master is tired! », «He has been walking and speaking all day! », «In any case! Gentiles in the house! Now then! ». The Twelve are in a turmoil, like a beehive which has been disturbed.

«Hush! Peace! It does not trouble Me to listen to those who look for Me. It is relaxation to Me. »

«It might be a trap! At this time of the day!... »

«No. *It is not.* Be calm and have a rest. I rested while waiting for you. I will go. I will not ask you to come with Me... although... although I tell you that it is to the Gentiles that you will have to take your Judaism, which will be nothing but Christianity. Wait for Me here. »

«Are You going alone! No! Never! » says Peter standing up.

«Stay where you are. I am going alone. »

406. 8 <sup>s</sup>He goes out. He looks out of the main door. In the twilight there are many men waiting for Him.

«Peace be with you. Do you want Me? »

«Hail, Master» replies an old imposing man. He is wearing a Roman garment that shows under a short round mantle with hood on his head. «We spoke to your disciples today. But they could not tell us much. We would like to speak to You. »

«Are you the ones of the rich offering? Thank you on behalf of the poor of God. » Jesus turns around towards the landlady and says: «Woman, I am going out with these people. Tell My disciples to come and meet Me near the seashore because, if I am right, these people are merchants of the trade centre... »

«And seafarers, Master. You are right. »

They all go out together on to the main road, which is bright in the moonlight.

«Have you come from afar? » Jesus is in the middle of the group and beside Him there is the old man who spoke previously, a handsome old man with a sharp Latin profile. On the other side there is another elderly man, whose features are clearly Jewish. Around them there are two or three thin people with olive complexion, lively and somewhat ironical eyes, and then some sturdier people of different ages: about a dozen people all together.

«We come from the Roman colonies in Greece and Asia. Some of us are Jews, some Gentiles... That is why we dared not come... But we were assured that You do not despise Gentiles... as other people do... The observant Judaeans, I mean, those of Israel, because elsewhere also Judaeans are not so severe. In fact I, a Roman, am married to a Judaeans from Lycaonia, whereas this gentleman, a Jew from Ephesus, is married to a Roman woman. »

«I do not despise anybody... But we must be indulgent to those who cannot yet consider that: *As there is one only Creator, all men are of one blood.* »

«We know that You are great among philosophers. And what You say confirms it. You are great and good. »

«He is good who does good things. Not who speaks well. »

«You speak well and do good things. So You are good. »

° «What did you want to know from Me? »

406. 9

«Today, forgive us, Master, if we annoy You with our inquisitiveness. But it is a good inquisitiveness because it seeks the Truth with love... Today we wanted to learn from Your disciples the truth concerning a doctrine, which was already mentioned by ancient philosophers of Greece and which You, so we are told, are now preaching once again, making it more extensive and beautiful. Eunice, my wife, spoke to some Judaeans who had heard You, and she repeated Your words to me. Eunice, You know, is Greek and learned and she knows the words of the wise men of her country. She found a resemblance between Your words and those of a great Greek philosopher. And Your words have reached also Ephesus. And as we came to this port, some on business and some to celebrate the rite, we found ourselves among friends and we talked. Business does distract people



from thinking also of other higher matters. After filling our emporia and holds, we have time to resolve our doubt. You say that a soul is eternal. Socrates said that it is immortal. Do You know the words of the Greek master? »

«No. I did not study in the schools of Rome and Athens. But tell Me. I will understand you just the same. I am acquainted with the thought of the Greek philosopher. »

«Socrates, contrary to what we Romans believe, and also to what your Sadducees think, states and maintains that man has a soul and that it is immortal. Consequently he says that death is nothing but liberation for the soul that passes from prison to a free place, where it joins those whom it loved and where it meets the wise men with whose wisdom it was acquainted, and great people, heroes, poets, and where it no longer finds injustice or sorrow. There is instead eternal happiness in a peaceful residence open to the immortal souls which lived in justice. What do You say, Master? »

«I solemnly tell you that the Greek master, although in the error of a false religion, was stating the truth saying that the soul is immortal. As a searcher after truth and a lover of Virtue, he heard the Voice of the unknown God whisper in the depth of his soul: the Voice of the True God, of the Only God: the Most High  
406. 10 Father from Whom I come to take men to the Truth. <sup>10</sup>Man has a soul, One, True, Eternal, Mistress, worthy of reward and of punishment. It is entirely his. Created by God it is destined in God's Thought to go back to God. You, Gentiles, devote yourselves too much to the cult of your bodies. The human body is really a wonderful work, on which there is the mark of the eternal Finger. You admire your minds too much; man's mind is a jewel enclosed in the coffer of his head from which it sends forth its sublime beams. A great celestial gift of God Creator, Who made you according to His Thought with regards to your figure, that is, a perfect work of organs and members, and He gave you His likeness with His Thought and Spirit. *But the perfection of the likeness is in the Spirit.* Because God has no members or dull flesh, as He is not subject to sensuality or incentive of lust. But He is a most pure Spirit, He is eternal, perfect, immutable, indefatigable in acting, continuously reviving in His works, which He paternally adapts to the ascensional march of His creature. The spir-

it, created in all men by the same Source of power and bounty, knows no variation of the original perfection, but knows many of them after it is infused in the body. One only is the uncreated and most perfect Spirit, and it has always been such. Three are the spirits that were created perfect and... »

«You are one, Master. »

«Not I. In My body I have the divine Spirit that was not created, but was generated by the Father through exuberance of Love. And I have the soul created for Me by the Father, as I am, now, the Man. A perfect soul as befits the Man God. But I am speaking of other spirits. »

«Which, then? »

«The two first parents from whom the race descends; they were created perfect and then they voluntarily fell into imperfection. The third one, created for the delight of God and of the Universe, is too superior to the possibilities of thought and faith of the present world to be pointed out to you. The spirits, as I was saying, created by the same Source with the same degree of perfection, are subject, through their own will and merit, to a double metamorphosis. »

«So You admit a second life? »

«*There is but one life.* In it the soul, which was originally made in God's likeness, passes, through justice faithfully practised in everything, to a more perfect likeness, I would say, to a second creation of itself, whereby it evolves towards a double likeness to its Creator, becoming capable of possessing holiness, *which is perfection of justice and likeness of children to the Father.* It is to be found in the blessed souls, that is in those who your Socrates says live in Hades. Whereas I say that when Wisdom will have spoken its words and signed them with its blood, they will be the blessed souls of Paradise, that is, of the Kingdom of God. »

«And where are they now? »

«In expectation. »

«Of what? »

«Of the Sacrifice. Of Forgiveness. Of Liberation. »

«They say that the Messiah will be the Redeemer, and that You are such... Is it true? »

«It is true. It is I Who am speaking to you. »

406. 11      11«So, You will have to die? Why, Master? The world is in such great need of Light, and You want to leave it? »

«You, a Greek, are asking Me this? You, who are dominated by Socrates' words? »

«Master, Socrates was a just man. You are holy. Consider how much the Earth needs holiness. »

«It will be raised to the ten thousandth power for each sorrow, each wound and drop of My Blood. »

«By Jove! Never was there a Stoic greater than You, as You do not just preach the contempt of life, but You are preparing Yourself to throw it away. »

«I do not despise life. I love it as the most useful thing to buy the salvation of the world. »

«But You are too young, Master, to die! »

«Your philosopher says that what is holy is dear to the gods, and you said that I am holy. If I am holy I must long to go back to the Holiness from Which I came. So never young enough not to have such longing. Socrates also says that he who is holy loves to do things pleasant to the gods. What is more pleasant than restoring to the embrace of the Father the children whom sin had banished, and giving man peace with God, the source of all wealth? »

«You say that You do not know Socrates' words. How come then, that You know the ones You have spoken? »

«I know everything. *The thoughts of men, when they are good thoughts, are nothing but the reflection of a thought of Mine.* When a thought is not good, it is not Mine, but I have read it in the succession of times and *I knew, I know and will know,* when it was, is and will be spoken. I know. »

406. 12      12«Lord, come to Rome, the light of the world. You are surrounded by hatred here. You will be surrounded by veneration there. »

«It would surround man, not the Master of the supernatural. I have come for the supernatural. I must bring it to the children of the People of God, although they are the most stubborn against the Word. »

«So Rome and Athens will not have You? »

«They will have Me. Be not afraid. They will have Me. Those who want Me will have Me. »

«But if they are going to kill You... »

«The spirit is immortal. The spirit of every man is immortal. Will Mine not be so, the Spirit of the Son of God? I will come with My active Spirit. I will come... I can see numberless crowds and the Houses erected in My Name... I am everywhere... I will speak in cathedrals and in hearts... My evangelization will know no rest... The Gospel will travel all over the Earth... all good people towards Me... and there... I go by at the head of My multitude of saints and I lead it to Heaven. Come to the Truth... »

«Oh! Lord! Our souls are bandaged in formulae and errors. How can we open the doors to them? »

«I will unlock the doors of Hell, I will open the doors of your Hades and of My Limbo. And will I not be able to open yours? Say: “I want it” and like locks made with wings of butterflies they will collapse as if they were pulverised at the passing of My Ray. »

«Who will come in Your Name? »

«See that man who is coming here with the other fellow who is little more than a teenager? They will come to Rome and to the world. And many more with them. As solicitous as they are now, for My love that spurs them and gives them no rest but beside Me, they will come, for the sake of those redeemed by My Blood, to gather you together and lead you to the Light. Peter! John! Come here. I think I have finished and I can be with you. Have you anything else to tell Me? »

«Nothing else, Master. We will go away taking Your words with us. »

«May they germinate within you with eternal roots. Go. Peace be with you. »

«Hail, Master. »

And the vision ends...

<sup>13</sup>Jesus says also to me: «Are you exhausted? A laborious dic- 406.13  
tation. A dictation rather than a vision. But the subject is wanted by certain people. Who? You will know on My Day. Now you may go in peace as well. »

Of my own I wish to add that the conversation of Jesus with the Gentiles took place along the sea-front of a seaside-town. In the moonlight one could see very clearly the calm waves lap the

rocks of the breakwater of a large port full of ships. I could not mention this before because the group spoke all the time and if I had described the place I would have lost the thread of the conversation. They spoke walking up and down a long stretch of the seafront near the port. The place is solitary as there are no passengers and the seafarers have all gone back to the boats, the red lamps of which can be seen shining like rubies in the night. I do not know which town it is. It is certainly beautiful and important.

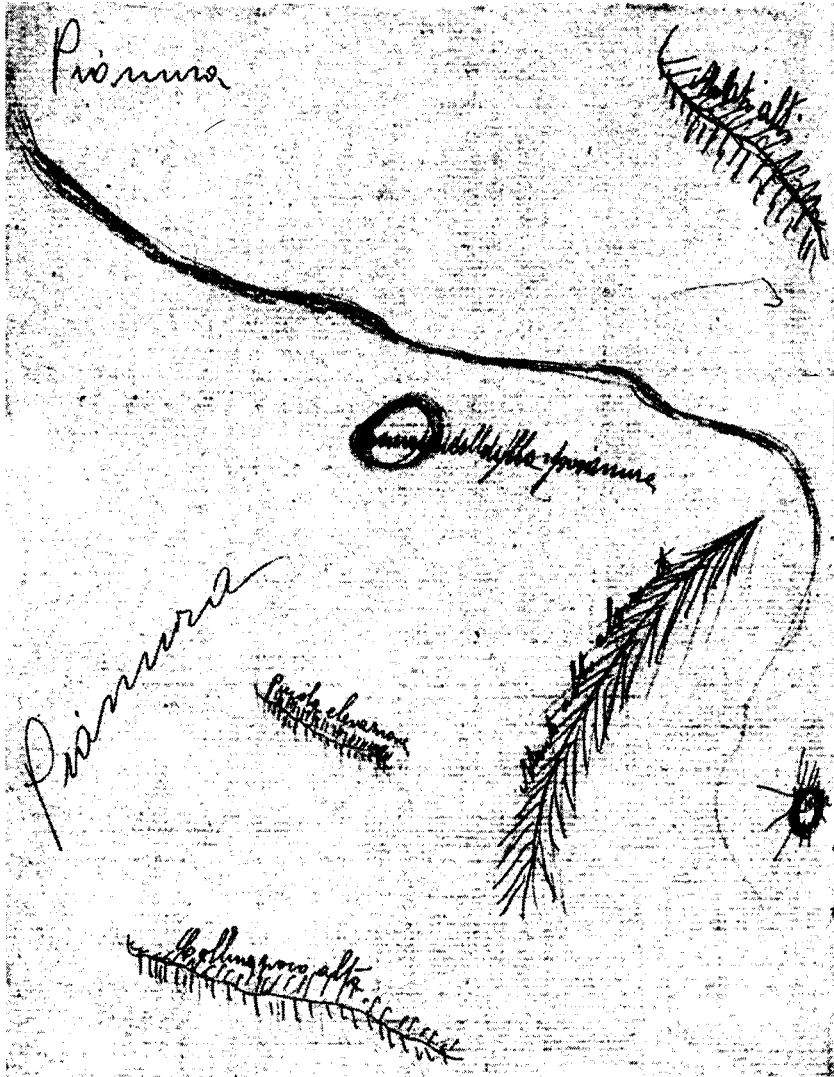
#### **407. In the countryside properties of Nicodemus. The parable of the two sons.**

29<sup>th</sup> March 1946\*.

407. 1 <sup>1</sup>Jesus arrives there at dawn, when the air is fresh and cool. And the fertile fields of good Nicodemus are beautiful in the early sunshine. They are beautiful despite the fact that the corn has been cut in many of them and they thus have the tired look of fields after the death of the corn, which in golden piles, or stretched on the ground like corpses, awaits being carried to the threshing-floors. And many other flowers die with the corn: sapphire star-shaped cornflowers, violet snapdragons, the minute corollas of scabiouses, the ephemeral chalice of harebells, the smiling radiant crowns of camomiles and daisies, showy scarlet poppies, and hundreds of other flowers, which star-shaped, in spikelike clusters, in bunches, in radiant crowns were previously smiling where there is now yellowish stubble. But the pain of the ground despoiled of its corn is comforted by the foliage of the fruit trees, which look more and more joyful because of the fruit growing on them with many different hues and on which dew drops, not yet dried by the sun, shine like diamond dust.

Farmers are already busy at their work. They are happy because the hard work of harvest time is almost over. And they sing while cutting, and laugh happily, competing with one an-

\* **29<sup>th</sup> March 1946.** This is the start of a new hand-written book. On the inside of the cover, M. V. has drafted the drawing on the next page. From the top to the bottom and from the left to the right, we can read: Plain, high mountains, Emmaus of the plain, Plain, Small elevation, rather high mounts, Bether, Small hill.



other in cutting quicker with the sickle or tying sheaves... There are several groups of well-fed peasants who are happy to work for their good master. At the edges of the fields or behind the reapers, there are children, widows, old people, waiting to glean and they are waiting peacefully, because they know that there is plenty for everybody, as is customary, «by Nicodemus' order» as a widow explains to Jesus, Who had asked her.

«He watches to ensure that a large number of ears are deliberately not tied in the sheaves, and left for us» she says. «And not satisfied with so much charity, after taking a just quantity of corn in proportion to the seed, he gives out the rest to us. Oh! He does not wait for the Sabbatical year to do that! But he always does that to help the poor with his crops, and he does the same with his olive-trees and vineyards. That is why God blesses him with wonderful harvests. The blessings of the poor are like dew on seeds and flowers, and thus each seed yields more ears and no flower falls before the fruit sets. <sup>2</sup>And he told us that this year the whole lot will be given to us, because this is a year of grace. I do not know to which grace he refers. Unless it is because, as is rumoured among us poor people and among his happy servants... because he is secretly a disciple of Him, Who is said to be the Christ, and preaches one should love the poor, in order to show love to God... Perhaps You know Him, if You are Nicodemus' friend... because friends are generally fond of the same people... Joseph of Arimathea, for instance, is a great friend of Nicodemus, and it is rumoured that he, too, is a friend of the Rabbi... Oh! what have I said! May God forgive me! I have wronged the two good masters of our plain!... » The woman is upset.

Jesus smiles and asks: «Why, woman? »

«Because... Oh! tell me, are You a true friend of Nicodemus and Joseph, or are You one of the Sanhedrin, one of the false friends who would harm those two good people, if they knew for certain that they are friends of the Galilean? »

«Do not worry. I am a true friend of those two good men. But you know many things, woman! How did you get to know them? »

«Oh! we all know! The high classes with hatred; the low ones with love. Because, even if we do not know Him, we love the Christ, we the forlorn ones, whom He only loves and teaches to love. And we tremble for Him... The Judaeans, Pharisees, scribes and priests are so wicked!... But I am scandalising You... Forgive me. My tongue... is the tongue of a woman and cannot keep quiet... But it is because they are the cause of all our sorrows, the powerful ones who oppress us mercilessly, and compel us to fast on days which are not prescribed by the Law, but imposed by the necessity of finding money to pay all the tithes which they, the rich ones, have levied on poor people... And it is because all our

hopes are in the Kingdom of this Rabbi, Who, if He is so good now that He is persecuted, what will He be when He is king? »

<sup>3</sup>«His Kingdom is not of this world, woman. He will have neither palaces nor armies. He will not impose human laws. He will not make donations of money. But He will teach the better ones to do so. And the poor will find not two or ten or one hundred friends among the rich, but all those who believe in the Master will join their wealth together to assist their needy brothers. Because from now on your fellow-creature will no longer be called “neighbour”, but “brother”, in the name of the Lord. » 407. 3

«Oh!... » The woman is astonished, dreaming of such an era of love. She caresses her children, smiles, then raises her head and says: «So You assure me that I have not wronged Nicodemus... speaking to You? I did it so spontaneously... Your eyes are so kind!... Your countenance so serene!... I don't know... I feel as safe as if I were near an angel of God... That's why I spoke... »

«You have done no harm. Be sure of that. On the contrary, you have praised My friend so highly that I will commend him as well, and he will be dearer to Me than ever... Do you live here? »

«Oh! no, Lord. I come from a village between Lydda and Bethdagon. But when one needs relief, Lord, one runs even if the road is a long one! The winter months... the months of starvation are longer... »

«And eternity is longer than life. People ought to have for their souls the same care they have for their bodies, and run where there are words of life... »

«And that is what I do with the disciples of Rabbi Jesus, the good one, You know? The only good Rabbi of the too many rabbis we have. »

«You do the right thing, woman» says Jesus smiling, but making gestures to Andrew and James of Zebedee, who, are with Him whereas the others have gone towards Nicodemus house, to stop gesticulating to make the woman understand that it is Rabbi Jesus Who is speaking to her.

«Of course I do the right thing. I do not want to be guilty of not loving and believing Him... They say that He is the Christ... I do not know Him. But I want to believe. Because I think that those who refuse to accept Him as such will be in trouble. »

«And supposing His disciples were mistaken? » asks Jesus



tempting her.

«That's not possible, Lord. They are too good, humble and poor, to think that they are following a man who is not holy. In any case... I have spoken to people who were cured by Him. Do not commit the sin of not believing, Lord! You would damn Your soul... After all... I think that if we were all mistaken and He were not the promised King, He is certainly holy and a friend of God, if He speaks those words and cures souls and bodies... And it is always a good thing to esteem good people. »

407. 4 «What you say is true. Persist in your faith... 4There is Nicodemus... »

«Yes, with the disciples of the Rabbi. In fact they go round the country evangelizing the reapers. Yesterday also we ate their bread. »

Nicodemus, with his tunic tucked up, is coming forward without noticing the Master and he tells the peasants not to pick up any of the ears that have been cut. «We have enough bread for ourselves... Let us give the gift of God to those who have none. And let us give it to them without any fear. A late frost might have destroyed our crops. Not one seed has been lost. Let us give God's bread back to Him by giving it to His unhappy children. And I can assure you that next year's harvest will be even more plentiful, ten times richer, because He said so\*, "an overflowing measure will be given to those who give". »

The peasants, respectful and happy, listen to their master nodding assent. And Nicodemus, from one field and one group to another, repeats his kind instructions.

Jesus, half-hidden by a curtain of canes near a partition ditch, approves and smiles. The more Nicodemus approaches Him, the more He smiles, as their meeting and the disciple's surprise are now very close at hand.

In fact Nicodemus jumps over the ditch to go into other fields... and becomes petrified before Jesus Who stretches His arms towards him. At last he recovers his power of speech: «Holy Master, how come You are here with me, may You be blessed? »

«To become acquainted with you, if there was any such need, through the words of the most sincere witnesses: those whom

\* He said so, in 171. 4.

you overwhelm with charity... »

Nicodemus is on his knees, prostrated on the ground and also the disciples, led by Stephen and Joseph from Emmaus on the mountains, are on their knees. The peasants and the poor people present understand and they all prostrate themselves venerating the Master, seized with astonishment.

«Stand up. Up until a little while ago I was the Wayfarer who inspired confidence... Continue to consider Me as such. And love Me without any fear. <sup>5</sup>Nicodemus, I sent the ten apostles who are missing, to your house... » 407. 5

«I spent the night outside to watch that an order was carried out... »

«Yes, and God blesses you for that order. Which voice told you that this year, and not the next one, is a year of grace, for instance? »

«... I do not know... And I know... I am not a prophet. But I am not a fool. And a light from Heaven was added to my intelligence. My Master... I wanted the poor to enjoy the gifts of God, while God is still among the poor... And I dared not hope to have You, to give a sweet flavour and sanctifying power to these crops, to my olive-groves, vineyards and orchards, which will be for the poor children of God, my brothers... But now that You are here, raise Your blessed hand and bless them, so that with the nourishment of the body, the holiness emanating from You may descend into those who will feed on them. »

«Yes, Nicodemus. Yours is a just desire approved of by Heaven. » And Jesus opens His arms to bless.

«Oh! Wait! That I may call the peasants» and with a whistle he whistles three times and the shrill sound spreads in the calm air causing reapers, gleaners and curious people to rush from everywhere. A little crowd...

Jesus opens His arms and says: «Through the power of the Lord, for the desire of his servant, may the grace of health, both of soul and body, descend upon every grain, every grape, olive and fruit and may it prosper and sanctify those who eat of them with good spirit, free from concupiscence and hatred, and willing to serve the Lord by obeying His divine perfect Will. »

«So be it» reply Nicodemus, Andrew, James, Stephen and the other disciples... «So be it» reply the people of the crowd stand-

ing up, as they had knelt down to be blessed.

407. 6      ««Stop the work, My friend. I want to speak to them. »  
            «A gift in a gift. Thank You on their behalf, Master! »

They go into the shade of a thick orchard and wait for the arrival of the ten who had been sent to the house. They in fact arrive panting and disappointed at not finding Nicodemus.

Jesus then begins to speak:

«Peace be with you. I wish to propose a parable to all of you standing here around Me, so that each of you may avail himself of the teaching and of the part that is more suitable to him. Listen. »

A man had two sons. He approached the first one and said: “Son, come and work in your father’s vineyard today”. It was a great sign of honour on his father’s side. He in fact thought that his son was capable of working where up to then his father had worked. He obviously saw goodwill, perseverance, capability, experience and love for his parent. But the son, whose mind was somewhat distracted by worldly things and who was afraid of being taken for a servant - Satan makes use of such mirages to avert people from Good - fearing mockery and perhaps also reprisal from his father’s enemies, who dared not threaten him but would not have so much respect for the son, replied: “I will not go. I do not feel like it”. The father then went to the other son, saying to him what he had already said to the first one. And the second son replied: “Yes, father, I will go at once”. But what happened? The first son whose mind was honest, after a first moment of weakness in temptation, a moment of rebellion, repented having disgusted his father, and without saying anything went to the vineyard, where he worked all day until late in the evening, and then went back home with peace in his heart, having fulfilled his duty. The second son, instead, untruthful and weak, went out, that is true, but he then wasted his time wandering about the town making useless visits to influential people from whom he hoped to get some benefit. And he said to himself, in his heart: “Father is old and will not leave the house. I will tell him that I obeyed and he will believe me...”. But when evening came also for him and he went back home, his tired look of an idle person, his creaseless clothes, and his uncertain way of greeting caused his father to watch him and compare him with his first

son. The latter, in fact, had come back tired, dirty, untidy, but jovial and sincere. He looked humble and kind, as if he wished to say to his father, without boasting, that after all he had fulfilled his duty: "I love you truly, so much so, that to make you happy I resisted temptation". And the comparison spoke clearly to the intelligent father, who embraced his son saying: "May you be blessed because you have understood love! "

In fact, what do you think? Which of the two had loved? You will certainly say: "He who did the will of his father". And who did it? The first or the second son? »

«The first» replies the crowd by one consent.

«Yes, the first. <sup>7</sup>Also in Israel, and you complain about it, in the eyes of God are not holy those who beat their chests saying "Lord! Lord! ", without being really repentant of their sins in their hearts - in fact their hearts become harder and harder - neither are those holy, who ostentatiously devote rites to be regarded as saints, whereas in private they lack charity and justice. Neither those are holy who rebel against the Will of God Who sends Me, and they contest it as if it were the will of Satan, which will not be forgiven. Those are not the ones who are holy in the eyes of God. But those are holy who acknowledging that everything that God does is well done, accept the Messenger of God and listen to His word in order to be able to do what the Father wants in a better and better way: they are holy and dear to the Most High. I solemnly tell you: ignorant and poor people, publicans and prostitutes will go before many who are called "masters", "powerful", "holy", and they will enter the Kingdom of God. And it will be just. Because John came to Israel to lead her on the ways of Justice and too many in Israel did not believe him - Israel who calls herself "learned and holy" - but publicans and prostitutes did believe him. And I came, and the learned and holy ones do not believe Me, but poor and ignorant people and sinners do believe in Me. And I have worked miracles; and they did not believe even them, neither do they repent for not believing. On the contrary, they hate Me and those who love Me. Well, I say: "Blessed those who can believe in Me and thus do the will of God, in Whom there is eternal salvation". Increase your faith and persevere. You will possess Heaven, because you knew how to love the Truth. Go. May God be always with you. »

He blesses them and dismisses them and then, walking beside Nicodemus, He goes towards the house of His disciple to rest during the hot hours of the day.

**408. In the countryside properties of Joseph of Arimathea.  
Multiplication of the corn and the power of faith.**

31<sup>st</sup> March 1946.

408. 1 <sup>1</sup>Here also the reapers are working hard. Nay, it would be better to say: the reapers have worked hard. Sickles, in fact, are no longer needed, as not one ear has been left uncut, the fields being closer to the Mediterranean shores than Nicodemus'. Jesus in fact has not gone to Arimathea, but to Joseph's estate in the plain, towards the sea, and the fields here before harvest time must have looked like another little sea of ears, they are so large.

In the middle of the bare fields there is a low, wide white house: a country house, but well kept. Its four threshing-floors are being filled with sheaves arranged in groups, as soldiers do with baggage-trains when they stop at camps. Numerous carts carry the precious goods from the fields to the threshing-floors, where many men unload them and pile them up, while Joseph moves from one threshing-floor to another, checking that everything is done properly.

From the top of a heap on a cart a peasant announces: «Master, we have finished. All the corn is on your threshing-floors. This is the last cart of the last field. »

«Very well. Unload the cart, unyoke the oxen and take them to the watering place and then to the stables. They have worked hard and deserve a rest. And you all have done a good job and deserve a rest. But the last job will be a light one because kind hearts are relieved by the joy of other people. <sup>2</sup>We shall now get the children of God to come here and we will give them the gift of the Father. Abraham, go and call them» he then says addressing a patriarchal peasant, who is perhaps the first of the peasant servants in Joseph's estate. I think he must be, because I see that the other servants have great respect for the old man, who does not work, but supervises and assists the master with his advice.

And the old man goes... I can see him move towards a very

low large building, which is more like a shed than a house, with two huge doors which reach up to the eaves gutter. I think that it is a kind of storehouse where carts and other agricultural tools are kept. He goes in and then comes out followed by a miserable heterogeneous crowd of people of every age... and of every degree of misery. There are emaciated people but without any physical defect, and there are cripples, blind and maimed persons, and people with diseased eyes... Many widows with little orphans around them, and wives of sick men, sad, shabby, feeble through waking and sacrificing themselves to cure their husbands.

They come forward with the typical aspect of poor people going to a place where they will be assisted: with shy countenance, the bashfulness of the honest poor, but, nevertheless, with a smile which just appears on their lips shading the sadness impressed on their wan faces by days of sorrow, but, nevertheless with a tiny spark of triumph, which is almost a reply to the ruthless obstinacy of destiny during continuous sad days, as if to say: «Today is a feast-day also for us, it is a feast, mirth, relief for us! »

The little ones open their eyes wide before the heaps of sheaves, which are higher than the house, and pointing at them they say to their mothers: «Are they for us? Oh! How lovely! ». The old people whisper: «May the Blessed One bless the merciful one! ». The beggars, cripples, the blind and maimed people and those with defective sight: «We also shall have bread at last, without having to stretch out our hands begging for it! ». And the sick people say to their relatives: «At least we shall be able to follow treatment knowing that you are not suffering because of us. Medicines will do us good, now. » And relatives reply to the sick people: «See? Now you will no longer say that we fast to let you have a morsel of bread. So be happy now!... » And the widows to their little orphans: «Dear children, we will have to bless the Father in Heaven most sincerely, as He acts as your father, and also good Joseph who is His administrator. Now we shall not hear you cry anymore because you are hungry, poor children, who have but your mothers to assist you... Poor mothers who have no riches but their hearts... » It is a joyful chorus and sight, but it also makes tears well up in one's eyes...

<sup>3</sup>And when the unhappy crowd is before him, Joseph begins to walk up and down their lines, calling them one by one, asking how many they are in the family, how long have they been widows, or ill and so on... and he takes notes. And for each case he gives instructions to the peasant servants: «Give ten. Give thirty. »

«Give sixty» he says after listening to an almost blind old man who comes up to him with seventeen grandchildren, all under twelve, the children of a son and a daughter of his who died, the former at reaping time the previous year, the latter of childbirth... and the old man says: «her husband consoled himself getting married again after one year, and he sent his five children to me saying that he would see to them. Instead, never one penny!... Now my wife also died and I am left... with these... »

«Give sixty to the old father. And you, father, wait here, later I will give you some clothes for the little ones. »

The servant points out that if they continue to give sixty sheaves every time, there will not be enough corn for everybody...

«And where is your faith? Am I perhaps storing up the sheaves for myself and sharing them out? No. No they are for the children dearest to the Lord. The Lord Himself will see that there is enough for everybody» replies Joseph to the servant.

«Yes, master. But numbers are numbers... »

«And faith is faith. And to show you that faith can do everything, I order you to double the quantities given to the first ones. Let him who had ten have ten more, and who had twenty, twenty more and give the old man one hundred and twenty. Go! Do that! »

The servants shrug their shoulders and carry out the order. And the distribution continues while the amazed beneficiaries rejoice seeing that they are receiving a quantity that exceeds the most optimistic hopes. And Joseph smiles, caressing the little ones who are busy helping their mothers, or he helps the cripples who are arranging their little piles, he helps those who are too old to do so, or the women who are too emaciated, and he has two sick people put to one side to let them have further assistance, as he did the old man with seventeen grandchildren.

The piles which were higher than the house, are now very low, almost on ground level. But everybody has had his share, and an

abundant one. Joseph asks: «How many sheaves are there still left? »

«One hundred and twelve, master» reply the servants after counting the remainder.

«Well. You will take... » Joseph glances over the list of names which he had written, and then he says: «You will take fifty and put them aside for seed, because it is holy seed. And the rest will be given one each to every head of the family who is present here. They are exactly sixty-two. »

The servants obey. They take fifty sheaves under a porch and hand out the rest. Now there are no more huge golden piles on the threshing-floors. But on the ground there are sixty-two little heaps, of different sizes, and their owners are busy tying them and loading them on to rudimentary wheelbarrows, or on stunted little donkeys that they untied from a fence at the rear of the house.

«Old Abraham, who has been chatting with the main peasant servants, approaches his master along with them and the master asks him: «Well? Have you seen? There was enough for everybody! And with surplus! »

«Master! There is a mystery here! Our fields cannot have yielded all the sheaves that you have distributed. I was born here and I am seventy-eight years old. I have been reaping for sixty-six. And I know. My son is right. Without a mystery we could not have given so much!... »

«But it is a matter of fact that we have given them, Abraham. You were beside me. The sheaves were handed out by the servants. There is no sorcery. It is not a dream. You can still count the sheaves. They are still there, although divided into many lots. »

«Yes, master. But... It is not possible that the fields have yielded so many! »

«And what about faith, my children? What about faith? What shall we do with our faith? Could the Lord belie His servant who made a promise in His Name and for a holy purpose? »

«Then, you have worked a miracle?! » exclaim the servants, ready to sing hosannas.

«I am not the type of man who works miracles. I am a poor man. The Lord worked it. He read my heart and saw two wishes in it: the first one was to lead you to my faith. The second was



to give much, so much to these unhappy brothers of mine. God consented to my desires... and He worked. May He be blessed for that! » says Joseph bowing reverently as if he were before an altar...

«And His servant with Him» says Jesus Who has been in hiding hitherto behind the corner of a little house surrounded by a hedge; I do not know whether it is the bakehouse or the oil-mill. And He now appears openly on the threshing-floor, where Joseph is standing.

«My Master and my Lord!! » exclaims Joseph falling on his knees to venerate Jesus.

408.5 «Peace to you. I have come to bless you in the name of the Father, and to reward your charity and your faith. <sup>5</sup>I shall be your guest this evening. Do you want Me? »

«Oh! Master! Are You asking me? Only... Only I will not be able to honour You here... I am with servants and peasants... in my country house... I have no fine table-cloths, no butler, no experienced servants... I have no refined food... no choice wines... I have no friends here... It will be a very poor hospitality indeed... But You will understand... Why, my Lord, did You not inform me beforehand? I would have provided... Hermas was here the day before yesterday with his friends... In fact I made use of them to inform these people, to whom I wanted to give what belongs to God... But Hermas did not say anything to me! If I had known!... Allow me, Master, to give instructions, so that I may try to find a remedy... Why are You smiling thus? » at last asks Joseph, who is in utter confusion with the sudden joy and because of the situation that he considers... a disaster.

«I am smiling at your unnecessary pains. Joseph, what are you looking for? For what you have? »

«What I have? I have nothing. »

«Oh! What a material man you are now! Why are you no longer the spiritual Joseph of a little while ago, when you spoke as a wise man? When you were promising, full of confidence, for your faith and to give faith? »

«Oh! did You hear me? »

«I heard and saw you, Joseph. That laurel hedge is very useful, as from it I could see that what I have sown in you is not dead. That is why I say that you are worrying about trifles. You have no

butlers or experienced servants? But where charity is practised, there is God, and where God is, there are His angels. So which house-stewards more experienced than they are do you want? You have no delicious food or choice wines? Which food do you want to give Me, which drink more delicious than the love you had for these people and you have for Me? You have no friends to honour Me? And what about these? Which friends are dearer to the Master, Whose name is Jesus, than the poor and the unhappy? Come on, Joseph! Even if Herod should be converted and he should open his halls to give Me honour and hospitality, in a purified palace and the heads of all the castes were there, I would not have a more select court than this one, to which I also wish to say a word and give a gift. Will you allow Me? »

«Oh! Master! I want everything You want! Tell me. »

«Tell them to gather together, and get the servants also to assemble here. There will always be some bread for us... It is better for them to listen to My word now, rather than run here and there busying themselves with trifles. »

The astonished people crowd around quickly...

‘Jesus says: «You have realized here that faith can multiply corn when such desire is based on a desire of love. But do not confine your faith to material necessities. God created the first grain of wheat and since then wheat ears for the bread of men. But God created also Paradise and it awaits its citizens. It was created for those who live according to the Law and remain faithful notwithstanding the sorrowful trials of life. Have faith and you will be able to remain holy with the help of the Lord, just as Joseph was able to allot a double quantity of corn to make you happy twice and confirm his servants in the faith. I solemnly tell you that if man had faith in the Lord, and if it were for a just reason, not even mountains, the rocky bowels of which are rooted in the earth, could resist, and they would shift from one place to another at the order of anyone who has faith in the Lord. Have you faith in God? » He asks addressing everybody.

408. 6

«Yes, Lord! »

«Who is God according to you? »

«The Most Holy Father, as the disciples of the Christ teach us. »

«And what is Christ to you? »

«The Saviour. The Master. The Holy One! »

«Only that? »

«The Son of God. But we must not say that, because if we do, the Pharisees will persecute us. »

«But do you believe that He is the Son of God? »

«Yes, Lord. »

«Well, increase your faith. Even if you are silent, stones, plants, stars, the ground, everything will proclaim that Christ is the true Redeemer and King. They will proclaim it in the hour of His accession, when He will be in the most holy purple with the wreath of Redemption. Blessed are those who will believe that as from now and will believe even more then, and will have faith in the Christ and consequently eternal life. Have you such unshakeable faith in Christ? »

«Yes, Lord. Tell us where He is, and we will beg Him to increase our faith in order to be blessed as You say. » Not only the poor, but also the servants, the apostles and Joseph take part in the last prayer.

«If you have as much faith as the size of a mustard seed, and you keep the precious pearl of your faith in your hearts, without allowing any human, or superhuman or wicked thing to take it away from you, each of you will be able to say to that mighty mulberry-tree which shades Joseph's well: "Uproot yourself and be transplanted in the waves of the sea". »

408.7 <sup>7</sup>«But where is Christ? We are expecting Him to be cured. His disciples did not cure us, but they said: "He can do it". We would like to be cured to be able to work» say the sick and unfit men.

«And do you think that Christ can do it? » asks Jesus making signs to Joseph not to say that He is the Christ.

«We do believe it. He is the Son of God. He can do everything. »

«Yes. He can do everything... and He wants everything! » shouts Jesus stretching out His right arm imperiously and then lowering it as if to swear. And He concludes with a powerful cry: «And let that be done, to the glory of God! »

And He is about to turn around towards the house. But those who have been cured, about twenty people, shout, rush, surround Him in a confusion of hands stretched out to touch, bless, find His hands, garments, to kiss and caress Him. They isolate Him from Joseph, from everybody...

And Jesus smiles, caresses, blesses... He slowly frees Himself, and still followed by the people, He disappears into the house while hosannas rise in the sky, which is becoming violet in the incipient twilight.

#### 409. The family drama of the Sanhedrin John.

2<sup>nd</sup> April 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Joseph of Arimathea is resting in a half-lit room, because all the curtains have been lowered as a protection from the sun. There is a death like silence in the entire house. Joseph is dozing in a low seat covered with mats... A servant enters, he goes towards his master and touches him to wake him. Joseph opens his sleepy eyes and looks at the servant inquisitively. 409. 1

«Master, your friend John is here... »

«My friend John?! How is he here if the Sabbath is not yet over?! » Joseph has woken up with a start, surprised at the visit of a member of the Sanhedrin on a Sabbath. And he orders: «Let him come in at once. »

The servant goes out and, while waiting, Joseph walks pensively up and down the semi-dark cool room...

«May God be with you, Joseph! » says John, the member of the Sanhedrin we already saw\* at the first banquet offered to Jesus at Arimathea, and also in Lazarus' house at last Passover, always as a person not hostile to Jesus, although not a disciple.

«And with you, John! But... as I know that you are just, I am astonished at seeing you before sunset... »

«That's true. I have infringed the Sabbatic law. And I sinned knowing that I was sinning. So, serious is my sin... And great will be the sacrifice that I will consume to be forgiven. And momentous is the reason that instigated my commission of this sin... Jehovah, Who is just, will be indulgent to His guilty servant in view of the important motive that drove me to sin... »

«Once you did not speak like that. The Most High was only rigid severity as far as you were concerned. And you were perfect because you feared Him as an inexorable God... »

\* we already saw, in 114. 4/6 and 375. 5.

«Oh! perfect!... Joseph, I have never confessed my secret faults to you... But it is true. I did judge God inexorable. Like many in Israel. We were taught to consider Him thus: the God of vengeance... »

«And you have continued to believe so even after the Rabbi came to let His people know the true Face of God, His true Heart... The Face, the Heart of a Father... »

«It's true. But... I had never heard Him speak for any length of time... But... you will remember, since the first time I saw Him at the banquet in your house, I assumed an attitude of... respect, if not of love for the Rabbi. »

«That is true... But for the love I have for you I would like you to pass on to an attitude of love for Him. Respect is too little... »

«You love Him, don't you, Joseph? »

«Yes, I do. And I am telling you, although I know that the Chief Priests hate those who love the Rabbi. But you are not capable of delation... »

«No. I am not... And I would like to be like you. But shall I ever succeed? »

«I will pray that you may succeed. It would be your eternal salvation, my dear friend... »

409. 2 <sup>2</sup>Silence follows full of reflections...

Then Joseph asks: «You told me that a serious reason drove you to infringe the Sabbath. Which? Can I ask you without being too indiscreet? I think that you have come to have help from your friend... And I must know, in order to help you... »

John rubs his forehead with his hand, he presses his broad forehead, which is beginning to go bald, as is typical of men in full virility, he mechanically caresses his grizzly hair, his thick square cut beard... He then raises his head, stares at Joseph saying: «Yes. An important reason. And a painful one. And... a great hope... »

«Which? »

«Joseph, can you believe that my house is like hell and will soon no longer be a home... as it will soon be devastated, dispersed, destroyed, crushed? »

«What? What are you saying? Are you raving? »

«No, I am not... My wife wants to leave me... Are you surprised? »

«... Yes... I am... because I have always known her to be good... and because your family seemed to be a model one... you all kindness... she all virtue... »

John sits down holding his head in his hands...

Joseph goes on: «Now... this... decision... I... Well... I cannot believe that Anne has done anything wrong... or that you have... But I believe even less with regard to her... entirely devoted to her home and children... No!... There can be no fault in her!... »

«Are you sure? Really sure? »

«Oh! my poor friend! I have not the eye of God. But as far as I can judge, that is what I think... »

«Do you not think that Anne is... unfaithful...? »

«Anne?! But, my friend! Has the summer sun injured your brain? Unfaithful with whom? She never leaves the house, she prefers the country to town. She works as the best of her servants, she is nothing but humble, modest, active, loving with you and the children. A light woman does not love such things. Believe me. Oh! John, on what do you ground your suspicion? Since when? »

«I have always suspected. »

«Always? Well, yours is a disease!... »

«Yes. And... Joseph, I have many faults. But I do not want to confess them to you only. The day before yesterday some disciples and poor people passed by my house. They said that the Rabbi was on His way to your house. And yesterday... yesterday was a very stormy day for my house... so much so that Anne took the decision I told you... During the night - and what a night - I have pondered very much... And I came to the conclusion that only He, the perfect Rabbi... »

«Divine, John, divine! »

«... As you wish... That He only can cure me and repair... rebuild my house, giving Anne... my children... everything back to me... » The man is weeping and while shedding tears he continues: «Because He only sees and speaks the truth... and I will believe Him... <sup>3</sup>Joseph, my friend, let me stay here and wait for Him... » 409. 3

«The Master is here. He will leave after sunset. I will go and call Him for you» and Joseph goes out...

After a few minutes the curtain is drawn again to let Jesus

pass... John stands up and bows respectfully.

«Peace to you, John. Why have you been looking for Me? »

«That You may help me to see... and You may save me. I am very unhappy. I have sinned against God and against my wife. And from one sin to another I have come to the point of infringing the Sabbath law. Absolve me, Master. »

«The Sabbath law! A great holy law! And far be it from Me the idea of considering it of no importance and old-fashioned. But why do you put it before the first commandment? What? You ask Me to absolve you for infringing the Sabbath and you do not ask absolution for lacking charity and torturing an innocent soul, driving to despair and to the threshold of sin the soul of your wife? You ought to be distressed about that more than anything else! About calumniating her... »

«Lord I have only spoken to Joseph about it, a short time ago. I have not mentioned it to anybody else, believe me. I kept my grief so secret that my good friend Joseph was not aware of anything, and he was amazed when I told him. He has now told You, in order to help me. Joseph is a just man and he will not talk to anybody about it. »

«He has not mentioned it to Me. He only told Me that you wanted Me. »

«Oh! How do You know then? »

«How do I know? As God knows the secrets of hearts. Shall I tell you the state of your heart? »...

Joseph is about to withdraw discreetly. But John himself stops him saying: «Oh! Stay. You are my friend! Since you were groomsman at my wedding, you can help me with the Rabbi!... » and Joseph remains.

«Shall I tell you? Do you want Me to help you to know yourself? Oh! be not afraid! I do not have a cruel hand. I can uncover wounds but I do not make them bleed to cure them. I can understand and be indulgent. And I know how to cure and heal, provided one wants to be cured. And you do want it. So much so that you have looked for Me. Sit here, beside Me, between Joseph and Me. He was your groomsman at your earthly wedding. I would like to be the best man of your spiritual wedding... Oh! I would

<sup>409.</sup> <sup>4</sup> love that!... <sup>4</sup>Now, listen to Me carefully. And answer all My questions frankly. What do you think of the action of God Who

created man and woman, so that they should be united? Was it a good or a bad thing? »

«A good one, Lord. Like all the things made by God. »

«You are right. Now tell Me: if the action was good, what were to be its consequences? »

«Equally good, Lord. And they were good, although Satan came to upset them, because Adam was always comforted by Eve, and Eve by Adam. And their consolation was more deeply felt when alone, exiles on the Earth, they supported each other. Also material consequences were good, that is, their children, through whom mankind propagated, and the power and goodness of God shone. »

«Why? Which power and goodness? »

«Well... the one carried out in favour of men. If we look back... yes... there are just punishments, but there are many, more numerous good deeds... And the Covenant made with Abraham and renewed with Jacob is infinite goodness... and up to the present day. - And repeated by truthful lips: the prophets... up to John... »

«And by the Rabbi, John» interrupts Joseph.

«Those are not the lips of a prophet... or the lips of a Master... They are... much more. »

Jesus smiles lightly at the... still restricted profession of faith of the member of the Sanhedrin, who does not go to the extent of saying. «They are divine lips» although he already thinks so.

«So God did the right thing in joining man and woman together. Agreed. But how did He want man and woman to be? » asks Jesus.

«One body only. »

«All right. Now, can the body hate itself? »

«No. »

«Can one member hate another member? »

«No. »

«Can one member separate from another? »

«No. Gangrene only, or leprosy or an accident can amputate a member from the rest of the body. »

«Very well. Therefore only a sorrowful or wicked thing can separate what by God's will is *one* unit only? »

«It is so, Master. »

<sup>5</sup>«Well, then, although you are convinced of such things, why <sup>409. 5</sup>



do you not love your body, and you hate it so much, that you get gangrene to grow between one member and another, whereby the weaker member, the mortified one, separates and leaves you all alone? »

John lowers his head, becomes silent while fretting the fringes of his garment.

«I will tell you why. Because Satan, the usual disturber, has come between you and your wife. Nay: he has come into you, with a disorderly love for your wife. And when love is disorderly, it becomes hatred, John. Satan has worked on your virile sensuality to get you to commit sin. Because that is where your sin began from one disorder that has brought about new and much serious disorders. In your wife you have not seen only a good companion and the mother of your children, but also an object of pleasure. And that has made your eyes like those of an ox, which sees everything altered. You saw things as you were seeing them. That is how you saw your wife. An object of pleasure for you, you considered her such also for other people, whence your feverish jealousy, your irrational fear, your sinful arrogance, which made of her a frightened, imprisoned, tortured, slandered woman. What does it matter if you do not beat her, if you do not revile her in public? Your suspicion is a stick, your doubt is slander! You calumniate her thinking that she could go to the extent of being unfaithful to you. What does it matter if you treat her as your rank demands? In the privacy of your home she is worse than a slave for you, because of your beastlike lust, which degrades her beyond endurance, and which she has suffered silently and submissively, hoping to convince you, to calm you, to make you good, and which has only served to irritate you more and more, to the extent of turning your house into a hell, in which the demons of lust and jealousy are roaring. Jealousy! What can you think of more slanderous for a wife than jealousy? And what is a clearer indication of the state of a heart than jealousy? You may rest assured that wherever it nestles, foolish, irrational, groundless, offensive, obstinate as it is, there can be no love for one's neighbour or for God. But there is selfishness. You ought to be grieved over all that, not at infringing the close of the Sabbath! And to be forgiven you must repair the ruin caused by you... »

409. 6      <sup>6</sup>«But Anne wants to go away, by now... Come and convince

her... You are the only one who can judge whether she is really innocent, after hearing her speak, and... »

«John! You want to be cured and yet you do not want to believe what I say? »

«You are right, my Lord. Change my heart. It is true. I have no well-grounded reason to suspect. But I love her so much... lewdly, it is true... You have seen the real situation... Everything is shadowy to me... »

«Come into the Light. Come out of the burning confusion of sensuality, which is so fierce. It will cost you at first... But it would cost you much more to lose a good wife and deserve hell, expiating your sins of lack of love, slander and adultery, and hers as well, because I remind you that who drives a woman to divorce, places himself and her on the way to adultery. If you can resist your demon for one month, at least for one month, I promise you that your nightmare will come to an end. Will you promise Me? »

«Oh! Lord! Lord! I would like to... But it is a fire... Put it out, You are powerful!... » John has fallen on to his knees before Jesus and is weeping with his head in his hands as he kneels on the floor.

«And I will appease it. I will limit it. I will check and restrain this demon. But you have sinned much, John, and you must work at your revival by yourself. Those who have been converted by Me, came to Me willing to become new, free... They had already worked, with their own strength only, the beginning of their redemption. Such as Matthew, Mary of Lazarus and many more. You have come here only to find out whether she is guilty and to be helped by Me not to lose the fountain at which your pleasure drinks. I will limit the power of your demon for three months, not for one. During that time meditate and rise. Resolve to start a new life as a husband. The life of a man gifted with soul. Not the life of a brute as you have led so far. And fortified by prayer and by meditation, by the peace which I will give you as a gift for three months, learn to struggle and conquer eternal Life and win back the love and peace of your wife and of your home. Go. »

7«But what shall I tell Anne? I may find her ready to leave... 409. 7 Which words shall I speak after so many years of... insults, to persuade her that I love her and that I do not want to lose her?

Please come with me... »

«I cannot. But it is so simple... Be humble. Call her to one side and confess your torment. Tell her that you came to Me because you want to be forgiven by God. And tell her to forgive you because God's forgiveness will be given to you only if she invokes it for you and she is the first to give you it... Oh! unhappy man! How much good, how much peace you have dissipated through your lust! How much evil is brought about by the unruliness of senses and by the disorder of affections! Rise and go away with a peaceful mind. Do you not understand that your wife, who is good and faithful to you, is more distressed than you are at the thought of having to leave you and is waiting only for one word from you so that she may say to you: "You have been forgiven everything"? You may go now, as the sun is already set. So you are not committing any sin in going back to your house... And the Saviour absolves you of the sin you committed in coming to Him. Go in peace. And sin no more. »

«Oh! Master! Master!... I do not deserve such words!... Master... I... want to love You from now on... »

«Yes, of course. Go and do not delay. And remember this hour when I will be the slandered Innocent. »

«What do You mean? »

«Nothing. Go. Goodbye» and Jesus withdraws leaving the two members of the Sanhedrin moved and excited in judging Him really holy and wise as only God can be.

#### **410. Provocations by Judas Iscariot in the apostolic group.**

5<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

410. 1 <sup>1</sup>«I am dying to be up in the mountains! » exclaims Peter puffing and blowing and wiping the perspiration that trickles down his cheeks and neck.

«What? You hated mountains, and now you want them? » sarcastically asks Judas Iscariot, who has become overbearing and bold once again, now that he sees that his fear of being found out has come to nothing.

«Yes, now I really want them. At this time of the year they are

the right place. Not just like my sea... That one, ah! But... I do not understand why fields are warmer after harvest time. The sun is still the same, and yet... »

«It is not a question that they are warmer. The fact is that they are gloomier and one feels more depressed looking at them thus, than when they are full of corn» sensibly replies Matthew.

«No. Simon is right. They are unbearably warm after they have been reaped. I never felt so warm» says James of Zebedee.

«Never? And what about the heat we suffered going to Nike? » retorts Judas of Kerioth.

«It was never as bad as this» replies Andrew.

«No wonder! Summer is now forty days ahead and consequently the sun is scorching hot» insists Judas.

«It is a fact that stubble gives off more heat than fields full of corn, and the reason is clear. The sunbeams, which previously stopped on the top of the ears, now blaze down directly on the bare burnt ground and the latter reflects its heat upwards, in opposition to the sun that descends from above, and thus man finds himself between two fires» sententiously says Bartholomew.

The Iscariot laughs ironically and he gives a low bow to his companion saying: «Rabbi Nathanael, I greet you and thank you for your learned lesson. » He is as offensive as one can be.

Bartholomew looks at him... but is silent. Philip instead defends him: «There is no need to be ironical! What he said is correct! You are surely not going to deny a truth that millions of people with good common sense have judged to be true, logical and verifiable. »

«Of course! Of course! I know, that you are all learned, experts, sensible, good, perfect people... You are everything! Everything! I only am the black sheep in the white herd!... I only am the bastard lamb, the disgrace that is disclosed and puts on ram-horns... I only am the sinner, the imperfect one, the cause of all the evil among us, in Israel, in the world... perhaps also in the stars... I cannot stand this any longer! Not so much because I see that I am the last, but because I see that nonentities, like those two fools who are speaking to the Master, are admired as if they were two holy oracles, I am tired of... »

«Listen, boy... » Peter begins to say, while red in the face hot so much from the heat, as from his efforts in controlling himself.

But Judas Thaddeus interrupts him: «Are you judging other people by your own standard? Try and be a “nonentity” yourself like my brother James and John of Zebedee, and there will no longer be imperfections in the apostolic group. »

«See now, whether I am right! I am imperfection! Ah! that’s too much! But it is... »

«Yes, I think that it was too much the wine that Joseph made us drink and in this heat it is upsetting you... just a reaction of the blood... » says very calmly Thomas, to make a joke of the quarrel, which is about to arise.

410. 2 <sup>2</sup>But Peter has worn out his patience and with set teeth and clenched fists to continue to master himself, he says: «Listen boy. There is one thing only advisable for you: part for a little while... »

«I? Part? By your order? The Master only can give me orders and I will obey Him only. Who are you? A poor... »

«An ignorant, coarse, good-for-nothing fisherman. You are right... I am the first to say that. And before the omnipresent all-seeing Jehovah, I testify that I would prefer to be the last instead of the first, I declare that I would like to see you or anybody else in my place, but you above all, so that you might be freed from the monster of jealousy, which makes you unfair, and I wish I had but to obey you, my boy... And believe me, it would cost me much less trouble than having to speak to you as the “first”. But He, the Master, appointed me the “first” among you... And I must obey Him first of all and more than I have to obey anybody else. And you must obey. And with my good sense of a fisherman I tell you to part, not as you have understood, mistaking my soothing words for fiery ones, but to go away for a short while and be alone to meditate... You were behind us all from Bether to the valley. Do that again... The Master ahead... you in the rear... we... the nonentities, in the middle... All one has to do to understand and to calm down is to be alone... Listen to me... It is better for everybody, and for you first of all... » And he takes him by the arm and pulls him out of the group, saying: «There, stay there while we join the Master. Then... come slowly, slowly... and you will see that the storm will soon be over» and he leaves him, joining his companions who are already a few metres ahead.

410. 3 <sup>3</sup>«Ugh! I perspired more speaking to him than walking...

What temperament! Shall we ever be able to get something from him? »

«Never, Simon. My brother persists in keeping him. But... He will never get any good out of him» replies Judas Thaddeus to him.

«He is a real punishment for us! » whispers Andrew, and he concludes: «John and I are almost afraid of him and we always keep quiet fearing further quarrels. »

«It is in fact the best policy» says Bartholomew.

«I just cannot keep quiet» admits Thaddeus.

«I am not very successful either... But I have found the secret to become so» says Peter.

«Which? Tell us... »they all say.

«Working like an ox at the plough. Even a useless job... Something that serves to get off my chest the load that is brewing up inside me... something that is not Judas. »

«Ah! I understand! That is why you made such havoc of plants when descending to the valley! That's why, eh? » asks James of Zebedee.

«That's it... But today... here... I had nothing to break without causing damage. There are only fruit trees and it would be a sin to spoil them... I worked three times as hard... breaking myself... so that I would not be the old Simon of Capernaum... And my bones are aching... »

Bartholomew and the Zealot make the same gesture and utter the same words: they embrace Peter exclaiming: «And you are astonished that He appointed you the first among us? You are a teacher to us... »

«Me? Because of that?... A trifle!... I am a poor man... I ask you only to love me by giving me wise advice, simple loving advice. Love and simplicity that I may become like you... And only for His sake as He is already so grieved... »

«You are right. That we at least may not be the cause of His grief! » exclaims Matthew.

«I had a terrible fright when Johanna sent for Him. You two, who have gone ahead, do you really not know anything? » asks Thomas.

«No, nothing for certain. But we have been thinking that it was in connection with that fellow behind there... who has been

up to something» replies Peter.

«Be quiet! I suspected the same when I heard the Master speak on the Sabbath» admits Judas Thaddeus.

«So did I» answers James of Zebedee.

«Oh!... I never thought of that... not even when I saw Judas so gloomy, so rude that evening, I must say» says Thomas.

«Well. Let us forget about it. And let us try to... improve him, with our love and sacrifices. As Marjiam taught us... » says Peter.

410.4 <sup>4</sup>«What will Marjiam be doing? » asks Andrew smiling.

«Who knows?!... We shall soon be with him. I am dying to see him... These separations really cost me so much. »

«I wonder why the Master wants this. Now... Marjiam also could be with us. He is no longer a little frail boy» remarks James of Zebedee.

«And then... If he walked such a long way last year when he was so weak, he could walk all the more now» says Philip.

«I think that it is to avoid him seeing certain disgraceful things... » says Matthew.

«Or being in touch with certain people... » grumbles Thaddeus who just cannot put up with the Iscariot.

«Perhaps you are both right» says Peter.

«Surely not! He must be doing it to let the boy grow stronger. You will see that next year the boy is with us» states Thomas.

«Next year! Will the Master still be with us next year? » asks Bartholomew pensively. «His speeches seem... so allusive to me... »

«Don't say that! » implore the others.

«I don't like to say so. But not saying does not serve to remove what is destined to happen. »

«Well... That is another reason why we should improve much during the next months... In order not to grieve Him by not being ready. I mean, now that we shall be resting in Galilee, He should teach us twelve particularly as much as possible... In any case we shall soon be there... »

«Yes. And I am longing for that. I am old and these marches in this heat cause much personal trouble to me» confesses Bartholomew.

«And to me. I was a vicious man and if you count my years I am older than you think. Excesses... eh! I feel all their conse-

quences in my bones now... And we children of Levi suffer from such trouble by nature... »

<sup>5</sup>«And what about me? I was ill for years... and that life in <sup>410. 5</sup> caves, with scanty miserable food. One feels the effect of such situations!... » says the Zealot.

«But you have always said that since you were cured you have been feeling strong? » asks Judas who has joined them and is behind the Zealot. «Has perhaps the effect of the miracle come to an end? »

The disfigured but expressive face of the Zealot makes a typical grimace, and seems to say: «He is here! Lord, grant me patience! » But he replies most kindly: «No. The effect of the miracle is not over. And you can see that. I have not been taken ill again. I am strong and healthy. But years are years and fatigue is fatigue. And this heat, which causes us to get as wet with perspiration as if we had fallen into a ditch, and the nights, which I would say are ice-cold as compared with the heat of the day and freeze perspiration on our bodies, while the dew adds more humidity to our garments already wet with sweat, all that certainly does me no good. And I am longing to have a rest so that I can take care of myself. In the morning, particularly when we sleep under the open sky, I am stiff all over. If I become an invalid, of what use shall I be? »

«You will be able to suffer. Jesus says that suffering is as good as work and prayer» Andrew replies to him.

«That's all right. But I prefer to serve Him apostolically and... »

«And you are tired, too. Admit it. You are tired of continuing this life without any prospect of pleasant hours, on the contrary, with the prospect of persecutions and... defeat. You are beginning to consider that you are running the risk of becoming an outlaw once again» says Judas of Kerioth.

«I am not considering anything. I am saying that I feel that I am going to fall ill. »

«Oh! as He cured you once!... » and Judas laughs ironically.

<sup>6</sup>Bartholomew feels that another squabble is approaching and <sup>410 6</sup> to divert it he calls Jesus. «Master! Is there nothing for us? You are always ahead of us!... »

«You are right, Bartholmai. But we are going to stop now. See



that little house? We will go there because the sun is too strong. We will set out again in the evening. We must make haste in going back to Jerusalem, because Pentecost is close at hand. »

«What were you speaking of? » Judas Thaddeus asks his brother.

«Just imagine! We began to speak about Joseph of Arimathea and we ended up by talking about the old property of Joachim at Nazareth and about his habit - as long as he was able to do so - of taking half of the crops for himself giving the rest to the poor, which the old people in Nazareth remember so well. How abstinent were those two just people, Anne and Joachim! No wonder they were granted the miracle of a Daughter, of that Daughter!... And with Jesus I was recalling the past, when we were children... » And they continue talking while going towards the house through sunny fields.

410. 7 <sup>7</sup>Jesus says: «You will put here the vision of the miraculous gleaning on behalf of the little old woman (in the plain between Emmaus on the plain and the mountains towards Jerusalem) which you had on September 27<sup>th</sup> 1944. »

### **411. Lessons taken from nature.**

#### **The miraculous gleaning for an old woman.**

#### **How to help those who are redeeming themselves.**

27<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

411. 1 <sup>1</sup>Jesus is passing with His apostles through a country completely golden with crops. Although early morning it is very warm. The reapers are mowing along furrows thick with ears, making empty spaces among the golden grain. The sickles shine for a moment in the sun, they disappear among the tall ears, they reappear for a moment on the other side and the sheaf bends and lies down on the earth warmed by the sun, as if it were tired of standing up for so many months. Some women follow the reapers, tying the sheaves. The whole country is busy at this work. The harvest has been very good and the reapers are overjoyed.

Many men, when they are near the road along which the apostolic group passes, stop working for a moment leaning on their

scythes and wiping their perspiration and they look... The women binding the sheaves do the same. In their light clothes their heads covered with a white cloth, they look like flowers emerging from the earth deprived of the corn: poppies, cornflowers, daisies. The men, in short grey or yellowish tunics, are not so showy. The only light article they wear is a piece of cloth tied to their heads with a cord and hanging over their necks and cheeks. Their tanned faces framed by the white cloth, seem ever darker. When Jesus sees that they are looking at Him, He passes greeting: «The peace and blessing of God be with you» and the others reply: «May the blessing of God come back to You» or more simply: «Also with You. »

Some who are more talkative, interest Jesus in the harvest saying: «It is very good this year. Look at these well-shaped ears and see how thick they are in the furrows. It is hard work to cut them. But it's bread!... »

«Be grateful to the Lord. And you know that one must show one's gratitude not by words, but by deeds. Be merciful in your harvest, thinking of the Most High Who mercifully granted dew and sunshine to your fields, so that you might have a plentiful crop. Remember the precept\* of Deuteronomy. When harvesting the wealth given to you by God, think of those who have none and leave them some of yours. It is a holy prevarication as it is charity for your neighbour and God sees it. It is better to be willing to give than greedy in gathering. God blesses generous people. *There is more happiness in giving than in receiving\*\**, because it compels God, Who is just, to give a more abundant reward to him who was compassionate. » Jesus passes repeating His advice of love.

<sup>2</sup>The sun becomes warmer. The reapers stop working and those who are near their houses go back to them, those who are far from them gather in the shade of trees and they rest, eat and doze there. <sup>411. 2</sup>

Jesus also takes shelter in a thicket in the middle of the country and sitting on the grass, after praying and offering their fru-

\* **the precept** is the one of *Deuteronomy 24, 19*.

\*\* **There is more happiness in giving than in receiving** is a spoken sentence by Jesus which is not reported in the Gospel but is remembered in: *Acts 20, 35*. We will find it repeated in 547. 2 and 596. 17.

gal food, consisting of bread, cheese and olives, He hands out the portions and eats talking to His apostles. There is shade, coolness and perfect silence. The silence of sunny hours in summer. A silence inviting one to sleep. Most of them, in fact, are dozing after eating. Jesus is not dozing. He is resting leaning with His back against a tree, and He takes an interest in insects working on flowers.

At a certain moment he beckons to John, Judas Iscariot and to one of the older apostles, whom He calls Bartholomew, and when they, are close to Him, He says: «Just watch the work this little insect is doing. Look. I have been watching it for some time. It wants to take from this chalice, which is so tiny, the honey that fills the bottom part of it, and as it cannot get into it, look: it stretches out first one little leg and then the other one, it dips them into the honey and then feeds on it. It has almost emptied it. See what a wonderful thing is God's Providence! Not ignoring that without certain organs the olive-green insect, created to fly over green meadows, would not be able to nourish itself, Providence gifted it with tiny hairs along its legs. Can you see them? Can you, Bartholomew? No? Look. I will now catch it and show it to you against the light», and He delicately takes-the scarab, which looks like burnished gold, and lays it upside-down on the back of His hand.

The scarab pretends to be dead and the three examine its tiny legs. Then the insect begins to kick its legs about, in order to run away. It does not succeed, of course, but Jesus helps it and stands it on its legs. The little creature walks on the palm of Jesus' hand, as far as His finger-tips, it dangles and opens its wings. But it is distrustful. «It does not know that I want nothing but the welfare of every being. It has only its little instinct, which is perfect if compared with its nature, and sufficient to all its needs. But it is so inferior to human thought. An insect, therefore, is not responsible if it does anything wrong. Man is, because he has within himself a superior light of intelligence, which will be greater the more he is indoctrinated in the things of God. And consequently he is responsible for his actions. »

411. 3     <sup>3</sup>«So, Master, since we are taught by You, have we a heavy responsibility? » asks Bartholomew.

«Yes, very heavy. And it will be even heavier in the future

when the Sacrifice is accomplished, and Redemption has come together with Grace, which is strength and light. And after it, One will come Who will make you understand will-power even better. And he who does not want that, will be held responsible. »

«Very few only, then, will be saved! »

«Why Bartholomew? »

«Because man is so weak! »

«But if he fortifies his weakness by trusting Me, he becomes strong. Do you think that I am not aware of your struggles? See? Satan is like that spider that is laying its snare from that tiny branch to this stem. It is so thin and treacherous! Look how that cobweb shines. It looks like the silver of impalpable filigree. It will be invisible at night and at dawn, tomorrow, it will shine with gems, and imprudent flies, which roam at night looking for unclean food, will fall into it, as well as light butterflies, which are attracted by what shines... »

The apostles have approached the Master and are listening to the lesson taken from the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

«... Well, My love does, with regards to Satan, what My hand is doing now. It destroys the cobweb. Look how the spider runs away and hides. It is afraid of what is stronger. *Satan also is afraid of what is stronger. And what is stronger is Love.* »

<sup>4</sup>«Would it not be better to destroy the spider? » asks Peter, <sup>411</sup>.<sup>4</sup> who is very practical in his conclusions.

«It would be better. But the spider is doing its duty. It is true that it kills the poor little butterflies, which are so beautiful, but it exterminates a large number of filthy flies, which carry diseases and infection from sick to healthy people, from corpses to living persons. »

«But in our case what does the spider do? »

«What does it do, Simon? (Simon also is an elderly man and is the one who was complaining of rheumatism). It does what your goodwill does. It destroys tepidity, apathy, vain conceit. It compels you to be vigilant. What makes you worthy of prize? Struggle and victory. Can you win if you do not fight? The presence of Satan compels continuous vigilance. Love, then, Who loves you, makes his presence not necessarily harmful. If you keep close to Love, Satan will tempt but he will be rendered unable to cause real damage. »

«Always? »

«Always. In great and little things. For instance, a little thing: he in vain advises you to take care of your health. A treacherous piece of advice to try to take you away from Me. But Love holds you tightly, Simon, and your pains become of no importance even in your eyes. »

«Oh! Lord! You know?... »

«Yes, I do. But do not lose heart. Cheer up! Love, Who is the first to smile at your human nature trembling because of its rheumatism, will give you so much courage... » Jesus laughs at His embarrassed apostle and clasps him in His arms to comfort him. Even when laughing He is full of dignity. The others also laugh.

411. 5     5«Who is coming to help that poor old woman? » says Jesus pointing at a little old woman who, defying the great heat, is gleaning in the fields already reaped.

«1» reply John, Thomas and James.

But Peter takes John by the sleeve and pulling him a little aside, says to him: «Ask the Master what is making Him so happy. I asked Him but all He said to me was: “My happiness is in seeing that a soul is looking for the Light”. But if you ask Him... He tells you everything. »

John is in a state of uncertainty, drawn one way by reservedness and another by desire to know and to please Peter. He slowly joins Jesus Who is already gleaning in the field. The old woman, seeing so many young people, makes a desolate gesture and busies herself endeavouring to work faster.

«Woman! Woman! » cries Jesus. «I will glean for you. Do not stand in the sun, mother. I am coming. »

The little old woman, dumbfounded at so much kindness, stares at Him, she then obeys and stooping and trembling a little all over her lean body she moves towards the thin strip of shade along the edge of the field. Jesus moves about quickly gathering ears. John follows Him close at hand. Thomas and James are a little farther away.

«Master» says John panting. «How come You find so many ears? In the adjoining furrow I find so few! »

Jesus smiles but does not speak. I could not swear to it, but I think that ears, which have been cut but not picked up, spring up

wherever Jesus' divine eyes rest. He gathers them and smiles. He has a big bunch of ears in His arms.

«Take Mine, John. So you will have many as well and the little mother will be happy. »

«But, Master... You are working a miracle? It is not possible for You to find so many! »

«Hush! It's for the little mother... thinking of your mother and Mine. Look, what a little old soul she is!... Good God, Who feeds new-born little birds, wants to fill the tiny granary of this grandmother. She will have bread for the months she has still left. She will not see the next harvest. But I do not want her to starve during her last winter. You will now hear her exclamations. John, be ready to have your ears rent, as I will be ready to be washed by her tears and kisses... »

«How cheerful You have been for some days, Jesus! Why? »

«Do you want to know or has someone sent you? »

John, already flushed with fatigue, becomes crimson.

Jesus understands: «Tell him who sent you that there is a brother of Mine who is ill and wants to be cured. His goodwill to recover fills Me with joy. »

«Who is it, Master? »

«A brother of yours, one whom Jesus loves, a sinner. »

«So, not one of us? »

«John, do you think that there is no sin among you? Do you think that I rejoice only because of you? »

«No, Master. I know that we are sinners, too, and that You want to save all men. »

«So? I said to you: "Do not be inquisitive" when there was evil to be discovered. I say the same now that good is dawning...  
«Peace to you, mother! Here are the ears we have picked. My companions will come with theirs. »

«May God bless You, son. How did You find so many? It's true that I cannot see very well. But these are really two big sheaves... very big... » The old woman feels them, her trembling hand caresses them, she wants to lift them... But she cannot.

«We will help you. Where is your house? »

«That one» and she points at a little house beyond the fields.

«You are alone, are you not? »

«Yes, how do You know? And who are You? »

«I am one who has a mother. »

«Is this your brother? »

«He is My friend. »

From behind Jesus' back, His friend makes wide gestures to the old woman. But with her veiled eyes she cannot see them. In any case, she is too intent on watching Jesus. Her old mother's heart is deeply moved.

«You are in a sweat, son. Come here in the shade of this tree. Sit down. Look how You are streaming with perspiration! Dry Yourself with my veil. It's worn but clean. Here, take it, son. »

«Thank you, mother. »

«Blessed be Your mother, the mother of so good a son. Tell me Your name and Hers. That I may mention them to God to bless You. »

«Mary and Jesus. »

«Mary and Jesus... Mary and Jesus... Wait. Once I shed bitter tears... The son of my son was killed for defending his baby boy and my son died of grief... and at that time they said that the innocent was killed because they were looking for one whose name was Jesus... Now I am on the threshold of death and that Name is coming back to me... »

«You wept then, mother, because of that Name. May that Name now bless you... »

«You are that Jesus... say so to a poor woman who is about to die and who has lived without cursing because she was told that her grief served to save the Messiah for Israel. »

John doubles his gestures. Jesus is silent.

«Oh! tell me! Is it You? You... blessing me at the end of my life? In the name of God, speak. »

«It is I. »

«Ah! » the old woman prostrates herself on the ground. «My Saviour! I have lived in expectation and I no longer hoped to see You. Shall I see Your triumph? »

«No, mother. Like Moses\*, you will die without knowing that day. But I will give you the peace of God in advance. I am Peace. I am the Way. I am Life. You, a mother and the grandmother of just children, will see Me in another eternal triumph and I will

\* **Moses**, whose death is mentioned in: *Deuteronomy 32, 48-52; 34, 1-8.*

open the gates to you, to your son, to the son of your son and to his baby boy. That baby who died for Me is sacred to the Lord! Do not weep, mother!... »

«And I have touched You! And You gathered ears for me! Oh! How did I deserve such honour?! »

«Through your holy resignation. <sup>7</sup>Come, mother, to your <sup>411.7</sup> house. And may this wheat nourish your soul more than your body. I am the true Bread that descended from Heaven to satisfy the hunger of every heart. You (Thomas and James have joined them with their sheaf)... take these sheaves and let us go. »

And the three apostles laden with the sheaves walk away, followed by Jesus and the grandmother who weeps and whispers prayers. They arrive at the little house: two small rooms, a tiny kitchen, a fig-tree and a small vineyard. Tidiness and poverty.

«Is this your home? »

«Yes, it is. Bless it, Lord! »

«Call me: son. And pray that My Mother may find solace in Her grief, since you know what the grief of a mother means. Goodbye, mother. I bless you in the name of the true God. »

And Jesus raises His hand and blesses the small house. He then bends and embraces the little old woman, He presses her to His heart and kisses her head covered with thin white hair. And she weeps rubbing her lips against Jesus' hands with veneration and love... and crushes me with grief. Because I think of my mother who was afraid of You, Jesus, when she saw You... Why be afraid of You, Jesus?

<sup>8</sup>Jesus says:

411.8

«Why? There are many whys in your heart after this dictation. But I will begin from the last one. [... ]

The other query you have in your heart is always whether I knew that Judas would not be saved notwithstanding that effort to save him. I knew. Why then was I happy? Because also the simple desire that was present, a flower in the barren land of Judas' heart made the Father look benignly at My disciple whom I loved and whom I could *not* save. The eye of God on a heart! What would I like except that the Father should look at all of you with love? *And I had to be happy to give the poor wretch also that means to revive. The incentive of My joy seeing him come*



*back to Me.*

One day, after My Death, John became acquainted with this truth and he told Peter, James, Andrew and the others, because I had ordered My best-loved Apostle, who was acquainted with the all the secrets of My heart, to do so. He was informed and he told them, so that everyone should have a rule in guiding disciples and believers later.

The soul that after falling comes to the minister of God and confesses its error, the friend, the son, the husband or the brother, who after erring, comes saying: “Keep me with you. I do not want to make mistakes anymore so that I may not grieve God and you”, are not to be deprived, among other things, of the satisfaction of seeing our happiness in realizing that they are anxious to make us happy. *Infinite tact is required in curing hearts.* I, the Wisdom, had such tact to teach everybody the art of redeeming and of helping those who are redeeming themselves, although I knew that in the case of Judas it was useless.

And now I say to you what I said to Simon of Cana: “Cheer up”, and I clasp you in My arms to make you feel that there is someone who loves you. My hands give punishments, but they give caresses as well, and My lips speak severe words and also words of satisfaction and the latter are more numerous and uttered with so much more joy.

Go in peace, Mary. You have not grieved your Jesus, and may that be your comfort. »

#### **412. Praise for the lilies of the valley, a symbol of Mary and a sacrifice of Peter for the good of Judas.**

8<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

<sup>1</sup>The apostolic group has left the plain behind and along hilly roads, among mountains and valleys, it is going towards Jerusalem. To shorten the journey they have not taken the main roads, but solitary tiring short cuts, which are, however, very quick.

At present they are in the bottom of a green valley rich in waters and little flowers. There are also many sweet-smelling lilies of the valley, which causes Thaddeus to remark that it is only right to call such flowers «lilies of the valley» and praise their

fragile yet resistant beauty and their delicate fragrance.

«But they are upside-down lilies» remarks Thomas. «They look down instead of looking up. »

«And how tiny they are! We have flowers which are more pompous than those. I do not understand why they praise them so much... » says Judas scornfully, striking a little tuft of lilies of the valley in flower.

«No! Why? They are so gentle looking! » intervenes Andrew defending the poor flowers and he bends to pick up the broken stems.

«They look like hay, nothing else. The agave is more beautiful, it is so majestic and imposing. Worthy of God and of flowering for God. »

«I see God more in these minute chalices... Look how graceful they are!... Indented, so concave... They look like alabaster, pure wax and they seem to have been made by very tiny hands... Instead it was the Immense One Who made them! Oh! Power of God!... » Andrew is almost ecstatic in contemplation meditating on flowers and the perfection of the Creator.

«You look like a poor little woman suffering from nervous trouble!... » teases Judas of Kerioth laughing maliciously.

«No. In actual fact I also - and I am a goldsmith and thus an expert in the matter - I also find that these stems are perfect. It is more difficult to reproduce them in metal than it is to reproduce an agave. Because you ought to know, my friend, that it is the infinitely small that reveals the ability of a craftsman. Give me a stem, Andrew... And you, whose goggle eyes admire only grand things, come here and look. Which craftsman could make cups so light and perfect as these, decorating them with those tiny topazes down there, in the bottom, and joining them to the stem by means of this graceful curved filigree... It's wonderful!... »

«Oh! what poets have risen among us! You, too, Thomas, so... »

«I am neither a fool nor a poor little woman, you know! I'm an artist. A sensitive artist. And I am proud of it. <sup>412. 2</sup> Master, do You like these flowers? » Thomas asks Jesus Who has been listening without saying anything.

«I like the whole of Creation. But these flowers are among the ones of which I am particularly fond... »

«Why? » ask several apostles. And at the same time Judas asks: «Do you like vipers as well? » and he laughs.

«Yes, they also serve... »

«What purpose? » ask many.

«To bite. Ah! Ah! Ah! » says Judas laughing offensively.

«In that case you should like them very much» retorts Thaddeus interrupting Judas' laughter with a very clear allusion. The others are now laughing at the witty remark.

Jesus does not laugh. On the contrary, He is pale and sad. He looks at His twelve apostles and particularly at the two antagonists who are watching each other, one angrily, the other severely, and He replies to them all, in order to reply to the Iscariot in particular.

«If God created them, it means that they serve. Nothing in creation is useless or entirely harmful. Evil only is clearly and solely noxious and woe to those who allow it to bite them. One of the effects of its bite is the inability to tell Good from Evil, then there is the deviation of reason and of conscience led astray towards evil things, and then spiritual blindness, because of which, Judas of Simon, one does not see the power of God shine on things, even when they are tiny. And His power is written on this flower, through its beauty and scent, and its shape, which is so different from any other flower, and through this drop of dew which trembles and glitters suspended on the waxen edge of the tiny petal and seems a tear of gratitude to the Creator, Who made everything well, useful and varied. But it is written that everything was beautiful for the first parents, until their eyes became opaque with sin... And everything spoke to them of God until the fluid, which distorted their capacity for seeing God, was instilled into things, or rather, into their eyes. Even nowadays, the more the spirit is the sovereign in a human creature, the more God reveals Himself... »

«Solomon sang the wonders of God and so did David... and yet their spirits were not their sovereigns! Master, I caught You out this time. »

«How impudent you are! How dare you say that? »

«Let him speak... I do not take into consideration his words, which the wind dispels and which do not scandalise herbs and trees. We are the only ones to hear them and we know how to at-

tach to them the importance they deserve, do we not? And we do *not* remember them any longer. Youth is often thoughtless, Bartholmai. You must pity it... <sup>3</sup>But someone was asking Me why I prefer the lily of the valley... This is My reply: “Because of its humbleness”. Everything in it speaks of humbleness... The spots it loves... the attitude of the flower... It makes Me think of My Mother... This flower... so tiny! And yet how sweet is the perfume of one flower alone. The air around it is scented by it... My Mother also... humble, reserved, unknown, She asked only to remain unknown... And yet the perfume of Her holiness was so strong that it drew Me from Heaven... »

«Do You see a symbol of Your Mother in that flower? »

«Yes, I do, Thomas. »

«And do You think that our ancestors foresaw Her, when they praised the lily of the valley? » asks James of Alphaeus. «They compared Her then with other plants and flowers: with the rose, the olive-tree, and with the most gentle animals: turtle-doves, wood-pigeons... »

«They all ascribed to Her the most beautiful things they saw in creation. And She is really the Beauty of creation. But I would call\* Her Lily of the valley and peaceful Olive-tree, if I had to sing Her praises» and Jesus cheers up and brightens thinking of His Mother, and He quickens His pace to be alone...

<sup>4</sup>They continue to walk, notwithstanding the heat of the day, because in the hollow of the valley there is a succession of trees protecting from the sun. <sup>412. 4</sup>

After some time Peter lengthens his stride and joins the Master. He calls Him in a low voice: «My Master! »

«My Peter! »

«Will I disturb You, if I come with You? »

«No, My friend. What have you so urgent to tell Me, that it compels you to come to your Master? »

«A question... Master, I am an inquisitive man... »

«So? » Jesus smiles looking at His apostle.

«And I like to know many things... »

«Which is a fault, My Peter. »

«I know... But I do not think it is a fault this time. If I want-

\* I would call, as in: *Song of Songs 2, 1-2; Sirach 24, 14.*

ed to know something unbecoming, or knavish actions so that I might criticise who did them, oh! in that case it would be a fault. But You know that I did not ask You whether Judas was somehow connected with Your being called to Bether and because... »

«But you were dying to know... »

«Yes. That's true. But it is a greater merit, isn't it? »

«It is a greater merit. As it is a great merit to control oneself. It proves in him, who behaves thus, real good progress in spiritual life, real active understanding and assimilation of the lessons of the Master. »

«Is that so? And are You glad? »

«Oh! Peter, why ask Me? I am more than happy. »

«Are You really? O my Master! Then is it Your poor Simon who makes You so happy? »

«Yes, it is. Did you not know? »

«I dared not believe it. But seeing You so happy, I got John to ask You yesterday. Because I thought that it might be Judas also who was improving... although I have no proof of that... But I may be a bad judge. John told me that You said that You are happy because there is one who is becoming holy... Just now You told me that You are happy because I am becoming better. Now I know. The one who makes You happy and cheerful is me, poor

<sup>412. 5</sup> Simon... <sup>5</sup>But now I wish my sacrifice could make Judas change. I am not envious. I would like everybody to be perfect, to make You perfectly happy. Shall I succeed? »

«Confide, Simon, confide and persevere. »

«I will! I certainly will! For Your sake... and for his as well. Because I am sure that he cannot be glad to be always like that. After all... he could be my son... H'm! Actually I prefer to be Marjiam's father! But... I will be a father to him, working to give him a soul worthy of You. »

«And of you, Simon» and Jesus bends and kisses his hair.

Peter is overjoyed... After some time he asks: «Are You not telling me anything else? Is there no more good news, a flower among the thorns, which You find everywhere? »

«Yes, there is. One of Joseph's friends who is coming to the Light. »

«Really? A member of the Sanhedrin? »

«Yes, but we must not tell anybody. We must pray and suffer

for that purpose. Are you not asking Me who it is? Are you not anxious to know? »

«Very much so. But I am not going to ask You. A sacrifice for the unknown man. »

«May you be blessed, Simon! You are making Me really happy today. Continue like that and I will love you more and more and so will God. Now let us stop and wait for the others... »

### **413. Arrival in Jerusalem for Pentecost. Dispute with the doctors in the Temple.**

9<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

<sup>1</sup>The city is full of people. The Temple is crowded. Jesus ascends to it as soon as He enters Jerusalem and He goes in through the gate near the Bethesda, that is, almost immediately, before the people realize that He is in Town and before the news may spread from the house where they leave their baggage and where they wash and tidy themselves, in order to enter the Temple clean and free from dust and perspiration. 413. 1

There is the usual indecorous din of vendors and money-changers, and the usual kaleidoscope of colours and faces.

Jesus, with the apostles who have bought what is necessary for the offering, goes straight to the place of prayer and remains there for a long time. Of course, He is noticed by many people, both good and bad, and a whisper spreads like the wind and with the noise of leaves rustling in the wind, through the large outer yard, where people stop to pray. And when, after praying, He retraces His steps, a train of people, which becomes bigger and bigger, follows Him through the other atria, porches, yards, until they become a crowd, which surrounds Him and asks Him to speak.

«Another time, children! And in some other place! » says Jesus and He raises His arm to bless, trying to go away.

Scribes, Pharisees, doctors and their disciples, scattered among the people, sneer saying to one another sharp phrases, which are real mockery, such as: «Prudence is advising» or: «Eh! somewhat afraid... » or: «He has reached the age of reason» or also: «Not such a fool as we thought... » But the greater part,

those who know and love Him or those who sincerely wish to know Him, and thus nurse no grudge against Him, insist in saying: «Are You going to deprive us of a feast in the Feast? Good Master, You cannot do that! Many of us have made sacrifices to remain here waiting for You... » and some hiss the mockers or give them sharp answers.

It is very obvious that the mass would be ready to overwhelm the wicked minority, who, shrewd and crafty as they are, take the hint, and they not only become quiet, but endeavour to go away. And although they are in the enclosure of the Temple, many do not hesitate to scoff at or hurl abuse at those who are departing, whilst others, mainly elderly people, and thus more reflective, ask Jesus: «Since You know, please tell us, what will happen to this place, to this town, to the whole of Israel, who will not surrender to the Voice of the Lord? »

413. 2     <sup>2</sup>Jesus looks at those grey or white haired heads pitifully and replies:

«Jeremiah told you\* what will happen to those who reply to the flash of divine wrath by increasing their sins, and consider divine mercy as a proof of weakness on God's side. Because God is not to be derided, children. You, as the Eternal God said through the lips of Jeremiah, are like clay in the hands of the potter, as clay are those who consider themselves mighty, as clay are the inhabitants of this place and those of the royal palace. There is no human power that can resist God. And if the clay resists the potter and wants to take strange horrible shapes, the potter turns it into a handful of clay again and starts afresh and works it into another vessel until it realises that the potter is the stronger and thus it yields to his will. And it may also happen that the vessel breaks into pieces, because it persists in not being modelled, as it refuses the water with which the potter moistens it in order to be able to shape it without cracks. The potter then throws the refractory clay and the useless unworkable bits and pieces into the waste dump and he takes fresh clay and moulds it as he thinks best. Does the Prophet not say so when explaining the symbol of the potter and the clay vessel? That is what he says. And repeating the words of the Lord, he says: "As the clay is in

\* told you, in: *Jeremiah 18, 1-11; 19, 10-15.*

the potter's hand, so you, Israel, are in the hand of God". And the Lord adds, as a warning to those who are refractory, that only penance and repentance, when God reproaches man, can change the decree of God to punish a rebellious people.

Israel did not repent. Thus the threats of God have struck Israel many times. Israel is not repenting even now that not a prophet, but One Who is more than a prophet speaks to her. And God Who has had supreme mercy on Israel and has sent Me, now says to you: "As you do not listen to My own Voice, I will regret the good I have done to you and I will prepare a disaster for you". And I, Who am Mercy, although I know that I am speaking in vain, I shout to Israel: "Each one of you, turn back from your evil ways. Amend your conduct and your inclinations. So that, when the plan of God will be carried out against the guilty Nation, at least the better ones in it may preserve their spirits free from sin in the general loss of goods, of freedom, of union, and united to God they may not lose the eternal goods as they lost the earthly ones".

The visions of prophets have always one aim: to warn men of what may happen. And it is stated by the symbol of the earthenware vessel, broken in the presence of the people, what is in store for towns and kingdoms that do not surrender to the Lord, and... »

<sup>3</sup>The elders, scribes, doctors and Pharisees, who had gone away previously, must have gone to inform the Temple guards and the magistrates in charge of order. And one of them, followed by a handful of comical cardboard soldiers, whose faces only seem belligerent, as they are a mixture of stupidity with a little malice and much harshness, not to say criminality, comes towards Jesus. The Master is speaking leaning against a column of the porch of Pagans and as the magistrate cannot get through the crowds, which have formed an impenetrable circle around Jesus, he shouts: «Go away! Or I will get my soldiers to throw You out of the enclosure... » 413. 3

«Ugh! The big green flies! Heroes against lambs! Can you not go in and put in prison those who have turned Jerusalem into a brothel, and the Temple into a market? Go away, you chicken-hearted man, go away and stay with beech-martens... Ugh! Ugh! » The people turn against the grotesque soldiers and make



it clear that they will not let the Master be insulted.

«I am carrying out the instructions I received... » says apologetically the leader of those... policemen.

«You are carrying out Satan's instructions and you do not realize that. Go away now, and implore God's mercy as you dared insult and threaten the Master! You dare not touch the Master! Is that clear to you? You are our oppressors, He is the Friend of the poor. You are our corrupters, He is our holy Master. You are our ruin, He is our Salvation. You are perfidious, He is good. Go away, or we shall do to you what Mattathias did\* at Modein. We will hurl you down the slope of Moriah like idolatric altars, and we will cleanse the place you have desecrated, washing it with your blood, and the feet of the only Holy Man in Israel will tread upon that blood to go to the Holy of Holies and reign there, as He deserves! Away from here! You and your masters! Away, you hired ruffians serving hired assassins... »

It is a frightful uproar... Roman guards rush from the Antonia led by an elderly severe hasty non-commissioned officer.

«Make room, you stinkers! What's happening? Are you tearing one another to pieces over some of your scabby lambs? »

«They are rebelling against the soldiers... » the magistrate endeavours to explain.

«By invincible Mars! These... soldiers? Ah! Ah! Go and fight cockroaches, you wine-cellar warrior. » He then addresses the people saying: «Tell me... »

«They did not want to let the Galilean Rabbi speak. They wanted to drive Him away. Perhaps they wanted to capture Him... »

«The Galilean Rabbi? Non licet. I say to you in the language of Rome the word of John Decollate. Ah! Ah! March to your kennel you and your curs. And tell the mastiffs to lie down as well. The She-Wolf knows how to tear to pieces those, too... Is that clear? Rome only has the right to judge. And You, Galilean... You may go on telling Your stories... Ah! Ah! » and he turns around all of one piece, his breastplate shining in the sun, and goes away.

«Exactly as with Jeremiah... »

«As with all the prophets, you ought to say... »

\* **did**, as can be read in: *1 Maccabees 2, 23-28*.

«But God triumphs just the same. »

«Master, go on speaking. The vipers have run away. »

«No, let Him go, lest the new Pashhurs\* should come back with greater strength and put Him in chains... »

«There is no such danger... While the lion roars the hyenas do not come out... »

The people speak making their comments in utter confusion.

<sup>4</sup>«You are wrong» says an unctuous Pharisee wrapped in his pompous mantle, followed by his likes and by some doctors of the Law. «You are wrong. You must not think that the entire caste is like some of its members. Eh! Eh! There is good and bad on every tree. » 413. 4

«Yes. In fact figs are generally sweet. But if they are unripe or too ripe they are sour or acid. You are acid. Like the figs of the very bad basket\*\* of the prophet Jeremiah» says one from the middle of the crowd: a man I do not know, but he must be well known to the crowds and is also a mighty one, because I see the people wink approvingly while the Pharisee pockets the blow without reacting.

On the contrary, in an even more sugary manner, he turns towards the Master and says to Him: «A wonderful subject for Your Wisdom. Rabbi, do speak to us on this subject. Your elucidations are so... new... so... learned... We savour them with greedy appetite. »

Jesus stares at the Pharisaic champion and then replies to him: «You, Helkai, and your friends have also another unavowed appetite. But you will be given also that food... which is even more acid than figs. And it will contaminate your hearts as sour figs infect bowels. »

«No, Master. I swear to it in the name of the living God! My friends and I hunger only to hear You speak... God sees whether... »

«That's enough. Honest people need not swear. Their deeds are their oath and witness. <sup>5</sup>But I shall not speak of the very good and very bad figs... » 413. 5

«Why not, Master? Are You afraid that facts may contradict Your explanations? »

\* **Pashhurs** is mentioned in: *Jeremiah 20, 13.*

\*\* **bad basket** refers to the episode of: *Jeremiah 24.*

«Oh! no! On the contrary... »  
 «So You foresee torment, shame, sword, plague, famine for us? »  
 «All that and even more. »  
 «Even more? What? So God no longer loves us? »  
 «He loves you so much that He fulfilled His promise. »  
 «You? Are You His promise? »  
 «I am. »  
 «In that case, when are You going to establish Your Kingdom? »  
 «Its foundations have already been laid. »  
 «Where? »  
 «In the hearts of good people. »  
 «But that is not a kingdom. That is teaching! »  
 «As My Kingdom is a spiritual one, spirits are its subjects. And spirits need no palaces, houses, armies, walls. They need to know only the Word of God and practise it. Which is happening in good people. »  
 «But can You speak that Word? Who authorises You? »  
 «The possession. »  
 «Which possession? »  
 «The possession of the Word. I give what I am. One who has life, can give life. One who has money, can give money. By My eternal Nature I have the Word that translates the Divine Thought and I give the Word, because the Love to make known the Thought of the Most High, Who is My Father, urges Me to give that gift. »  
 «Mind what You say! It's an audacious language! It may be detrimental to You! »  
 «It would be more detrimental to lie, because it would imply perverting My Nature and disowning Him from Whom I proceed. »  
 «So You are God, the Word of God? »  
 «I am. »  
 «And You say so like that? In the presence of so many witnesses who could report You? »  
 «The Truth does not lie. The Truth does not make calculations. The Truth is heroic. »  
 «And that is the truth? »  
 «The Truth is He Who is speaking to you. Because the Word

of God translates the Thought of God, and God is Truth. »

‘The crowds are all ears, paying attention, in silence, to the discussion, which, however, is carried on without harshness. More people have rushed there from other parts, and the yard is crammed: hundreds of faces all turned towards one spot. And more faces, with stretched necks, appear from the openings leading to this yard, anxious to see and hear...’<sup>413. 6</sup>

Helkai, the member of the Sanhedrin, and his friends look at one another... A rapid exchange of anxious glances. But they control themselves. Nay, an old doctor asks very kindly: «What should we do to avoid the punishments that You foresee? »

«You ought to follow Me, and above all believe Me. And even more: love Me. »

«Are You a mascot? »

«No. I am the Saviour. »

«But You have no armies... »

«I have Myself. Remember, you should all remember, for your own sake and out of pity for your souls, remember the words\* of the Lord to Moses and Aaron, when they were still in the land of Egypt: “Each man of the people of God must take a lamb without blemish, a male one year old. One animal for each household, and if the number of persons in the family is too small to eat all the animal, they must join with their neighbour. And you shall immolate it on the fourteenth day of the month of Abib, which is now called Nisan April, and with the blood of the immolated animal you shall wet the doorposts and the lintel of your houses. And the same night you shall eat the flesh roasted over the fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. And you shall burn what might be left over. And you shall eat it with a girdle round your waist, sandals on your feet, a staff in your hand, you shall eat it hastily, because it is the passover of the Lord. And that night I will pass and strike down all the first-born of man and animal, that are in the houses not marked with the blood of the lamb”. At present, in the new passover of God, *the truest passover*, because God really passes amongst you in a visible manner, recognizable by His signs, those will be saved who are marked with the salutary mark of the Blood of the Lamb. Because, truly,

\* the words, that are in: *Exodus 12, 3-13.*

you will all be marked with it. But only those who love the Lamb and will love His Sign, will receive salvation from that Blood. With regards to the others it will be the mark of Cain. And you know that Cain no longer deserved to see the face of the Lord and had no more peace. And chased by remorse, by punishment, by Satan, his cruel king, he became a fugitive and wanderer over the Earth as long as he lived. He is a really great figure of the People who will strike the new Abel... »

«Ezekiel also speaks of the Tau... Do You think that Your Sign is Ezekiel's Tau? »

«It is. »

«So You accuse us because there is abomination in Jerusalem? »

«I wish I could not do so. But it is so. »

«And are there no sinners amongst those marked with the Tau? Can You swear to that? »

«I do not swear anything. But I say that if there are sinners among those who are marked, their punishment will be even more dreadful, because adulterers of the spirit, abjurers, the killers of God, who become so after being His followers, will be the greatest in Hell. »

«But those who cannot believe that You are God, will not commit sin. They will be justified... »

«No. If you had not known Me, if you had not been able to verify My deeds, if you had not had the opportunity to examine My words, you would not be guilty. If you were not doctors in Israel, you would not be in the wrong. But you know the Scriptures and you see My works. You can make a comparison. And if you do so honestly, you will see Me in the words of the Scripture and you will see the words of the Scripture in Me, translated into My actions. Thus you will not be justified for failing to recognize Me and for hating Me. There are too many idols, too much abomination, too much fornication, where God only should be. And the same applies to every place where you are. Salvation consists in disowning all that and in accepting the Truth that speaks to you. Consequently, where you kill or you try to kill, you will be killed. And that is why you will be judged at the border of Israel, where all human power lapses, and the Eternal Father only is the Judge of His creatures. »

<sup>7</sup>«Why do You speak so, Lord? You are severe. »

413. 7

«I am truthful. I am the Light. The Light was sent to illuminate Darkness. But the Light must shine freely. The Most High would have sent His Light in vain, if He had hidden that Light under a bushel. Not even men do so when they light a lamp, otherwise there would be no sense in lighting it. If they light it, they do so that it may give light and those in the house may see. I have come to give light to the darkened earthly house of My Father, so that those who are in it may see. And the Light shines. And bless it, if its most pure beams disclose reptiles, scorpions, traps, cobwebs, cracks in the walls. It does so for your sake, to give you the opportunity to know yourselves, to cleanse yourselves, driving away harmful animals, that is, passions and sins, so that you may rebuild yourselves before it is too late, and you may see where you set your foot: on Satan's trap, before you fall into it. But in order to see, in addition to a clear light, one needs a clear eye. No light can illuminate an eye that a disease has covered with pus. Cleanse your eyes and your spirits, so that the Light may descend into you. Why perish in Darkness when the Most Good God sends you Light and Medicine to cure you? It is not too late yet. In the time still left to you, come to the Light, the Truth, the Life. Come to your Saviour Who stretches His arms to you, and opens His heart to you, imploring you to receive Him for your own eternal good. »

Jesus is really imploring, yearning lovingly, and nothing but love emanates from Him... Even the most stubborn beasts, even those who are most intoxicated with hatred, perceive so, and their weapons avow defeat and their poison fails to spit out its acid bitterness.

<sup>8</sup>They look at one another. Then Helkai speaks on behalf of everybody: «You have spoken the truth, Master! I beg You to accept the banquet which I offer to honour You. »

«The only honour I ask for, is to conquer your souls. Leave Me in My poverty... »

«You will not offend Me by refusing?! »

«No offence. I beg you to leave Me with My friends. »

«They are invited as well, who could doubt it? They are invited with You. A great honour for my house!... You go to other great people! Why not come to Helkai? »

«Well... I will come. But, believe Me, in the secret of your house I will not be able to speak words different from those that I have spoken here, among the people. »

«Neither will I! Nor my friends! Do You perhaps doubt it?... »

Jesus looks at him. He then says: «I doubt only what I do not know. But I do know the thoughts of men. Let us go to your house... Peace to those who have listened to Me. »

And beside Helkai He directs His steps out of the Temple, followed by the train of His apostles mixed, but not enthusiastic about it, with Helkai's friends.

#### **414. Rebuke against Pharisees and doctors at the banquet in the home of the Sanhedrin Helkai.**

10<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

<sup>414. 1</sup> <sup>1</sup>Jesus enters the house of His host, not far from the Temple, towards the district at the foot of the Tophet. It is the decorous, rather austere house of a strict observant, nay, of an exaggerated observant. I believe that even nails have been placed in number and position as prescribed by one of the six hundred and thirteen precepts. There is no design on the cloths, not one ornament on the walls, not a knick-knack... not one of the little things, which in the houses of Joseph and Nicodemus and of the very Pharisees in Capernaum, are present to decorate them. Here... the spirit of the owner breathes in every part. It is icy, so bare it is of ornament. The dark heavy furniture, shaped like sarcophagi, makes it dull. It is repellent. A house which does not welcome, but is hostile to those entering it.

And Helkai points it out boasting. «See, Master, how observant I am? Everything says so. Look: curtains without any design, unadorned furniture, no sculptured vases or chandeliers imitating flowers. There is everything, but everything complies with the precept\*: “You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on the earth or in the waters under the earth”. And it is so in the house and also with regards to my garments and those of the household. For in-

\* precept, that is in: *Exodus 20, 4.*

stance, I do not approve of the needlework on the tunic and mantle of this disciple of Yours (the Iscariot). You will object: “Many wear them”. Or: “It is only a Greek fret”. All right. But with those angles and curves, it is too strong a reminiscence of the signs of Egypt. Horrible! Diabolic cyphers! Necromantic signs! Beelzebub’s monogram! It is not an honour to you, Judas of Simon, to wear them, or to You, Master, to allow him. »

Judas replies with a sly sarcastic laugh. Jesus replies humbly: «Rather than the signs of their clothes, I watch that there are no signs of horror in their hearts. But I will ask, nay I ask My disciple now, to wear less ornate garments in order not to scandalise anybody. »

Judas has a good gesture: «In actual fact my Master has told me several times that He would prefer my clothes to be more simple. But I... I did what I liked, because I like to be dressed thus. »

«Which is bad, very bad. It’s very bad that a Galilean should teach a Judean, particularly with regards to you, as you were one of the Temple... Oh! » Helkai appears to be utterly scandalised and his friends join in with him.

Judas is already tired of being kind. He retorts: «Oh! in that case there are many pompous things that you members of the Sanhedrin should forgo! If you had to remove all the drawings with which you have covered the faces of your souls, you would really look ugly. »

«How can you say that? »

«As one who knows you. »

«Master! Do You hear him? »

«I do, and I say that humbleness is necessary on both sides, as well as truth. And you ought to be indulgent to one another. God only is perfect. »

«Well said, Rabbi! » says one of the friends... A feeble solitary voice in the group of Pharisees and doctors.

«It’s wrong, instead» replies Helkai. «Deuteronomy is clear in its curses\*. It says: “A curse on the man who carves or casts an idol, a detestable thing, the work of a craftsman’s hands and...”»

«But these are clothes, they are not sculptures» replies Judas.

«Be silent. Your Master will speak. Helkai, be fair and make

\* **curses**, of which Helkai remembers that of *Deuteronomy 27, 15*; while Jesus remembers those of *Deuteronomy 27, 24-25*.



the necessary distinction. Cursed be he who makes idols, not he who makes patterns copying the beautiful things which the Creator put in creation. We pick flowers to adorn... »

«1 don't pick any and I do not want to see any room adorned with them. Woe to my women if they commit such a sin in their rooms. God only is to be admired. »

«Quite right. God only. But we can admire God also in a flower, confessing that He is the Craftsman of the flower. »

«No, no! Heathenism! Heathenism! »

«Judith adorned\* herself, so did Esther for a holy purpose... »

414. 2 «Females! And a female is always a despicable thing. <sup>2</sup>But I beg You, Master, go into the dining-room, while I withdraw for a moment as I have to speak to my friends. »

Jesus agrees without discussion.

«Master... I am breathing with difficulty!... » exclaims Peter.

«Why? Are you not feeling well? » ask some apostles.

«No, but I feel uncomfortable... like one who has fallen into a trap. »

«Do not get excited. And be very prudent, all of you» advises Jesus.

They remain standing in a group, until the Pharisees come in followed by the servants.

«Let us sit down at once. We have a meeting and we cannot be late» orders Helkai. And he assigns the seats while the servants serve the food.

Jesus is beside Helkai and Peter is at His side. Helkai offers the food and the meal begins in deathlike silence... They then begin to speak and the first words, of course, are addressed to Jesus, because the Twelve are neglected, as if they were not there.

414. 3 <sup>3</sup>The first question is asked by a doctor of the Law. «Master, are You sure of what You say? »

«I do not say so by Myself. The prophets said so before I was among you. »

«The prophets!... Since You deny that we are the holy ones, You may accept as true my assertion that our prophets may be braggarts. »

«The prophets are saints. »

\* adorned, as in: *Judith 10, 3-4; Esther 5, 1.*

«But we are not, are we? But remember that Zephaniah\* joins prophets and priests together when condemning Jerusalem: “Her prophets are braggarts, they are impostors, and her priests profane the holy things, they do violence to the Law”. You continuously reproach us with that. But if You accept the latter words of the prophet, you must accept also the former and thus admit that one cannot rely on the words of braggarts. »

«Rabbi of Israel, reply to My question. When a few lines later Zephaniah says: “Shout for joy, daughter of Zion... the Lord has repealed your sentence... the King of Israel is in your midst”, does your heart accept those words? »

«It is my glory to repeat them to myself dreaming of that day. »

«But they are the words of a prophet, of a braggart, so... »

The doctor of the Law remains dumbfounded for a moment. One of his friends assists him. «No one can doubt that Israel will reign. Not one, but all the prophets, and the patriarchs before the prophets, have mentioned that promise of God. »

«And not one of the patriarchs and prophets has failed to point out Who I am. »

«Oh! Well! But we have no proof! You may be a braggart as well. What proof can You give us that You are the Messiah, the Son of God? Give me a time-limit, that I may judge. »

«I do not refer you to My Death described by David and Isaiah, but to My Resurrection. »

«You? Rise again? And who will make You rise again? »

«Not certainly you. Neither the Pontiff, nor the monarch, nor the castes, nor the people. I will rise again by Myself. »

«Do not blaspheme, Galilean, and do not lie! »

«I am doing nothing but pay honour to God and speak the truth. And with Zephaniah I say to you: “Wait for Me at My resurrection”. Up to that time you may doubt, you all may doubt and work to make the people dubious. But it will no longer be possible for you to feel dubious when the Eternal Living One, after redeeming mankind, will rise by Himself from the dead to die no longer. Intangible Judge, perfect King, with His sceptre and Justice He will rule and judge until the end of the world and will continue to reign forever in Heaven. »

\* **Zephaniah**, that will be mentioned in the following passages: *Zephaniah 3, 4. 8. 14. 15.*

414.4     4«Do You not realize that You are speaking to doctors and members of the Sanhedrin? » asks Helkai.

«And so what? You ask Me questions, and I reply to them. You show desire to learn, and I explain the truth to you. After calling to My mind the curse of Deuteronomy, because of a drawing on a garment, you are not going to remind Me of another curse of the same Book: “A curse on him who strikes down his neighbour in secret”. »

«I am not striking You down. I am giving You food. »

«No. But your insidious questions are blows in the back. Be careful, Helkai. Because God’s maledictions follow one another, and the one I just quoted, is followed by another one: “A curse on him who accepts a bribe to take an innocent life”. »

«In this case You are accepting the gift, since You are my guest. »

«I do not even condemn culprits, if they are repentant. »

«Then, You are not just. »

«Yes, it is just. Because He considers that repentance deserves forgiveness, and therefore He does not condemn» says the man who already consented to Jesus in the hall of the house.

«Will you be quiet, Daniel! Do you think you know better than we do? Or are you seduced by One upon Whom much is still to be decided and Who does nothing to help us decide in His favour? » says one of the doctors.

«I know that you are the wise ones and I am a simple Judaeon and I do not even know why you often want me to be with you... »

«Because you are a relative! That is easily understood! And I want those who become my relatives to be holy and wise! I cannot allow ignorance in the Scriptures, in the Law, in Halacha, Midrash and Haggada. And I cannot suffer that. Everything is to be known and complied with... »

«And I am grateful to you for so much attention. But I, a simple tiller, once I undeservedly became your relative, I have been anxious about nothing but to know the Scriptures and the Prophets, to have comfort in my life. And with the simplicity of an unlearned person, I confess that in the Rabbi I recognize the Messiah, preceded by His Precursor, who pointed Him out to us... And you cannot deny that John was possessed by the Spirit of God. »

There is silence. They do not want to deny that the Baptist was infallible. Neither do they wish to admit that he was.

Then another one says: «Well... Let us say that the Precursor is the precursor of that angel that God sends to prepare the way to Christ. And... let us admit that in the Galilean there is enough holiness to consider Him such an angel. After Him there will come the times of the Messiah. Do you not think that this idea of mine is conciliative for everybody? Will you agree to it, Helkai? And what about you, my friends? And You, Nazarene? »

«No. », «No. », «No. » Three definite noes.

«Why? Why do you not approve of it? »

Helkai is silent. His friends also say nothing. Jesus only replies frankly: «Because I cannot approve of an error. I am more than an angel. The Baptist was the angel, the Precursor of the Christ, and I am the Christ. »

<sup>5</sup>There is a long deathlike silence. Helkai, his elbow resting on his couch and his cheek leaning on his hand, is pensive, severe, as uncommunicative as his whole house. <sup>414. 5</sup>

Jesus turns around, looks at him, then says: «Helkai, do not confuse the Law and the Prophets with trifles! »

«I see that You have read my thought. But You cannot deny that You have sinned infringing the precept. »

«As you, and by craft, and thus with a bigger sin, have infringed the duty of a host, and you did so deliberately, you distracted My attention and you sent Me here, while you were purifying yourself with your friends, and when you came back you begged us to make haste, because you had a meeting, and you did all that in order to be able to say to Me: “You have sinned”. »

«You could have reminded me of my duty to let You have what was necessary for Your purification. »

«I could remind you of many things, but it would only serve to make you more intolerant and hostile. »

«No. Tell me. We want to listen to You and... »

«And inform the Chief Priests accusing Me. That is why I reminded you of the last two curses. I am aware of it and I know you. I am here defenceless among you. I am here, isolated from the people who love Me and before whom you dare not assail Me. But I am not afraid. I do not resort to compromises, neither do I act in a cowardly way. And I tell you your sin, yours and of your

entire caste, O Pharisees, the false pure ones of the Law, O doctors, the false wise ones, who intentionally confuse and mix the true and the false good, who impose on other people and exact from them perfection even in exterior things, while you exact nothing from yourselves. You blame Me, together with your host and Mine, for not washing Myself before dining. You know that I have just come from the Temple, which one enters after being purified\* of dust and the dirt of the road. Do you want perhaps to confess that the Holy Place is contamination? »

«We purified ourselves before the meal. »

«And we were ordered: “Go there and wait”. And later: “Let us sit down without any delay”. So on your walls free from designs, there was a design: your plan to deceive Me. Which hand wrote on your walls the reason for a possible accusation? Your spirit or another power, which controls your spirit and to which  
414. 6 you listen? 6Now listen, all of you. »

Jesus stands up and with His hands resting on the edge of the table He begins His speech:

«You Pharisees wash the outside of the cup and of the plate, and you wash your hands and feet, as if plate and cup, hands and feet were to enter your spirits that you love to proclaim pure and perfect. But it is not for you, but for God to proclaim that. Well, listen to what God thinks of your spirits. He thinks that they are full of falsehood, of filth and robbery, they are full of iniquity and nothing from the outside can corrupt what is already corrupted. »

He lifts His right hand from the table and begins unintentionally to gesticulate with it, while He continues:

«Who made your spirits, as He made your bodies, can He not exact at least the same respect for your inside as you have for your outside? O stupid people, who confuse the two values and invert their importance, will the Most High not want a greater care for the spirit, which was made in His likeness and loses eternal Life through corruption, than He exacts for a hand or a foot, the dirt of which can be cleansed easily and which, even if they remained dirty, would not affect your interior cleanliness? And can God worry about the neatness of a cup or a tray, which

\* purified, as occurred in 413. 1.

are things without a soul and cannot influence your souls?

I read your thought, Simon Boetos. No, it does not stand. You do not carry out those purifications thinking of your health, as a protection for your bodies, your lives. Carnal sins, nay the sins of gluttony, of intemperance, of lust are certainly more harmful to the body than a little dust on your hands or on a plate. And yet you commit them without worrying about protecting your lives or the safety of your relatives. And you commit sins of various kinds, because besides polluting your souls and bodies, squandering your wealth, lacking respect to your relatives, you offend the Lord by desecrating your bodies, the temple of your souls, and in that temple there ought to be the throne of the Holy Spirit; and you offend the Lord also because you think that you have to protect by yourselves your bodies from diseases caused by a little dust, as if God could not intervene to protect you from physical trouble, if you had recourse to Him with pure spirit.

<sup>7</sup>But He Who created the inside did not perhaps create the <sup>414.</sup> <sup>7</sup> outside also, and vice versa? And is the inside not nobler and more marked by divine likeness? Do then good works worthy of God, not mean actions that do not rise from the dust for which and of which they are made, of the poor dust, which is man considered as an animal creature, mud formed into shape and which will become dust again, dust which the wind of time disperses. Do lasting works, that is holy regal works, crowned with divine blessing. Be charitable, give alms, be honest and pure in your deeds and in your intentions, and without resorting to ablutionary waters, everything will be pure in you.

What do you think? That you are in order because you pay tithes on spices? Woe to you, Pharisees, who pay the tithes of mint and rue, of mustard and cumin, of fennel and every other kind of herbs, and then you neglect the justice and love of God. It is your duty to pay tithes and it is to be done. But there are higher duties and they are to be done as well. Woe to those who respect exterior things and neglect the interior ones based on the love of God and of our neighbour. Woe to you, Pharisees, who love the first seats in synagogues and meetings, and like to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares and you do not worry about doing deeds that can give you a seat in Heaven and make you deserve to be revered by the angels. You are like hidden sepulchres,

which do not disgust him who passes near them without noticing them, but would give him a shiver of horror if he saw what is closed in them. But God sees the most secret things also and cannot be deceived when He judges. »

414. 8 <sup>8</sup>Jesus is interrupted by a doctor of the Law who also stands up to contradict Him. «Master, You are offending us as well, by speaking so; and that is not advantageous to You, because we have to judge You. »

«No. Not you. You cannot judge Me. You will be judged, you are not the judges, and it is God Who will judge you. You can speak and utter sounds with your lips. But even the most powerful voice cannot reach up to Heaven or resound all over the world. After a short space it is silence... And after a short time it is oblivion. But the judgement of God is a lasting voice that is riot subject to oblivion. Ages have gone by since God judged Lucifer and Adam. But the voice of the judgement has not gone out. And its consequences still last. And if I have come to bring back Grace to men, through the perfect Sacrifice, the sentence on Adam's action remains what it is, and it will always be called "Original sin". Men will be redeemed, they will be washed with a purification exceeding every other one, but they will be born with that stain, because God has decided that that stain is to be in every man born of woman, with the exception of Him, Who was made not by deed of man, but by the Holy Spirit, and with the exception of the Preserved Woman and the Presanctified Man, virgins forever. The Former, that She might be the Virgin Mother of God, the latter that he might be the precursor of the Innocent, being born already pure, through a pre-fruit of the infinite merits of the Saviour Redeemer.

414. 9 <sup>9</sup>And I tell you that God judges you. And He judges you saying: "Woe to you, doctors of the Law, because you load people with unbearable weights, turning into a punishment the fatherly Decalogue of the Most High to His People". He had given it out of love and for love, so that man might be supported by a fair guide, man, the eternal imprudent ignorant child. And the loving leading-strings, by which God supported His creatures, so that they might proceed along His way and arrive at His heart, have been replaced by you with mountains of heavy, sharp harassing stones, a labyrinth of prescriptions, a nightmare of scru-

pies, whereby man loses heart, becomes confused, stops, fears God as an enemy. You prevent hearts from going to God. You separate the Father from His children. Through your impositions, you deny such sweet, blessed true Paternity. You, however, do not even touch with your fingers those weights, which you load on other people. You consider yourselves justified, simply because you gave them. But, O fools, do you not know that you will be judged for what you considered necessary for salvation? Do you not know that God will say to you: “You said that your word was sacred and just. Well, I judge it such as well. And since you imposed it on everybody and you judged your brothers according to how it was accepted and practised, now I judge you by your own word. And since you did not do what you said was to be done, be damned”?

Woe to you who build sepulchres to the prophets killed by your fathers. What? Do you think that you will thus reduce the gravity of your fathers’ sin or that you will cancel it in the eyes of posterity? No. On the contrary you give evidence of such deeds of your fathers. Not only, but you approve of them, and you are ready to imitate them and build later a sepulchre to the persecuted prophet, so that you say to yourselves: “We have honoured him”. Hypocrites! That is why the Wisdom of God said: “I will send them prophets and apostles. And they will kill some and persecute some, so that it may be possible to call this generation to account for the blood of all the prophets, shed from the creation of the world onwards, from the blood of Abel\* down to the blood of Zacharias, slain between the Altar and the Sanctuary”. Yes, I solemnly tell you that of all that blood of saints an account will be asked of this generation, which cannot tell where God is, and it persecutes and distresses the just who are a living comparison for their injustice. <sup>10</sup>Woe to you, doctors of the Law, <sup>414.</sup> <sup>10</sup> who have usurped the key of science and have closed its temple, in order not to enter it and be judged by it, neither have you allowed others to enter it. Because you know that if the people were taught the true Science, that is, Holy Wisdom, they could judge you. You, therefore, prefer them to be ignorant that they may not judge you. And you hate Me because I am the Word of

\* from the blood of Abel, in *Genesis 4, 8*; down to the blood of Zacharias, in *2 Chronicles 24, 20-22*.



Wisdom and before the time you would like to close Me in prison, in a sepulchre, so that I may no longer speak.

But I will speak as long as My Father likes Me to speak. And afterwards My deeds will speak more than My words. And My merits will speak even more than My deeds, and the world will be taught and will know, and it will judge you. The first judgement is upon you. Then the second will come: an individual judgement at the death of each of you. And then the last one: The Universal one. And you will remember this day and these days, and you, you alone will know the terrible God, Whom you have striven to show as a nightmarish vision to the spirits of simple people, whilst you, inside your sepulchres, derided Him and you neither respected nor obeyed His commandments, from the first and main one: the commandment of love, to the last one given on Sinai.

It is of no avail to you, Helkai, that you have no images in your house. Neither is it of any avail to you all, that you have no sculptures in your houses. Inside your hearts you have an idol, several idols. The idol whereby you believe that you are gods, the idols of  
414. 11 your concupiscence. 11Come, My disciples, let us go. »

And preceded by the Twelve He goes out last.

Silence...

Those remaining clamour shouting all together: «We must persecute Him, catch Him at fault and find counts of indictment! We must kill Him! »

Then silence again.

Then, while two of them go away disgusted with the hatred and intentions of the Pharisees - one is Helkai's relative and the other the man who defended the Master twice - those left ask one another: «But how? »

There is silence once again.

Then with a hoarse laughter Helkai says: «We will have to talk Judas of Simon around... »

«Of course! It's a good idea! But you offended him!... »

«I'll see to that» says the one whom Jesus called Simon Boetos. «Eleazar of Annas and I... We will entrap him... »

«Some promises... »

«A little fear... »

«Much money... »

«No. Not much... Promises of much money... »

«And then? »

«What do you mean: and then? ».

«Eh! 'Then. When it is all done, what shall we give him? »

«Nothing! Death. So... he will not speak anymore» slowly and cruelly says Helkai.

«Oh! death... »

«Are you horrified? Go away! If we kill the Nazarene Who... is a just man... we can kill the Iscariot as well, as he is a sinner... »

There is hesitation.

But Helkai, standing up, says: «We will hear also what Annas says... And you will see that... he will say that it is a good idea. And you will come, too... Oh! you will certainly come... »

They all go out after their host who goes away saying: «You will come... You will come! »

#### **415. A short stay in Bethany.**

11<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Sunset reddens the sky when Jesus arrives at Bethany. His hot dusty apostles follow Him. And Jesus and the apostles are the only ones to brave the burning road - as hot as a furnace - which receives little shade from the trees extending from the Mount of Olives to the slopes of Bethany. Summer burns, but hatred rages even more. The fields are bare and scorched they are like furnaces reverberating blasts of heat. But the souls of Jesus' enemies are even more devoid - I do not mean of love - but of honesty, of human morals, raging with hatred... And there is but one home, one shelter for Jesus: Bethany. There is love, relief, protection and loyalty there... The persecuted Pilgrim directs His steps there, in His white garment, sad of countenance, with the tired step of one who cannot stop, being urged on by enemies close behind, with the resigned look of one who already contemplates death approaching every hour, at every step, and which one accepts, out of obedience to God... <sup>415. 1</sup>

The house, in the middle of its large garden, is closed and silent, awaiting cooler hours. The garden is empty and deserted,

and the sun only reigns despotically there.

415.2 <sup>2</sup>Thomas calls in his loud baritone voice.

A curtain is drawn, a face looks out... Then a cry: «The Master! » and the servants rush out, followed by the surprised mistresses, who were certainly not expecting Jesus at that hot hour of the day.

«Rabboni! », «My Lord! » Martha and Mary greet from afar, already stooping, ready to prostrate themselves, as they do, as soon as the gate is opened and Jesus is no longer separated from them.

«Martha, Mary: peace to you and to your house. »

«Peace to You, Master and Lord... But why at this hour? » ask the sisters, dismissing the servants so that Jesus may speak freely-

«To rest My body and soul where I am not hated... » sadly says Jesus, stretching out His hands, as if to say: «Do you want Me? » and He strives to smile, but His very sad smile is belied by His sorrowful eyes.

«Have they hurt You? » asks Mary flushing.

«What happened to You? » asks Martha and she adds maternally: «Come, I will give You some refreshment. How long have You been walking, since You are so tired? »

«Since dawn... and I can say without stopping, because the short rest in the house of Helkai, the member of the Sanhedrin, was worse than a long journey... »

«Was it there that they grieved You? »

«Yes... and previously at the Temple... »

«But why did You go to that snake? » asks Mary.

«Because if I had refused to go, it would have served to justify his hatred, which would have accused Me of despising the members of the Sanhedrin. But now... whether I go or not, the measure of Pharisaic hatred is full... and there will be no truce... »

«Have we got to that? Stay with us, Master. They will not hurt You here... »

«I would fail in My mission... Many souls are waiting for their Saviour. I must go... »

«But they will prevent You from going! »

«No. They will persecute Me by letting Me go, so that they may watch every step of Mine, allowing Me to speak to study

every word, watching over Me as bloodhounds track a quarry, so that they may have... something, which may look like a fault... and everything will serve... »

Martha, who is always so respectful, is so moved to pity, that she lifts her hand to caress His emaciated cheek, but she stops blushing and says: «Forgive me! I felt sorry for You as I do for our Lazarus! Forgive me, Lord, for loving You as a suffering brother! »

«I am the suffering brother... Love Me with pure sisterly love... <sup>3</sup>But what is Lazarus doing? »

415. 3

«He is languishing, Lord... » replies Mary and this avowal together with the grief of seeing her Master so distressed makes her shed the tears already welling in her eyes.

«Do not weep, Mary, neither for him nor for Me, We are doing the divine will. One should weep over those who do not know how to do that will... »

Mary bends to take Jesus' hand and kisses the tips of His fingers.

They have meanwhile arrived at the house and as they enter they go to Lazarus at once, while the apostles rest refreshing themselves with what the servants offer them.

Jesus bends over Lazarus, who is becoming more and more emaciated, and kisses him to relieve the sadness of His dear friend. «Master, how much You love me! You did not even wait until evening to come to me. In this heat... »

«My dear friend, I enjoy your company and you enjoy Mine. The rest does not matter. »

«That is true. It is nothing. Even my suffering no longer matters to me... Now I know why I suffer and what I can achieve by suffering» and Lazarus smiles an intimate spiritual smile.

«Yes, it is so, Master. One could almost say that our Lazarus rejoices at being ill and... » a sob breaks Martha's voice and she becomes silent.

«Come on, you may as well say it: at death. Master, tell them that they must help me, as the Levities help the priests. »

«To do what, My friend? »

«To consume the sacrifice... »

«And yet, up till recently, you trembled at the idea of death! So you no longer love us? You no longer love the Master? Do you

not want to serve Him?... » asks Mary, who is stronger but pale with grief, and she caresses the yellowish hand of her brother.

«And you are asking me, just you, ardent and generous soul? Am I not your brother? Have I not the same blood as you have, and the same holy loves: Jesus, souls, and you, my beloved sisters?... But since Passover my soul has received a great word. And I love death. My Lord, I offer it to You, for Your own intentions. »

«So you are not going to ask Me to cure you any longer? »

«No, Rabboni. I ask You to bless me that I may be able to suffer... and die... and if I am not asking for too much... to redeem... You said so... \*»

«I did. And I bless you to give you all the necessary strength. »  
And Jesus imposes His hands on him and then kisses him.

415. 4 <sup>4</sup>«We will be together and You will teach me... »

«Not just now, Lazarus. I am not staying. I have come only for a few hours. I am leaving tonight. »

«But why? » ask the three disappointed relatives.

«Because I cannot stay... I will come back in autumn. And then I will stay here for a long time and I will do much here... and in the surroundings... »

There is sad silence. Then Martha begs Him: «At least take some rest, some refreshment... »

«Nothing will refresh Me more than your love. Let My apostles rest and let Me stay here, with you, thus, in peace... »

Martha goes out weeping, she then comes back with some cups of cold milk and some early fruit...

«The apostles have had something to eat, and tired as they were, they are now sleeping. My Master, do You really not want to rest? »

«Do not insist, Martha. Before dawn they will be looking for Me here, at Gethsemane, at Johanna's, in every hospitable house. But at dawn I will be far away. »

«Where are You going, Master? » asks Lazarus.

«Towards Jericho, but not along the usual road... I am going towards Tekoa and then I will come back towards Jericho. »

«A hard journey in this season!... » whispers Martha.

\* You said so, in 376. 3.

«That is why the road is solitary. We will walk at night. The nights are clear even before the moon rises... And it is soon dawn... »

«And then? » asks Mary.

«And later beyond the Jordan. And at the height of northern Samaria, I will cross the river and come to this area. »

«Go to Nazareth soon. You are tired... » says Lazarus.

«I must go to the coastal area first... Then... I will go to Galilee. But they will persecute Me even there... »

«You will always have Your Mother to comfort You... » says Mary.

«Yes, poor Mother! »

«Master, Magdala is Yours. You know» Mary reminds Him.

«I know, Mary. I am aware of all the good and of all the evil... »

<sup>5</sup>«Separated thus!... for such a long time! Shall I still be alive, <sup>415. 5</sup> when You come back, Master? »

«Do not doubt it. Do not weep... We must get accustomed also to parting. Separations serve to test the strength of affections. The hearts we love are better understood when we see them with spiritual eyes, from afar. When we are not enticed by the human pleasure of being physically close to the person we love, we can meditate on the spirit and love of that person... and have a better understanding of the ego of our far away beloved... I am sure that, thinking of your Master, you will understand Him better, when you see and contemplate My deeds and love peacefully. »

«Oh! Master! But we are not dubious of You! »

«Neither I am of you. I know. But you will know Me better.

And I am not telling you to love Me, because I know your hearts. I say only: pray for Me. »

Lazarus and his sisters weep... Jesus is so sad!... How can one not weep?

«What do you want? God had put love amongst men. But men have substituted hatred... And hatred not only separates enemies from one another, but it insinuates itself to separate friends. »

There is a long silence.

Then Lazarus says: «Master, go away from Palestine for some time... »

«No. My place is here: to live, to evangelize, to die. »

«But You have seen to John and the Greek woman. Go and stay with them. »

«No. They were to be saved. I must save. And that is the difference that clarifies everything. The altar is here, and the chair is here. I cannot go elsewhere. In any case... do you think that would change what has been decided? No. Neither on the Earth nor in Heaven. It would only blemish the spiritual purity of the Messianic figure. I would be “the coward” who saves himself fleeing. I must set an example for the present and future generations that in the matters concerning God, in holy things, one must not be a coward... »

«You are right, Master» says Lazarus with a sigh...

415. 6    «And Martha, pushing the curtain aside, says: «You are right... It is getting dark... The sun has set... »

Mary weeps distressingly, as if that word had the power to crush her moral courage, which had so far confined her grief to silent tears. She is weeping more heartbrokenly than she did in the house of the Pharisee, when she implored the Saviour with her tears to forgive her...

«Why are you weeping thus? » asks Martha.

«Because you have spoken the truth, sister! There is no more sunshine... The Master is going away... There is no more sunshine for me... for us... »

«Be good. I bless you and may My blessing remain with you. And now leave Me with Lazarus who is tired and needs calmness. Watching My friend I will rest. Provide for the apostles and ensure that they are ready for the hour of shadows... »

The women disciples withdraw and Jesus remains silent, engrossed in thought, sitting near His languishing friend, who happy for such closeness, falls asleep with a light smile on his face.

415. 7    7«You will put here the vision of Jesus and the beggar on the road to Jericho, which you had on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1944, and immediately after it, the vision of the conversion of Zacchaeus, of 17th July 1944. »

## 416. A Samaritan beggar on the way to Jericho.

17<sup>th</sup> May 1944.

<sup>1</sup>I see Jesus on a very dusty and sunny main road. There is not the smallest patch of shade, there is not a blade of grass. There is dust on the road, there is dust on the waste country bordering on it. There are certainly none of the pleasant hills of Galilee nor of the woody mountains of Judaea, so rich in waters and pastures. The land here is not a desert by its nature, but only because man has made it so by leaving it uncultivated. It is a flat country and I cannot see one hill, not even in the distance. As I am not familiar with Palestine, I cannot say which region it is. It is certainly one which I have never seen in previous visions\*. On one side of the road there are heaps of crushed stones, perhaps to repair the road, which is in a very bad state. At present one sinks into the dust: when it rains it must become a torrent of mud. I can see no houses, neither near the road nor far away.

Jesus, as usual, is walking a few metres ahead of the apostles, who, hot and tired, follow Him in a group. To protect themselves from the sun, they have pulled their mantles over their heads and they look like a confraternity dressed in many-coloured robes. Jesus, instead, is bare-headed. The sun does not seem to annoy Him. He is wearing a white linen short-sleeved tunic. It is very wide and loose. He is not even wearing His usual cord belt. His clothes are most suitable for this torrid place. His mantle also must be of sky-blue linen because it is very light and falls loosely over His body, which is thus less wrapped than usual. His shoulders are covered, but His arms are free. I do not know how He has fastened it to keep it thus.

<sup>2</sup>A man is sitting, nay, he is half-lying on one of the heaps of crushed stones. He must be a poor beggar. His garment (so to speak) is a dirty tattered short tunic, which perhaps once was white, but now is the colour of mud. He is wearing two shabby worn-out sandals: two soles with holes, held together with pieces of string. In his hands he has a stick made from the branch of a tree. He has a dirty bandage on his forehead and another dirty rag, stained with blood, on his left leg, between his knee and hip.

\* **previous visions**, therefore those written before 17<sup>th</sup> May 1944.



The poor fellow is emaciated, a heap of bones, dejected, dirty, hairy, uncombed.

Before he invokes Jesus, Jesus goes to him. He approaches the poor wretch and asks him: «Who are you? »

«A poor man begging for bread. »

«Along this road? »

«I am going to Jericho. »

«The road is a long one and the country is depopulated. »

«I know, but the Gentiles who pass here are more likely to give me a piece of bread and a coin, than the Jews from whom I have come. »

«Have you come from Judaea? »

«Yes, from Jerusalem. But I had to go a long way round to see some good people in the country, as they always give me something. Townsfolk don't give anything. There is no mercy there. »

«You are right. There is no mercy. »

«But You have mercy. Are You Judaeen? »

«No. I come from Nazareth. »

«Once the Nazarenes had a poor reputation. But now we must say that they are better than the people in Judaea. Even in Jerusalem, only the followers of that Nazarene, Who they say is a Prophet, are good. Do You know Him? »

«And do you know Him? »

«No. I went there because, see, my leg is numb and contracted, and I drag myself along with difficulty. I am not fit to work and I am dying of starvation and blows. I was hoping to meet Him, because I was told that He cures whoever He touches. It is true that I do not belong to the chosen people... but they say that He is good to everybody. I was told that He was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks. But I walk slowly... and I was beaten and I was left suffering on the road... When I arrived in Jerusalem, He had left, because they told me that the Jews had ill-treated Him as well. »

«And did they maltreat you? »

«They always do. Only the Roman soldiers give me a piece of bread. »

<sup>416. 3</sup> «And what do the people in Jerusalem say of that Nazarene? »

«That He is the Son of God, a great Prophet, a Saint, a Just man. »

«And what do you think He is? »

«I... I am an idolater. But I think He is the Son of God. »

«How can you believe that, if you do not even know Him? »

«I know His works. Only God can be as good and speak words as He does. »

«Who told you of those words? »

«Other poor people, people who were cured, children who bring me some bread... Children are good and they know nothing of believers and idolaters. »

«But where do you come from? »

«... »

«Tell Me. I am like children. Be not afraid. But be sincere. »

«I am... a Samaritan. Don't beat me... »

«I never beat anybody. I never despise anyone. I feel sorry for everybody. »

«Then... Then You are the Rabbi of Galilee! »

The beggar prostrates himself, from the heap of stones he falls on the dust like a dead body, in front of Jesus.

«Stand up. It is I. Be not afraid. Stand up and look at Me. »

The beggar looks up, still on his knees: he is all contracted because of his deformity.

«Give this man some bread and something to drink» says Jesus to the apostles who have just arrived.

It is John who gives bread and water.

«Make him sit down, so that he may eat comfortably. Eat, brother. »

The poor man weeps. He does not eat. He looks at Jesus with the eyes of a stray dog, which is caressed and fed, for the first time, by a compassionate person.

«Eat up! » orders Jesus smiling.

The poor fellow eats between one sob and another and tears moisten his bread. But there is also a smile among his tears. He slowly regains confidence.

<sup>4</sup>«Who wounded you here? » asks Jesus touching with His fingers the dirty bandage on the man's forehead. <sup>416.4</sup>

«A rich Pharisee deliberately ran me over with his cart... I was standing at a cross-roads begging for bread. He drove his horses against me so quickly, that I was not able to move aside. I was on the point of death because of it. I still have a hole in my

head, from which putrid matter comes out. »

«And who struck you there? »

«I had approached the house of a Sadducee, where there was a banquet, asking for some of the remains, after the dogs had chosen the best ones. He saw me and set the dogs on me. One of them tore my thigh to pieces. »

«And what about this large scar that maims your hand? »

«A scribe gave me a blow with a club three years ago. He found out that I was a Samaritan and he struck me breaking my fingers. That is why I cannot work. With my right hand maimed, my leg numbed, how can I earn my living? »

«But why are you leaving Samaria? »

«It's bad to be in need, Master. We are very unhappy and there is not enough bread for everybody. If You helped me... »

«What do you want Me to do for you? »

«To cure me so that I may work. »

«Do you think I can? »

«Yes, I do believe it, because You are the Son of God. »

«Do you believe that? »

«I do. »

«You, a Samaritan, believe that? Why? »

«I do not know why. I know that I believe in You and in Him Who sent You. Now that You have come, there is no difference in worshipping. It is enough to worship You in order to worship Your Father, the eternal Lord. Where You are, there is the Father. »

416. 5 <sup>5</sup>«Have you heard, My friends? (Jesus addresses His disciples). This man is speaking through the Spirit Who enlightens the truth for him. And I solemnly tell you that he is superior to scribes and Pharisees, to cruel Sadducees, to all those idolaters who falsely call themselves the children of the Law. The Law prescribes to love our neighbour, after God. And they give blows to the neighbour asking for bread, they drive horses and dogs on suppliants, on the neighbour who lowers himself below the dogs of a rich man, they set the very dogs on him, to make him even more unhappy than his diseases do. Disdainful, cruel, hypocrites, *they do not* want God to be known and loved. If they did want that, they would make Him known through their deeds, as this man said. It is deeds, not practices, which make people see

the living God in the hearts of men and lead men to God. And you, Judas, since you reproach Me for being imprudent, tell Me, shall I not reprimand them? To be silent, to feign that I approve of them, would mean approving of their behaviour. No. For the glory of God, Whose Son I am, I cannot allow humble, unhappy, good people to believe that I approve of their sins. I have come to make the Gentiles sons of God. But I cannot do that if they see that the children of the Law - they call themselves so, but they are illegitimate children - practise a paganism more guilty than theirs, because these Jews have been acquainted with the Law of God, and now, just like unclean animals, they spit the re-gurgitations of their satisfied passions on it. Am I to believe, Judas, that you are like them? You, who reproach Me for the truth I speak? Or must I think that you are worried about your own life? *He who follows Me must not be concerned with human worries.* I told you, Judas, you are still in time to choose between My way and the way of the Judaeans, whom you approve of. But consider that My way goes to God; the other to God's Enemy. Consider that and make up your mind. But be sincere. <sup>416. 6</sup>And you, My friend, rise and walk. Remove those bandages. Go back home. You are cured because of your faith. »

The beggar looks at Him dumbfounded. He dare not stretch out his hand... but he tries. It is uninjured, exactly as his left one. He drops his stick, and pushing his hands on the heap of stones, he rises. He can stand. The paralysis contracting his leg is cured. He moves his leg, bends it... takes one step, two, three. He walks... He looks at Jesus with a cry and tears of joy. He rips off the bandage from his forehead. He touches the back of his head, where the infected hole was. There is nothing. It is all cured. He tears the blood-stained rag off his leg: the skin is intact.

«Master, Master and my God! » he shouts, lifting his arms, and then falling on his knees to kiss Jesus' feet.

«Go home now, and always believe in the Lord. »

«And where shall I go, Master and God, but after You, Who are good and holy? Do not reject me, Master... »

«Go to Samaria. And speak of Jesus of Nazareth. The hour of Redemption is close at hand. Be My disciple with your brothers. Go in peace. »

Jesus blesses him and they then part. The cured man walks

fast northwards, turning round now and again to look.

Jesus, with His apostles, leaves the road and they proceed eastwards through uncultivated fields, taking a little path which cuts across the main road and which widens out only much farther on. It is perhaps the road to Jericho. I do not know.

#### **417. The ex leper Zacharias. The conversion of Zacchaeus, a publican that let the yeast of Good leaven.**

17<sup>th</sup> July 1944.

417. 1 I see a large square, which looks like a market and is shaded by palms and other lower leafy trees. The palm-trees grow here and there, without any order and their top leaves rustle in the warm upper breeze, which raises a reddish dust, as if it came from a desert or from uncultivated places of reddish earth. The other trees, instead, form shady porches along the sides of the square, and vendors and buyers have taken shelter under them, in a restless shouting din.

In a corner of the square, exactly where the main road leads into it, there is a primitive excise office. There are scales and measures, and a bench at which is sat a little man who oversees, watches and deals in cash and to whom everybody speaks, as if he were very well known. I know that he is Zacchaeus, the excise-man, as many people address him, some to ask about the events of the town, and they are mainly strangers, some to pay their taxes. Many are surprised at seeing him worried. He seems in fact absent-minded and engrossed in thought. He replies in monosyllables and at times with gestures, which amazes many, who know that Zacchaeus is usually talkative. Some ask him whether he is not feeling well or if any of his relatives is ill. But he says no.

Only twice he shows keen interest. The first time when he questions two people who have come from Jerusalem and are speaking of the Nazarene, of His miracles and teaching. Zacchaeus then asks many questions: «Is He really as good as they say? And do His words correspond to facts? Does He really make use of the mercy which He preaches? On behalf of everybody, also of publicans? Is it true that He does not reject anybody? » And he

listens, thinks and sighs. The second time when someone points out to him a bearded man, who is, passing by with a little donkey laden with household goods. «See, Zacchaeus? That is Zacharias, the leper. He lived in a sepulchre for ten years. Now that he is cured, he has bought the furnishings for his house, which was emptied according to the Law, when he and his relatives were declared lepers. »

«Call him. »

<sup>2</sup>Zacharias comes.

417. 2

«Were you a leper? »

«I was and so were my wife and my two children. My wife was the first to be infected and we did not notice it at once. The children became infected sleeping with their mother, and I, when I approached my wife. We were all lepers! When it was found out, they sent us away from the village... They could have left us in our house, as it was the last one... at the end of the street. We would not have caused any trouble... I had already grown a very high hedge, so that we might not even be seen. It was already a sepulchre... but it was our home... They sent us away. Away! Away! No town wanted us. And quite rightly! Not even our own town had wanted us. We stayed near Jerusalem, in an empty sepulchre. Many poor wretches are there. But the children died, in the cold of the cave. The disease, cold and starvation soon killed them... They were two boys... they were beautiful before the disease. They were strong and beautiful, dark brown like two blackberries in August, curly and lively. They had become two skeletons covered with sores... They had no hair left, their eyes were sealed with scabs, their feet and hands were falling off in white scales. I watched the bodies of my children waste away!... They no longer looked like human beings the morning they died... one after the other within a few hours... I buried them under a little earth and many stones, like the carrion of animals, while their mother screamed... A few months later their mother died... and I was left alone... I was waiting to die and no one would dig a hole to bury me...

<sup>3</sup>I was almost blind when one day the Nazarene passed by. 417. 3  
From my sepulchre I shouted: “Jesus! Son of David, have mercy on me! ” A beggar, who was not afraid to bring me his bread, had told me that he had been cured of his blindness, by shouting

that invocation. And he said: “He did not only give me the sight of my eyes, but also of my soul. I saw that He is the Son of God and I see everyone through Him. That is why, brother, I do not shun you, but I bring you bread and faith. Go to the Christ. So that one more soul may bless Him”. I could not go. My feet, ulcerated to the bone, would not let me walk... in any case... I would have been stoned, if they saw me. I waited carefully for Him to pass. He often passed by coming to Jerusalem. One day I saw, as far as I could see, a cloud of dust on the road and many people and I heard shouts. I dragged myself to the brow of the hill, where the sepulchral caves were, and when I thought I could see a bare fair-haired head shine among other covered ones, I shouted aloud, at the top of my voice. I shouted three times, until my voice reached Him.

He turned around. He stopped. Then He came towards me: all alone. He came right under the spot where I was and He looked at me. He was handsome, kind, with a voice, a smile!... He asked: “What do you want Me to do for you? ”.

“I want to be cleansed”.

“Do you believe that I can? Why? ” He asked me.

“Because You are the Son of God”.

“Do you believe that? ”.

“I believe it” I replied. “I see the Most High flash in His glory above Your head. Son of God, have mercy on me! ”.

He then stretched out a hand and His face was ablaze. His eyes seemed two blue suns, and he said: “I want it. Be cleansed” and He blessed me with a smile!... Ah! What a smile! I perceived a strength enter me. Like a sword of fire which ran searching for my heart, it ran through my veins. My heart, which was so diseased, became as it was when I was twenty years old, and the ice-cold blood became warm and fast-flowing in my veins. No more pains, no more weakness, and a joy, what a joy!... He was looking at me; with His smile He made me blissful. He then said: “Go, show yourself to the priests. Your faith has saved you”.

I then realized that I had been cured and I looked at my hands and legs. There were no more sores. There was fresh rosy flesh where previously the bone was uncovered. I ran to a little stream and I looked at myself. My face also was clean. I was clean! Clean after being loathsome for ten years!... Oh! Why did He not pass

by before? When my wife and children were alive? He would have cured us. Now, see? I am buying things for my house... But I am all alone!... »

«Have you not seen Him anymore? »

«No, but I know that He is in this area and that is why I have come. I would like to bless Him once again and be blessed by Him to have strength in my solitude. »

Zacchaeus lowers his head and is silent. The group breaks up.

«Some time passes. It gets warmer. The market place empties. <sup>417 4</sup> The exciseman with his head resting on one hand is pensive, sitting at his desk.

«Here is the Nazarene! » shout some children, pointing at the main road.

Women, men, sick people, beggars rush towards Him. The square is empty. Only some donkeys and camels, tied to the palm-trees, remain where they were, and Zacchaeus remains at his desk.

He then stands up and climbs on his desk. But he cannot see anything because many people have pulled off branches and are waving them joyfully and Jesus is bending over sick people. Zacchaeus then takes off his garment and having on only his short tunic he climbs one of the trees. He goes up the large smooth trunk with difficulty as his short arms and legs make climbing difficult. But he succeeds and sits astride two branches as on a perch. His legs hang from that kind of railing and from his waist upwards he leans out as if he were at a window and he watches.

The crowds arrive in the square. Jesus looks up and smiles at the solitary spectator perched on the branches. «Zacchaeus, come down at once. I am staying at your house today» He orders.

And Zacchaeus, after a moment of astonishment, his face purple with excitement, lets himself slide down on the ground like a sack. He is so excited that he is hardly able to put on his clothes. He closes his books and cash-desk with gestures which he would like to be very fast, but instead are very slow. But Jesus is patient: He caresses some children while waiting.

<sup>5</sup>Zacchaeus is ready at last. He approaches the Master and <sup>417. 5</sup> leads Him to a beautiful house with a large garden around it, in the centre of the town. A beautiful town. Not much inferior to Jerusalem with regards to its buildings, if not to its size.



Jesus goes in and while waiting for the meal to be made ready, he takes care of sick and healthy people. With such patience... as He only is capable.

Zacchaeus comes and goes, busying himself. He is beside himself with joy. He would like to speak to Jesus. But Jesus is always surrounded by a crowd of people.

At last Jesus dismisses everybody saying: «Come back at sunset. Go to your homes now. Peace be with you. »

The garden empties and the meal is served in a beautiful cool hall facing the garden. Zacchaeus has done things in great style. I do not see any other relatives, so I think that Zacchaeus is single and lives only with many servants.

<sup>417. 6</sup> «At the end of the meal, when the disciples scatter in the shade of bushes to rest, Zacchaeus remains with Jesus in the cool hall. In actual fact Jesus remains alone for a little while, because Zacchaeus withdraws to let Him rest. But he comes back and looks through a slit in the curtains. He sees that Jesus is not sleeping, but is pensive. He then approaches Him. He is carrying a heavy coffer, which he lays on the table near Jesus and says: «Master... they have spoken to me about You. For some time. One day on a mountain side You said so many truthful things, that our doctors cannot excel them. They remained in my heart... and since then I have been thinking of You... Then I was told that You are good and that You do not reject sinners. I am a sinner, Master. They told me that You cure sick people. My heart is diseased, because I defrauded, I practised usury, I have been a depraved fellow, a thief, hard on the poor. But now, I have been cured, because You spoke to me. You approached me and the demon of sensuality and riches fled. And as from today, I belong to You, if You do not reject me, and to prove to You that I am reborn in You, I divest myself of the ill-acquired riches and I give You half of my wealth for the poor and I will use the other half to give back, multiplied by four, what I got by fraud. I know whom I cheated. Then, after handing back to each of them what belongs to them, I will follow You, Master, if You allow me... »

«I do want that. Come. I have come to save and call people to the Light. Today Light and Salvation have come to the house of your heart. Those who over there, beyond the gate, are grumbling because I have redeemed you sitting at your banquet, are

forgetting that you are a son of Abraham as they are, and that I have come to save who was lost and to give Life to those whose spirits were dead. Come, Zacchaeus. You have understood My word better than many people who follow Me only to be able to accuse Me. Therefore you will be with Me as from now on. »

The vision ends here.

18<sup>th</sup> July 1944.

<sup>7</sup>Jesus says:

417. 7

«There is yeast and yeast. There is the yeast of Good and the yeast of Evil. The yeast of Evil, a Satanic poison, ferments more easily than the yeast of Good, because it finds matter more suitable for fermentation in the heart of man, in the thought of man, in the flesh of man, seduced all three by a selfish will, contrary therefore to the universal Will, which is the Will of God.

The will of God is universal because it is never confined to a personal thought, but it takes into consideration the welfare of the whole universe. Nothing can increase the perfection of God in any way, as He has always possessed everything in a perfect manner. Thus there can be no thought in Him of personal gain inciting any of His actions. When we say: “This is done to the greater glory of God, in the interest of God”, we do not mean that divine glory is in Itself susceptible to improvement, but that everything which in Creation bears the mark of good and any person doing good, and thus deserving to possess it, is adorned with the sign of divine Glory and thus gives glory to Glory itself, Which has created all things gloriously. It is, in short, the testimony which people and things bear to God, giving evidence, with their deeds, of the perfect Origin from Which they come.

Thus, when God orders or advises you to do an action or inspires you with one, He does not aim at any selfish interest, but at your welfare, with altruistic charitable mind. That is, therefore, the reason why the Will of God is never selfish, on the contrary it is a Will which aims entirely at altruism and universality. It is the only and true Strength in the universe which considers universal welfare.

On the contrary, the yeast of Good, spiritual embryo coming from God, grows through difficulties and hardships, as it has against itself the reactions propitious to the other one: the flesh,

the heart, the thought of man, pervaded with selfishness, the antithesis of Good, which by its origin can be but Love. Most men lack the will of Good and consequently Good becomes sterile and dies, or lives so poorly that it does not leaven: it remains as it was. There is no serious fault. But there is not even the effort to do the greatest good. The spirit thus lies inert: not dead, but unfruitful.

Bear in mind *that not to do evil serves only to avoid Hell*. To enjoy at once beautiful Paradise one must do good. It is essential. As much good as one can do, struggling against oneself and other people. Because I said\* that I had come not to bring peace but war, also between father and children, brothers and sisters, when such war was to defend the Will of God and His Law against the abuse of human wills aiming at what is contrary to what God wants.

417. 8 <sup>8</sup>In Zacchaeus the tiny quantity of yeast of good had leavened a huge mass. Only an original small particle had fallen into his heart: they had related My Sermon on the Mount to him. And they had done it so badly, mutilating it of many parts, as happens with reported speeches.

Zacchaeus was a publican and a sinner, but not through bad will. He was like one who sees things badly because the veil of cataract covers his eye-lenses. But he knows that once the veil is removed, he can see properly once again. And that sick person wants the veil to be removed. Zacchaeus was like that. He was neither convinced nor happy. He was not convinced of Pharisaic practices, which had already replaced the true Law. And he was not happy with his way of living.

He was instinctively seeking Light. The true Light. He saw a flash of it in that fragment of My speech and he hid it in his heart like a treasure. Because he loved it - bear this in mind, Mary - because he loved it, the flash became more and more lively, vast and vehement, and caused him to see Good and Evil clearly and to choose rightly, generously cutting off all the tentacles which previously, from things to his heart and from his heart to things, had enveloped him in a net of malicious slavery.

“Because he loved it”. That is the secret of success or failure.

\* I said, in 265. 12 and in 276. 12.

One succeeds when one loves. One has little success when one loves niggardly. One has no success at all when one does not love. In anything. All the more in the things of God, where, as God is invisible to corporal senses, I dare say, one must love perfectly, as far as a creature can reach perfection, in order to succeed in an enterprise. In holiness, in this case.

Zacchaeus, disgusted with the world and the flesh, as he was disgusted with the meanness of Pharisaic practices, so captious and severe for other people, so indulgent for them, loved the little treasure of a word of Mine, which reached him by chance, speaking from a human point of view. He loved it as the most beautiful thing that his forty-year-old life had ever possessed, and from that moment he concentrated his heart and thought on that point.

It is not only in evil that man's heart is where his treasure is. But also in good. Did saints perhaps during their lifetime not have their hearts where their treasure was: in God? Yes, they did. And that is why, looking only at God, they passed on the Earth, without contaminating their souls with the mud of the Earth.

<sup>417. 9</sup>That morning, even if I had not appeared there, I would have conquered a proselyte. Because the speech of the leper had completed Zacchaeus' metamorphosis. At the bench of the excise-house there was no longer a cheating vicious publican, but a man repenting his past and decided to change life. If I had not gone to Jericho, he would have closed his office, he would have taken his money and come looking for Me, because he could no longer live without the water of Truth, without the bread of Love, without the kiss of Forgiveness.

The usual harsh critics who always watched Me to reproach Me, did not see that and they could understand it even less. And that is why they were amazed at My having a meal with a sinner. Oh! I wish you never judged, leaving that task to God, you poor blind people, who cannot even judge yourselves! I never went with sinners to approve of their sin. I went to remove them from sin, because they often had only the exterior aspect of sin: their contrite souls had already changed into new souls, living to expiate. So was I with a sinner? No, I was with a redeemed soul, in need only of a guide to stand up in its weakness of a soul risen from death.

417. 10 <sup>10</sup>How much Zacchaeus' episode can teach you! The power of upright intention that excites desire. Upright desire that urges one to seek deeper and deeper knowledge of Good and to long for God continuously until one reaches Him, true repentance that gives the courage of abnegation. Zacchaeus had the upright intention of listening to words of true Doctrine. When he heard some, his upright desire urged him to greater desire and thus to uninterrupted research for that Doctrine; the research for God, hidden in the true Doctrine, detached him from the mean gods of richness and sensuality and made him a hero of renunciation.

“If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and follow Me” I said\* to the rich young man, but he did not do that. But Zacchaeus, although more hardened in avarice and sensuality, was able to do it. Because, through the few Words related to him, like the blind beggar and the leper cured by Me, he saw God. Can a soul that has seen God, find anymore attraction in the little things of the Earth? Is that ever possible, My little bride? »

#### **418. The healing of the disciple Joseph, wounded in the head and sheltered in the house of Salomon.**

13<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

418. 1 <sup>1</sup>Jesus reaches the town of Salomon at the dead of night. The position of the moon makes me think that it is about two o'clock a. m. A beautiful moon, just beginning to wane is beaming in the middle of the clear sky spreading peace on the earth. Peace and abundant dew, the heavy dew of warm countries, beneficial to plants after the parching heat of the sun during the day.

The pilgrims must have followed the river-bed, which is dry near the banks, as the river is more restricted in its bed because of the summer drought. And from the cane-brake they climb up to the wood limiting the banks and supporting them with the network of the roots of the trees growing near the water.

«Let us stop here and await morning » says Jesus.

418. 2 <sup>2</sup>«Master... I am aching all over... » says Matthew.

«And I am afraid I have a temperature. A river is not a healthy

\* I said, as we will see in 576. 6.

place in summer... as You know » adds Philip.

«But it would have been worse if from the river we had gone up to the Judaeen mountains. That is also well known» says the Zealot, who feels sorry for Jesus, to Whom they all tell their fears and complaints, but Whose mood no one understands.

«Never mind, Simon. They are right. But we shall have a rest shortly... Please, only another short distance... And a short rest here. You can see how the moon is going down westwards. Why wake the old man and Joseph, who is perhaps still ill\*, when it will soon be daybreak?... »

«The trouble is that everything is wet with dew here. One does not know where to sit... » grumbles the Iscariot.

«Are you afraid of spoiling your garment? Never mind, after these forced marches among dust and dew, there is no strutting about in it! In any case... kind Helkai would prefer it as it is. Your Greek frets... ha! ha! those at the hem and around the sleeves are hanging in ribbons on the thorny bushes of the Judaeen desert, and the one around your neck has been ruined by your perspiration... You are now a perfect Judaeen... » says Thomas, who is always merry.

«I am perfect a wretch, dirty as I am, and disgusted with it» retorts Judas angrily.

«It is enough for you to have a clean heart, Judas» says Jesus calmly. «That is important... ».

«Important! Important! We are exhausted with fatigue, with starvation... We are ruining our health, and that only is important» replies rudely Judas.

«I am not compelling you to stay... It is you who want to stay. »

«After all this time!... I had better do so. I am... »

«You may as well say the word that makes your lips rankle: “You are compromised in the eyes of the Sanhedrin”. But you can always make amends... and regain their confidence... »

«I do not want to make amends... because I love You and I want to stay with You. »

«In actual fact you say so in such a manner that rather than love it sounds like hatred... » grumbles between his teeth Judas of Alphaeus.

\* **Joseph, who is perhaps still ill**, is the ex-shepherd apostle, beaten and wounded as seen in 404. 5.

«Well... every man has his own way of expressing his love. »

«Of course! There is also who loves his wife but kills her with blows... I would not like that kind of love» says James of Zebedee endeavouring to put an end to the incident with a jest. But no one laughs. But no one, thanks be to God, replies.

Jesus advises: «Let us go and sit down on the threshold of the house. The eaves are wide and will protect us from the dew, and there is a footing at the base of the little house... »

They obey without speaking and when they arrive at the house they sit in a row along the wall.

But Thomas' simple remark: «I am hungry. These night marches make one hungry» revives the argument.

«Marches don't come into it! The fact is that for days we have been living on nothing! » replies the Iscariot.

«Actually at Nike's and at Zacchaeus' we had good meals, and Nike gave us so much food that we had to give it to the poor, otherwise it would have gone bad. We have never been short of bread. The caravan guide also gave us bread and butter... » remarks Andrew.

Judas, who cannot contradict, is silent.

418. 3 <sup>3</sup>A cock crows in the distance greeting the first sign of daylight.

«Oh! good! It will soon be dawn! » says Peter stretching himself, as he had almost fallen asleep.

They wait for daybreak in silence.

A bleating in a sheep-fold... Then a harness-bell in the distance on the main road, poles apart from them... The nearby cooing of Ananias' doves. The hoarse voice of a man in the cane-brake... It is a fisherman coming back with his night catch and he is cursing because it is scanty. He sees Jesus and stops. He hesitates, then says: «If I give it to You, will You promise me plenty in future? »

«For profit or for your needs? »

«For my needs. I have seven children, my wife and her mother. »

«You are right. Be charitable and I promise you that you will not lack what is necessary. »

«Here, then. In there, there is also the injured man who is not recovering despite treatment... »

«May God reward you and give you peace » says Jesus.

The man says goodbye and goes away, leaving his fish strung through the mouth with a willow twig.

<sup>4</sup>Silence falls on them again, just broken by the rustling of <sup>418. 4</sup> the canes, by the trills of some birds... Then a creaking is heard nearby. The rustic little gate, which Ananias made, creaks when opened and the little old man appears on the road scanning the sky. A sheep follows him bleating...

«Peace to you, Ananias! »

«Master! But... how long have You been there? Why did You not call, so that I could open the door for You?! »

«Not long. I did not want to disturb anyone... How is Joseph? »

«You know?... He is not well. Pus runs out of his ear and he suffers from headaches. I think he will die. That is, I thought. You are here now and I think that he will recover. I was going out to get some herbs to make a poultice... »

«Are Joseph's companions here? »

«Two of them. The others have gone ahead. Solomon and Elias are here. »

«Did the Pharisees annoy you? »

«Immediately after You left. Not afterwards. They wanted to know where You had gone. I said: "To my daughter-in-law, at Masada". Did I do the wrong thing? »

«No, you did not. »

«And... have You really been there? » The little old man is anxious.

«Yes, I was there. She is well. »

«But... did she not listen to You?... »

«No, she did not. We must pray very much for her. »

«And for the little ones... That she may bring them up for the Lord... » says the old man and two large tears stream down his face to say what he does not speak. He concludes: «Did You see them? »

«I can say that I saw one... I got a glimpse of the others. They are all well. »

«I offer my renunciation and forgiveness to God... But... it is so grievous having to say: "I will never see them again"... »

«You will soon see your son and you will be in peace with him in Heaven. »



«Thank You, Lord. <sup>5</sup>Come in... »

«Yes. Let us go at once to the injured man, Where is he? »

«In the best bed. »

They go into the well-kept kitchen garden, and from it into the kitchen and from the kitchen into the little room. Jesus bends over the sick man who moans in his sleep. He bends... and breathes into the ear wrapped in lints already impregnated with pus. He stands up and withdraws noiselessly.

«Are You not waking him? » asks the old man in a low voice.

«No. Let him sleep. He is no longer suffering. He will rest. Let us go to the others. »

Jesus sets the door ajar without making any noise and goes into the large room where are the little beds purchased the last time. The two disciples, being tired, are still sleeping.

«They keep vigil until morning. I keep watch over him from morning till evening. So they are tired. They are so good. »

The two must be sleeping with their ears cocked, because they awake at once: «Master! Our Master! You came just in time! Joseph is... »

«Cured. I have already seen to him, He is sleeping and does not know. There is nothing wrong with him now. All he has to do is to purge himself of the pus and he will be as healthy as before. »

«Oh! In that case purge us as well, because we have sinned. »

«How? »

«In order to assist Joseph we did not go to the Temple... »

«Charity makes every place a temple. And in the Temple of charity there is God. If we all loved one another, the whole Earth would be a Temple. Do not worry. The day will come when Pentecost means "Love". A manifestation of love. You have celebrated, anticipating times, the future Pentecost, because you have loved your brother. »

From the other room Joseph's voice is heard calling: «Ananias! Elias! Solomon! But I am cured! » and the man, thin and still pale, but no longer suffering, appears covered only with his short tunic. He sees Jesus and says: «Ah! It was You, my Master! » and he runs to kiss His feet.

«May God grant you peace, Joseph, and forgive Me if you suffered because of Me. »

«I glory in having shed my blood for You, as my father did. I bless You for making me worthy of that! » Joseph's simple plain face shines with joy uttering these words and looks noble, with the handsomeness which originates from an interior light.

«Jesus caresses him and says to Solomon: «Your house serves <sup>418. 6</sup> to do much good. »

«Oh! because it is Yours, now. Previously it served only for the sound sleep of the ferryman. But I am glad that it has been useful to You and to this just man. We shall now have some good days here with You. »

«No, My friend. You will leave at once. We are no longer granted any rest. This period of time will be a real test and only those with a strong will will remain faithful. We shall now break the bread together and then you will leave at once, going along the river, preceding Me by half a day. »

«Yes, Master. Joseph also? »

«Yes. Unless he is afraid of new injury... »

«Oh! Master! Would to God that I had to precede You in death shedding my blood for You! »

They go out into the dewy kitchen garden shining in the early sun. And Ananias does the honours of the house by picking some early figs from the branches better exposed, and he apologizes for being unable to offer a young pigeon because the two broods were used for the sick man. But there is the fish and they get busy preparing the food.

Jesus is walking between Elias and Joseph who tell Him of the recent adventure and of the strength of Solomon, who carried the injured man on his back for miles and miles, which they covered a little at a time, by night...

«But you, Joseph, have forgiven those who injured you, have you not? »

«I never had a grudge against those unhappy people. I offered forgiveness and my sufferings for their redemption. »

«That is what one must do, My good disciple! And what about Ogla? »

«Ogla has gone with Timoneus. I do not know whether he will go on with him or whether he will stop at Mount Hermon. He always said that he wanted to go to Lebanon. »

«Well. May God inspire him to do what is best. »

418. 7 <sup>7</sup>Many birds now chirp in chorus among the branches, while bleatings, the voices of children and women, braying donkeys, squeaking pulleys of wells, tell that the village is awake.

In the kitchen garden the bread is broken, the fish handed round and they have their meal. Immediately afterwards, the three disciples, blessed by Jesus, leave the house and walk fast along the road, as far as the river, and vanish into the cool shady canebrakes... They can no longer be seen...

«And now let us rest until evening and then we will follow them » orders Jesus.

And some lie down on the little beds, some on the piles of nets, which Ananias made, saying that thus he is not idle and he earns his daily bread, and they all seek a refreshing sleep.

In the meantime Ananias, after picking up the garments wet with perspiration, goes out noiselessly, closes the door and the gate and goes down to the river to wash them, so that they may be fresh and dry by evening...

418. 8 <sup>8</sup>Jesus says:

«And here you will put the vision: “Jesus in a little village of the Decapolis” of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1944, and then the other one: “The Demoniac of the Decapolis” of 29<sup>th</sup> September 1944. »

### **419. Healing in a small town of Decapolis. The parable of the sculptor and of the statues.**

2<sup>nd</sup> October 1944.

419. 1 <sup>1</sup>This is what I see. A little river in a village consisting of few modest houses. It must be the one from which Jesus came when, in a boat, He crossed\* the Jordan in flood, because I see the boatman and his relatives come to meet Jesus, Who had sent the Iscariot and Thomas ahead, to prepare the way for Him.

The boatman, when he sees Jesus coming from afar, quickens his step and when he is before Him, he bows most reverently saying: «You are welcomed, Master, by our sick people. They are waiting for You. I told them much about You. The entire village

\* crossed, in 361. 10/12.

greet You through my lips saying: “Blessed be the Messiah of the Most High God! ”»

«Peace to you and to this village. I am here for you. You will not be disappointed in your hopes. Those who believe will find Heaven merciful. Let us go. » And Jesus proceeds towards the centre of the village, walking beside the boatman.

Men, women and children appear at the doors and then follow the little procession, as it advances. At every step the people grow in numbers as many more join those already there. Some greet, some bless, some invoke.

<sup>2</sup>«Master» shouts a mother «my son is ill. Come, Blessed One! » 419. 2

And Jesus deviates towards a poor house, He lays one hand on the shoulder of the mother in tears and asks: «Where is your son? »

«Here, Master, come. »

The mother, Jesus, the boatman, Peter, John, Thaddeus and some local people go in. The others crowd at the door and look in craning their necks to see.

In a corner of the poor dark kitchen there is a little bed near the glimmering fireplace. On the bed there is the little corpse of a child about seven years old. I say a little corpse because he is so emaciated, yellowish, motionless. One is aware only of the heavy panting of the little chest, affected, I would say, by tuberculosis.

«Look, Master. I have spent all my resources to save at least this one. I am a widow, the other two sons died at the same age as this one is at present. I took him as far as Caesarea on the Sea to have him visited by a Roman doctor. But all he could say to me was: “Resign yourself. Caries is corroding him”. Look... »

And the mother uncovers the poor little thing, pushing the blankets back. Where there are no bandages, there are little bones protruding from a parched yellowish skin. But only a tiny part of the body is uncovered. The rest is covered with bandages and linen and when the mother removes them, they shows the characteristic dripping holes of osseous caries. A pitiful sight.

<sup>3</sup>The sick boy is so prostrate that he makes no gesture. He does not even seem to be involved. He just opens his hollow dull eyes, he casts an indifferent, I would say annoyed, glance at the people and then closes them again. 419. 3

Jesus caresses him. He lays His long hand on the little abandoned head, and the child opens his eyes again, looking with more interest at the unknown man, who is touching him with so much tenderness and is smiling with so much sympathy.

«Do you want to be cured? » Jesus says to him in a low voice, bending over his wan face. He had previously covered the little body saying to the mother, who wanted to put some more bandages: «It is not necessary, woman. Leave him thus. »

The little patient nods without speaking.

«Why? »

«For my mother» he says in a very faint voice. His mother weeps more grievously.

«Will you always be good if you are cured? A good son? A good citizen? A good believer? » He asks the questions separating them clearly, to give the child time to answer each one. «Will you always remember what you are now promising? »

The feeble, yet so deep in desire, «yes», is uttered repeatedly, like a succession of sighs from his soul.

«Give me your hand, My little one. » The little patient wants to give his healthy one, the left one. But Jesus says: «Give Me the other one. I will not hurt you. »

«Lord» says the mother «it's one big sore. Let me bandage it. For You... »

«It does not matter, woman. I am disgusted only at the impurities of hearts. Give Me your hand and say with Me: "I want to be always good as a son, as a man, as a believer in the true God". »

The boy repeats stressing his voice. Oh! His whole soul is in his voice, and his hope as well... and certainly also his mother's.

<sup>419. 4</sup> <sup>4</sup>A solemn silence has fallen in the room and in the street. Jesus, Who is holding the boy's right hand with His left one, lifts His right one, with the gesture as when He announces a truth, or when He imposes His will on diseases and elements, and standing solemnly upright, He says in a powerful voice: «And I want you to be cured. Rise, child, and praise the Lord» and He releases the little hand which is now completely healed, thin, but without the least excoriation, and He says to the mother: «Uncover your child. »

The woman, who looks as if she were between a death sentence and one of mercy, removes the blankets hesitantly... and

she utters a cry and throws herself on the very lean but whole-some body, kissing and embracing it... mad with joy. So much so that she does not see Jesus going away from the bed towards the door.

But the boy sees and says: «Bless me, Lord, and allow me to bless You. Mother... are you not thanking? »

«Oh! forgive me... » The woman, with the child in her arms, throws herself at Jesus' feet.

«I understand, woman. Go in peace and be happy. Goodbye, boy, Be good. Goodbye, everybody. » And He goes out.

<sup>419. 5</sup> Many women lift up their children so that Jesus' blessing may preserve them from evil in future. Little ones creep through adults to be caressed. And Jesus blesses, caresses, listens. He stops to cure also three people with diseased eyes and a man trembling as if he were affected by St. Vitus' dance\*. He is now in the centre of the village.

«There is a relative of mine here, deaf-and-dumb from birth. He is quick-witted, but he cannot do anything. Cure him, Jesus» says the boatman.

«Take Me to him. »

They enter a small kitchen garden at the end of which there is a young man, about thirty years old, who is drawing water from a well and pouring it on vegetables. As he is deaf and with his back turned, he does not notice what is happening and he calmly goes on with his work, despite the fact that the shouts of the crowd are so loud as to frighten the doves on the roofs.

The boatman goes towards him, takes him by the arm and leads him to Jesus.

Jesus stands in front of the unhappy fellow, very close to him, body against body, so that with His tongue He touches the tongue of the dumb man, who is standing with his mouth open, and with His middle-fingers in the ears of the deaf-mute, He prays for a moment with His eyes raised to the sky. He then says: «Be opened! » and removing His fingers He steps aside.

«Who are You Who have loosened my tongue and ears? » shouts the man cured miraculously.

Jesus makes a gesture and tries to proceed going out from the

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\* **St. Vitus' dance** is the name given to an illness of the nervous system, characterised by muscular contractions and involuntary movements.

rear of the house. But both the cured man and the boatman hold Him back, one saying: «He is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah» and the other exclaiming: «Oh! stay, that I may worship You! »

«Worship the Most High God and be always faithful to Him. Go. Do not waste time in useless words, and do not turn the miracle into a human pastime. Make use of your tongue to do good, and listen to the voices of the Creator Spirit Who loves and blesses you, with your heart, rather than with ears. »

Of course, it is quite useless to tell a man, who is so happy, not to talk of his happiness! The cured man makes up for so many years of mutism and deafness, by speaking to all the people present.

419. 6 <sup>6</sup>The boatman insists on Jesus entering his house to rest and take some refreshments. He feels that he is the maker of all the respect surrounding Jesus and is proud of it. He wants his right to be acknowledged.

«But I am the notable elder of the village» says an old imposing man.

«But if I had not been there with my boats, you would not have seen Jesus» replies the boatman.

And Peter, who is always frank and impulsive, says: «Actually... if I had not told you a little thing, you... the boats... »

Jesus interferes providentially, making everybody happy. «Let us go near the river. While waiting for our food there - and let it be frugal and sparing, because food is to serve the body and not be the aim of the body - I will evangelize. Anyone wishing to hear Me or ask Me questions, may come with Me. »

I can say that the entire village follows Him.

419. 7 <sup>7</sup>Jesus gets into a boat beached on the river shore and from that improvised pulpit He speaks to His listeners, who are sitting in front of Him, in a semicircle, on the bank and among the trees.

He takes as a starting point the question asked by a man: «Master, our Law seems to point out as struck by God those who were born wretched, in fact He forbids\* them to serve at the altar. How can they be guilty? Would it not be fair to consider guilty their parents who give birth to wretched sons? Mothers in par-

\* forbids, in: *Leviticus 21, 16-24.*

ticular? And how are we to behave with those born unfortunate? »

«Listen. A great perfect sculptor one day carved a statue and he made such a perfect job, that he was pleased and he said: “I want the Earth to be full of such marvels”. But by himself he could not cope with such a task. He therefore called other people to help him and said to them: “On this model make for me one thousand, ten thousand statues equally perfect. I will then give them the final touch, instilling expression into their features”. But his assistants were not capable of so much, because besides being much inferior to their master in skill, they had become somewhat intoxicated by the eating of a fruit, the juice of which brings about delirium and dullness. The sculptor then gave them some moulds and said: “Mould the material in them; it will be a perfect work and I will complete it, enlivening it with a final touch”. And the assistants set down to work.

But the sculptor had a great enemy. A personal enemy and the enemy of his assistants, and he tried with every means to make the sculptor cut a poor figure and arouse disagreement between him and his assistants. Thus he attacked their work with his cunning, altering the material to be poured into the moulds, or reducing the fire, or praising the assistants exaggeratedly. It thus happened that the ruler of the world, in an effort to prevent as far as possible the work from going out in imperfect copies, imposed heavy sanctions on those models issued in an imperfect state. And one of the sanctions was that such models could not be displayed in the House of God, where everything must be, or ought to be perfect. I say: ought to be, because it is not so. Even if appearances are good, facts are not so. Those present in the House of God seem faultless, but the eye of God discovers the serious faults in them. The faults which are in their hearts.

<sup>8</sup>Oh! the heart! It is with the heart that one serves God; indeed: <sup>419. 8</sup> it is with the heart. It is not necessary, neither is it enough to have clear eyes and perfect hearing, harmonic voice, beautiful limbs, to sing the praises pleasing to God. It is not essential or sufficient to have beautiful clean and scented garments. The spirit is to be pure and perfect, harmonic and well shaped in sight, hearing, voice, in spiritual forms, and these are to be adorned with purity; that is the beautiful clean dress scented with charity: that is the oil saturated with essence that God likes.



And what kind of charity would be the attitude of a man, who being happy and seeing an unhappy fellow, should despise him and hate him? On the contrary, double and triple charity is to be given to those who, although not guilty, were born poor wretches. Wretchedness is a pain that gives merit to those who bear it and to those who, united with the victims, suffer seeing them bear it out of love of relationship, and perhaps they strike their chests thinking: "I am the cause of such pain through my vices". And it must never become the cause of spiritual fault in those who see it. It becomes a fault if it becomes anti-charity. So I say to you: Never be without charity towards your neighbour. Was he born a poor wretch? Love him because he endures a great pain. Did he become unhappy through his own fault? Love him because his fault has already become a punishment. Is he the parent of a wretch born such or who became such? Love him because there is no deeper sorrow than the grief of a parent struck in his child. Is it a mother who has given birth to a monster? Love her because she is literally crushed by such grief, which she considers the most inhuman. It is inhuman.

419. 9     <sup>9</sup>But even deeper is the grief of a woman who is the mother of a son, who is a monster in his soul, as she realizes that she has given birth to a demon dangerous for the Earth, for the Fatherland, for the Family, for friends. Oh! the poor mother of a cruel, vile son, of a murderer, of a traitor, of a thief, of a corrupt man, dare not even raise her forehead! Well. I say to you: Love those mothers also, the most unhappy ones. Those who in history will be known as the mothers of murderers, of traitors.

Everywhere the Earth has heard the weeping of mothers whose hearts were broken because of the cruel death of their sons. From Eve onwards how many mothers have felt their bowels being lacerated more painfully than in labour, nay, they felt their bowels and their hearts being torn off by a cruel hand, in the presence of their sons murdered, tortured, martyred by men, and they howled their pangs, throwing themselves with the frenzy of convulsive sorrowful love on the corpses which could not hear them any longer, neither could they be warmed by their warmth, nor could they say with a look, a gesture, since they could not do so with their lips: "Mother I can hear you".

And yet I tell you that the Earth has not yet heard the cry and

has not collected the tears of the most holy Mother and of the most unhappy one among all those who will be remembered forever by man: the Mother of the Killed Redeemer and the mother of the man who will be His traitor. Those two mothers, martyrs in different ways, will be heard mourning miles apart, and the innocent and holy Mother, the most innocent, the Innocent Mother of the Innocent, will be the one Who will say to Her far away sister, the martyr of a son more cruel than anything on the Earth: "Sister, I love you".

Love to be worthy of that Woman Who will love everybody and on behalf of everybody. It is love that will save the Earth. »

<sup>10</sup>And Jesus comes down from His rustic pulpit and bends to caress a little boy rolling on the grass of the serious bed half-naked in his little shirt. After so many sublime words from a Master, it is pleasant to see Him thus, taking interest in a child, like a common man, and then breaking the bread, offering it round and handing it to those close to Him, sitting and eating like every man, while He certainly already hears in His heart the cry of His Mother and sees Judas beside Him. 419. 10

Such control over His feelings impresses me, who am so impulsive, more than many other things. It is a continual lesson to me. Those present, instead, seem to be really fascinated. They are pensive and silent while eating and they look with veneration at the kind Master of love.

#### **420. The healing of a totally possessed man. The vocation of women to love.**

29<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus and His apostles are still moving about the country. The mowing season is now over and the fields display scorched stubble. Jesus is walking along a shady path and is speaking to some men who have joined the group of the apostles. 420. 1

«Yes» says one. «Nothing can cure him. He is more than mad. And he terrorises everybody, women in particular, because he chases them with obscene jibes. It would be a tragedy if he caught them! »

«One never knows where he is» says another man. «On the

mountains, in the woods, in the fields... he appears all of a sudden like a snake... Women are terrified of him. One of them, a young girl, who was coming back from the river, died in a few days of a high temperature because she had been grasped by the madman. »

«The other day my brother-in-law went to the place where he prepared a sepulchre for himself and his relatives, because his father-in-law had died, and he wanted to make all the preparations for the burial. But he had to run away because the demoniac, nude and howling as usual, was inside and threatened to strike him with stones... He chased him almost as far as the village, then went back to the sepulchre and the dead man had to be buried in my sepulchre. »

«And what about the time when he remembered that Tobias and Daniel had taken him by force, had tied him and taken him back home? He waited for them hiding among the canes and the mud of the river and when they got into the boat to go fishing or to ferry, I am not sure which, with the strength of a demon he lifted the boat and turned it upside down. They saved themselves by a miracle, but what was in the boat was lost and the very keel of the boat was damaged and the oars were broken. »

420. 2      2«But have you not shown him to the priests? »

«Yes, he was taken to Jerusalem tied like a bale... What a journey!... I was there and I can tell You that I do not need to go to hell to learn what happens and is said there. But it was of no avail... »

«Just as bad as before? »

«Worse! »

«And yet... the Priest!... »

«But what can You expect!... It would be necessary... »

«What? Go on... »

There is silence.

«Speak up. Be not afraid, I will not accuse you. »

«Well... I was saying... but I do not want to commit a sin... I was saying... that... well... the priest might be successful if... »

«If he were a holy man, you mean, but you dare not say so. I say to you: do not judge. But what you say is true. It is regretfully true!... »

Jesus becomes silent and sighs. A short embarrassed silence.

Then one dares to take up the thread of the speech again: «If we should meet him, will You cure him? Will You dear this countryside? »

«Do you hope that I may be able to do so? Why? »

«Because You are holy. »

«God is holy. »

«And You who are His Son. »

«How do you know? »

«Eh! people talk, in any case, we live here, near the river, and we know what You did three months ago. Who can stop a river in spate, but the Son of God? »

«And what about Moses? And Joshua? »

«They worked in the name of God and for His glory, And they were able to do so because they were holy. You are greater than they were. »

«Will You do it, Master? »

«I will, if we meet him. »

<sup>3</sup>They proceed. The increasing heat makes them leave the road <sup>420. 3</sup> and seek shelter in a thicket along the river, which is not ruffled as when it was in flood. Although still rich in water, the water is calm and blue, shining in the sun. The path widens and white houses appear at the end of it. They must be approaching a village. At the borders of it there are some small very white buildings, with only one opening in one wall. Some are open. Most of them are hermetically closed. There is no one about. They are spread over bare uncultivated ground, which seems to be abandoned. There are only weeds and boulders.

«Go away! Away! Go back or I will kill You! »

«The demoniac has seen us! I am going away. »

«I, too. »

«And I will follow you. »

«Be not afraid. Remain here and watch. »

Jesus is so sure of Himself that the... brave ones obey, but they go behind Jesus. The disciples also remain behind Him. Jesus proceeds alone and solemnly, as if He saw and heard nothing.

«Go away! » The voice is a rending cry. It sounds like a growl and a howl. It seems impossible that it can be uttered by a human being. «Go away! Back! I will kill You! Why are You persecuting me? I do not want to see You! » The possessed man bounds,

he is naked, swarthy, with long ruffled hair and beard. His dark bristly locks strewn with dry leaves and dust fall over his grim bloodshot eyes, which roll in their sockets, and reach down to his mouth. And his mouth, open in howls and bursts of laughter of a madman - they sound like a nightmare - is foaming and bleeding, because he is striking it with a sharp stone and he says: «Why can I not kill You? Who is binding my strength? Is it You? You? »

420. 4 <sup>4</sup>Jesus looks at him and proceeds.

The madman rolls on the ground, bites himself, foams even more, strikes himself with his stone, springs to his feet, points his forefinger towards Jesus, Whom he stares at fixedly and wildly and says: «Listen! Listen! He Who is coming is... »

«Be silent, demon of the man! I order you. »

«No! No! I will not be silent. What is there between You and us? Why do You not leave us in peace? Are You not satisfied with confining us to the kingdom of hell? Is it not enough for You that You have come to snatch man from us? Why do You force us back down there? Allow us to dwell in our preys! Since You are great and powerful, pass and conquer, if You can. But let us rejoice and be harmful. We exist for that. Oh! cur... No! I cannot say that! Don't make me say that to You! I cannot curse You! I hate You! I persecute You! I am waiting for You to torture You! I hate You and Him from Whom You proceed and I hate Him Who is Your Spirit. I hate Love, because I am Hatred! I want to curse You! I want to kill You! But I cannot! I cannot! Not yet! But I will wait for You, o Christ, I will wait for You. I will see You dead! O what a joyful hour! No! Not joyful! You dead? No. Not dead. And I defeated! Defeated! Always defeated!... Ah!... » Paroxysm is at its utmost.

Jesus continues towards the demoniac keeping him under the radiation of His magnetic eyes. Jesus is now all by Himself. The apostles and the other people have remained behind. The people are behind the apostles, who are at least thirty metres from Jesus.

Some inhabitants of the village, which appears to be thickly peopled and I think is also wealthy, have come out, attracted by the shouts, and are watching the scene, ready to run away just like the other group. So the scene is as follows: in the centre the possessed man and Jesus, now a few metres apart from each oth-

er; behind Jesus, to the left, the apostles and the people of the country; on the right hand side, behind the demoniac, the citizens.

<sup>5</sup>Jesus, after ordering the demon to be silent, has not spoken anymore. He only stares at the demoniac. But now He stops and raises His arms, He stretches them towards the possessed man and is about to speak, The man's cries are now dreadful. He writhes, he jumps to the right, to the left, upwards. He looks as if he wanted either to run away or hurl himself upon Jesus, but he cannot. He is riveted there and apart from his writhing, he can make no other movement. 420. 5

When Jesus stretches out His arms, His hands extended as if He were taking an oath, the madman howls louder and after cursing, laughing and swearing, he begins to weep and implore. «No, not in hell! Don't send me there! My life is dreadful even here, imprisoned in man, because I want to travel through the world and tear Your creatures to pieces. But not there! No! No! Leave me outside!... »

«Come out of him. It's an order. »

«No! »

«Come out. »

«No! »

«Come out. »

«No! »

«In the name of the true God, come out! »

«Oh! Why do You defeat me? But I am not coming out, no. You are the Christ, the Son of God, but I am... »

«Who are you? »

«I am Beelzebub, the Master of the world and I will not surrender. I defy You, O Christ! »

The demoniac becomes motionless all of a sudden, stiff, almost dignified, and stares fixedly at Jesus with phosphorescent eyes, hardly moving his lips to utter unintelligible words and making light gestures with his hands near his shoulders and his elbows bent.

Jesus also has stopped. With His arms folded over His chest He gazes at him. Jesus also moves His lips lightly, but I cannot hear a word.

<sup>6</sup>The people present are waiting, but they do not agree with 420. 6

one another:

«He cannot do it! »

«Yes, the Christ will now succeed. »

«No. The other one is winning. »

«He is strong. »

«Yes, he is. »

«No, he isn't. »

Jesus opens His arms. His face flashes command, His voice sounds like thunder. «Come out. For the last time. Come out, O Satan! It is I Who command! »

«Aaaaah! » (it is a very long cry of never-ending torture. Not even a man slowly pierced by a sword would yell thus). And the cry ends in words: «I am coming out. Yes, You have defeated me. But I will avenge myself. You are driving me away, but there is a demon beside You and I will go into him and possess him, investing him with my full power. And no order of Yours will be able to take him away from me. In every age, in every place I, the author of Evil, procreate sons for myself. And as God procreated Himself by Himself, I procreate myself by myself. I conceive myself in the heart of man and he gives birth to Me, he gives birth to a new Satan, who is he himself and I rejoice having so many children! You and men will always find those creatures of mine, who are as many Satans. I am going, O Christ, to take possession of my new kingdom, as You wish, and I leave You this poor wretch whom I maltreated. In his place, as I am leaving him to You, the alms of Satan to You, God, I will take one thousand and ten thousand now, and You will find them when Your body in lurid tatters will be given as a plaything to dogs, and I will take ten thousand and one hundred thousand in future centuries to use them as an instrument for me and a torture for You. Do You think that You will win by raising Your Sign? My followers will knock it down and I will be the winner... Ah! It is not true that I will win! But I will torture You both in Yourself and in Your followers!... »

A loud crash, like thunder, is heard, but there is neither flash of light nor rumbling of thunder. Only a sharp lacerating crack, and as the demoniac falls like a dead body to the ground and remains there, a huge tree-trunk collapses near the apostles, as if it had been cut about one metre from the ground by a saw work-

ing as quickly as lightening. The apostolic group moves away just in time, while the local people run away.

<sup>7</sup>But Jesus, Who has bent over the prostrated man and has taken him by the hand, turns around, still stooping and with the hand of the cured man in His own, He says: «Come. Be not afraid! » The people approach timorously. «He is cured. Bring a garment. » A man runs away to fetch one. 420. 7

The man comes round slowly. He opens his eyes and meets Jesus'. He sits up. With his free hand he wipes off perspiration, blood and foam, he pushes his hair back and looks at himself. When he realizes that he is naked in the presence of so many people, he feels ashamed. He crouches and asks: «What happened? Who are You? Why am I here? Naked? »

«Nothing, My friend. They will now bring you some clothes and you will go back home. »

«Where have I come from? And where are You from? » He speaks with the faint tired voice of a sick person.

«I come from the Sea of Galilee. »

«And how come You know me? Why are You helping me? What is Your name? »

Some men arrive with a tunic which they put on the man cured miraculously. And an old woman arrives weeping and she presses the cured man to her heart.

«Son! »

«Mother! Why did you leave me for such a long time? »

The old woman weeps even more and kisses and caresses him. Perhaps she would speak more words, but Jesus dominates her with His eyes and inspires her with more pitiful ones: «You have been so ill, son! Praise God Who has cured you and the Messiah Who acted in the name of God. »

«Him? What's His name? »

«Jesus of Galilee. But His name is Goodness. Kiss His hands, son, and ask Him to forgive you for what you did or said... you certainly spoke in your... »

«Yes, he spoke when he was feverish» says Jesus to prevent unwise words. «But it was not he who spoke and I am not severe with him. Let him be good now. Let him be *continent*. » Jesus stresses the word. The man lowers his head, embarrassed. \*

<sup>8</sup>But what Jesus spares him is not spared by the rich citizens 420. 8



who have by now approached them. Among them there are some ineffable Pharisees. «You have been lucky! It is a good job that you met Him, the master of the demons. »

«I... a demoniac? » The man is terrified.

The old woman bursts out: «You cursed ones! You have neither mercy nor respect! You greedy cruel vipers! And you as well, you useless minister of the synagogue. The Holy One master of the demons! »

«And who do you think has power over them but their king and father? »

«Oh! Impious people! Blasphemers! Be c... »

«Be silent, woman. Be happy with your son. Do not curse. They do not upset or worry Me. You may all go in peace. My blessing to good people. Let us go, My friends. »

«May I follow You? » It is the cured man who asks the question.

«No. Stay here. Be My witness and your mother's joy. Go. »

And among cheering shouts and whispered mockery Jesus crosses part of the little town and then goes back to the shade of the trees along the river.

420. 9 <sup>9</sup>The apostles crowd around Him.

Peter asks: «Master, why did the unclean spirit offer so much resistance? »

«Because it was a complete spirit. »

«What does that mean? »

«Listen to Me. Some people give themselves to Satan by opening a door to one capital vice. Some give themselves twice, some three times, some seven times. When one has opened his spirit to the seven vices, then a complete spirit enters him. Satan, the black prince, enters. »

«How could that man, still young, be possessed by Satan? »

«Oh! My friends! Do you know along which path Satan comes? Generally three are the beaten paths, and *one is never missing*. Three: sensuality, money, pride of the spirit. Sensuality is the one which is always present. Courier of the other concupiscences, it passes spreading its poison and everything flourishes with satanic flowering. That is why I say to you: "Be the masters of your flesh". Let that control be the beginning of everything else, as that slavery is the beginning of everything else. The man

enslaved by lust, becomes thief, swindler, cruel, murderer, in order to serve his mistress. The very thirst for power is also related to the flesh. Do you not think so? It is so. Meditate on that and you will see whether I am mistaken. It was through the flesh that Satan entered man and through the flesh he goes back into man, and he is happy if he can do so. He, one and sevenfold, enters with the proliferation of his legions of minor demons. »

«You said\* that Mary of Magdala had seven demons. You said so and they were certainly demons of lust. And yet You freed her very easily. »

«Yes, Judas. That is true. »

«So? »

«So, according to you, My theory is wrong. No, My friend. That woman *wanted*, by that time, to be freed from her possession. *She wanted*. Will power is everything. »

<sup>10</sup>«Why, Master, do we notice that many women are possessed by the demon, and we can say, by *that* demon? » 420. 10

«See, Matthew. Woman is not equal to man in her formation and in her reaction to the original sin. Man has other aims for his desires which may be more or less good. Woman has one aim only: love. Man has a different formation. Woman has this one, sensitive, which is even more perfect, because its purpose is procreation. You know that every perfection brings about an increase in sensitiveness. A perfect ear can hear what escapes a less perfect ear and is glad of that. The same applies to the eyes, to the palate and to olfaction. Woman was to be the sweetness of God on the Earth, she was to be love, the incarnation of that fire which moves Him Who is, the manifestation, the testimony of that love. God had therefore gifted her with a supereminent sensitive spirit, so that, one day as a mother, she could and would know how to open the eyes of the hearts of her sons to the love for God and their fellow-creatures, as man would open the eyes of intelligence of his children to understanding and acting. Consider the command of God to Himself: “Let us make a helpmate for Adam”. God-Goodness *could but want to make a good* helpmate for Adam. He who is good loves. Adam’s helpmate, therefore, was to be able to love to succeed in making Adam’s day hap-

\* **You said**, as He will say in 503. 2.

py in the blissful Garden. She was to be so capable of loving as to be the second, collaborator and substitute of God, in loving man, His creature, so that even when God did not reveal Himself to His child with His loving voice, man should not feel unhappy for lack of love. Satan was aware of such perfection. *Satan knows so many things.* It is he who speaks through the lips of pythonesses telling lies mixed with truth. And - bear this in mind all of you, both you who are present here and those who will come in future - he speaks such truth, which he hates because he is Falsehood, *only to seduce you with the chimera that it is Light that speaks and not Darkness.* Satan, cunning, tortuous and cruel, crept into such perfection, he bit there and left his poison. The perfection of woman in loving has thus become Satan's instrument to dominate man and woman and spread evil... »

420. 11      11«What about our mothers, then? »

«John, do you fear for them? Not every woman is an instrument for Satan. Perfect as they are in their feelings, they exceed in action: angels if they want to be of God, demons if they wish to be of Satan. Holy women, and your mother is one of them, want to be of God and they are angels. »

«Do You not think that the punishment of woman is unfair, Master? Man also sinned. »

«And what about the reward then? It is written that Goodwill come back to the world through Woman and Satan will be defeated. »

«Never judge the work of God. That is the first thing. But consider that as Evil came into the world through woman, it is fair that through the Woman, Good should come into the world. A page written by Satan is to be cancelled. And the tears of a Woman will do that. And as Satan will shout his cries forever, the voice of a Woman will sing to drown those cries. »

«When? »

«I solemnly tell you that Her voice has already descended from Heaven where Her hallelujah has been sung from eternity. »

«Will She be greater than Judith? »

«Greater than every woman. »

«What will She do? »

«She will turn Eve upside down with her treble sin. Absolute obedience. Absolute purity. Absolute humbleness. She will rise

on that: a victorious queen... »

«But, Jesus, is Your Mother not the greatest, having given birth to You? »

«Great is he who does the will of God. And that is why Mary is great. Every other merit comes from God. But that one is entirely Hers and may She be blessed for it. »

And it all ends.

<sup>12</sup>Jesus says:

420. 12

«You have seen a man “possessed” by Satan. There are many replies in My words. Not so much for you as for other people. Will these be of any use? No. They will be of no use to those who need them most. Rest with My peace. »

#### **421. The cured demoniac. The Pharisees and the curse against the Holy Spirit.**

22<sup>nd</sup> April 1946.

<sup>1</sup>After the Holy Week and the consequent penitence of *not* <sup>421. 1</sup> *having any visions*, the spiritual vision of the Gospel comes back to me this morning. And all my anxiety is forgotten in this joy that is foretold by an indescribable sensation of superhuman jubilation...

... And now I see Jesus, Who is still walking along the thickets on the banks of the river, and He stops and orders the apostles to have a rest during the hours which are too warm to travel. Because, while it is true that the thickly interlacing branches protect from the sun, they form a kind of canopy which obstructs the very light breezes, and thus the air in there is warm, still, heavy, and damp; dampness in fact rises from the ground near the river, and far from being a relief it is a sticky torture, which mixes with and increases the troublesome perspiration streaming down their bodies.

«Let us stop until evening. We will then go down to the whitish river shore still visible in starlight and we will proceed by night. Let us take some food and a rest now. »

«Ah! before taking any food I will refresh myself in the water. The water will be warm, too, like a decoction for a cough, but

it will wash my sweat away. Who is coming with me? » asks Peter.

They all go with him: everyone, Jesus also, as, like everybody else, He is perspiring and His tunic is heavy with dust and sweat. Each of them takes a clean tunic from his sack and they all go down to the river. On the grass, to mark their stop, there are only thirteen sacks and the small water flasks, watched over by old trees and countless birds, which look curiously with their tiny jet eyes at the thirteen full multicoloured sacks spread over the grass.

The voices of the bathers fade away and mingle with the murmuring water. Only now and again the sharp laughter of the younger ones resounds like a high note above the low monotonous tone of the river.

421. 2 <sup>2</sup>But silence is soon broken by the shuffling of feet. Some heads appear from behind a thicket; they cast sidelong glances and say with an expression of satisfaction: «They are here. They have stopped. Let us go and tell the others» and they disappear behind the bushes...

... In the meantime the apostles come back with the Master. They are refreshed, their hair is still wet, although they have dried it hurriedly, they are barefooted and are holding their dripping washed sandals by the straps, and they are wearing fresh clothes and the other ones are hanging in the cane-brake after being washed in the blue water of the Jordan. They are obviously refreshed after the long bath.

Unaware of the fact that they have been discovered, they sit down, after Jesus has offered and handed out the food. And after the meal, sleepy as they are, they would like to lie down and slumber, when a man arrives and after him another one, and then a third one...

«What do you want? » asks James of Zebedee, who sees them arrive and stop behind a large bush, undecided about moving forward or not. The others, including Jesus, turn around to see to whom James is speaking.

«Ah! it's the people of the village... They have followed us! » says Thomas without enthusiasm, as he was preparing to have a little nap.

In the meantime the visitors reply somewhat timorously, seeing the obvious reluctance of the apostles to receive them: «We

wanted to speak to the Master... To tell Him that... Is that right, Samuel?... » and they stop not daring to say anything more.

But Jesus benignly encourages them: «Speak up. Have you more sick people?... » and He stands up directing His steps towards them.

«Master, You are even more tired than we are. Have a little rest and let them wait... » say some of the apostles.

«There are creatures here who want Me. So their hearts have no rest either. And the weariness of a heart is heavier than the tiredness of limbs. Let Me listen to them. »

«All right! Farewell to our rest!... » grumble the apostles, who are so affected by fatigue and heat as to reproach the Master in the presence of strangers, so much so, that they say to Him: «And when Your lack of prudence will have caused us all to be taken ill, You will realize too late that we were necessary to You. »

Jesus looks at them... compassionately. There is nothing else in His kind tired eyes... And He replies: «No, My friends. I do not expect you to imitate Me. Look, you stay here, and rest; I will speak and listen to these people and then I will come and rest with you. »

His reply is so kind that it achieves more than a reproach would obtain. The kind hearts and affections of the Twelve are awakened and overwhelm them: «No, Lord! Stay where You are and speak to them. We will go and turn our clothes round so that the other side may dry. We will thus overcome sleep, and then we will come back and rest all together. » And the more sleepy ones go towards the river... Matthew, John and Bartholomew remain.

<sup>3</sup>In the meantime the three citizens have become more than <sup>421. 3</sup> ten and their number increases more and more...

«So? Come here and speak without any fear. »

«Master, after You left, the Pharisees have become even more violent... They attacked the man freed by You... and it will be a new miracle if he does not become mad... because... they said to him... that You freed him from a demon who hampered only his reason and that You gave him a stronger demon, so strong that he defeated the previous one and is stronger than the previous one, because this one damns and possesses his soul, and thus, while in next life he would not have had to bear the consequences of the first possession because his actions were not... what did they

say, Abraham?... »

«They said... oh! a strange word... In short God would not have asked him to give an account of those actions because he had not done them with a free mind, whereas now, by adoring You through the imposition of the demon he has in his heart, placed there by You - oh! forgive us for telling You - by You, the prince of demons, by adoring You with a mind which is no longer mad, he is impious, cursed and will be damned. Consequently the poor wretch regrets his previous state and... he almost curses You... So he is more insane than previously... and his mother is in despair because her son has given up hope of being saved... and all their joy has become a torture. We have been looking for You so that You may give him peace, and an angel certainly guided us here... Lord, we believe that You are the Messiah. And we believe that the Messiah has in Himself the Spirit of God. He is therefore Truth and Wisdom. And we ask You to give us peace and an explanation... »

«You are in justice and in charity. May you be blessed. But where is the poor wretch? »

«He is following us with his mother, shedding desperate tears. See? The entire village, except them, the cruel Pharisees, is coming here, disregarding their threats. Because they have threatened to punish us for believing in You. But God will protect us. »

«God will protect you. Take Me to the man I cured. »

«No. We will bring him here. Just wait» and many of them depart towards the larger group of people who are coming making gestures, while two shrill cries overwhelm the confused noise of the talk of the crowd. The others, those who have remained, are already so many, and when they are joined by the group surrounding the cured demoniac and his mother, a really large crowd is pressing among the trees around Jesus, climbing even the trees to find a place to hear and see.

421. 4 <sup>4</sup>Jesus goes towards the cured demoniac, who begins to tear his hair as soon as he sees Him, and kneeling down he says: «Give the first demon back to me! Out of pity for me, for my soul! What have I done to You that You should injure me so much? »

And his mother, also on her knees, says: «He is raving mad with fear, Lord! Do not pay attention to his blasphemous words, but free him from the fear that those cruel people have infused

into him, so that he may not lose the life of his soul. You have already freed him once!... Oh! for the sake of a mother, free him once again! »

«Yes, woman. Be not afraid! Listen, child of God! » And Jesus lays His hands on the ruffled hair of the man delirious with supernatural fear: «Listen. And judge. Judge by yourself because your reason is free and you can judge according to justice. There is an unerring way to find out whether a prodigy comes from God or from a demon. And it is what a soul feels. If the extraordinary event comes from God, it infuses peace into the soul, peace and solemn joy. If it comes from the demon, it brings about perturbation and sorrow. And peace and joy come also from the words of God, whereas perturbation and sorrow come from those of a demon, be it a demon spirit or a demon man. And also the closeness of God grants peace and joy whereas the closeness of wicked spirits or men bring about perturbation and sorrow. Now consider, child of God. When, by yielding to the demon of lust, you began to receive your oppressor within you, did you enjoy happiness and peace? »

The man ponders and blushing replies: «No, Lord. »

«And when your everlasting Enemy captured you completely, did you enjoy peace and happiness? »

«No, Lord. Never. As long as I could understand, as long as a particle of my mind was free, I was distressed and grieved by the arrogance of the Enemy. Later... I do not know... My mind was no longer able to understand what I suffered... I was lower than a beast... But even in that state when I seemed to be less intelligent than an animal... oh! how much I could still suffer! I cannot say what... Hell is dreadful! It is nothing but horror... and it is not possible to say what it is... »

The man shivers remembering what he suffered when he was possessed. He trembles, blanches, perspires... His mother embraces him and kisses his cheek to distract his mind from that nightmare... People whisper their comments.

«And when you woke up with your hand in Mine, what did you feel? »

«Oh! Such a wonderful sensation... and such a joy and an even greater peace... I seemed to be coming out from a dark prison, where countless snakes had been my chains and the air was



permeated with the stench of a putrid sewer, and I seemed to be entering a garden full of flowers, of sunshine, of songs... I became acquainted with Paradise... but even that cannot be described... » The man smiles as if he were enraptured by the remembrance of his recent short hour of happiness. He then sighs and concludes: «But it was soon all over... »

«Are you sure? Now that you are close to Me and far from those who upset you, tell Me, what do you feel? »

«Peace once again. Here with You, I cannot believe that I am damned, and their words sound like blasphemy to me... But I believed them... So did I not sin against You? »

«You did not sin; they did. Rise, child of God, and believe in the peace within you. Peace comes from God. You are with God. Do not sin and be not afraid» and He removes His hands from the head of the man making him stand up.

421. 5 <sup>5</sup>«Is it really so, Lord? » ask many.

«It is really so. The doubt raised by the deliberately harmful words was the final revenge of Satan, who had come out of him defeated, but anxious to recapture the lost prey. »

With much good common sense a man of the people says: «Then... the Pharisees... assisted Satan! » and many applaud the keen remark.

«Do not judge. There is Who judges. »

«But at least we are sincere in our judgment... And God sees that we judge evident sins. They pretend to be what they are not. They act deceitfully and with wicked purposes. And yet they are more successful than we are, although we are honest and sincere. They are our terror. They extend their power even on the freedom of faith. One must believe and practise to their liking and they threaten us because we love You. They strive to reduce Your miracles to witchcraft and to frighten You. They conspire, they oppress, they injure... »

421. 6 <sup>6</sup>The people speak excitedly.

With a gesture Jesus imposes silence and says:

«Do not receive in your hearts anything originating from them, neither their suggestions nor their methods, not even the thought: “they are wicked and yet they are successful”. Do you not remember the words\* of Wisdom: “Fleeting is the triumph

\* words, that are in: *Proverbs 5, 22-23*; and approximately in: *Wisdom 2, 5; 5, 9*.

of the wicked”, and the words of Proverbs. “Son, do not follow the examples of sinners and do not listen to the words of the wicked because they will become entangled in the chains of their sins and they will be deceived by their own great stupidity”? Do not put into yourselves what comes from them and which you, although imperfect, consider wrong. You would, in fact, put within yourselves the same yeast which corrupts them. The yeast of the Pharisees is hypocrisy. Let it never be in you, neither with regards to the forms of worship of God nor with regards to your behaviour with your brothers. Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees. Remember that there is nothing concealed which cannot be disclosed, there is nothing hidden which is not revealed in the end.

You can see that yourselves. They allowed Me to leave and then they sowed darnel where the Lord had scattered chosen seed. They thought they had acted artfully and successfully. And it would have been enough if you had not found Me, if I had crossed the river leaving no trace of Myself on the water, which resumes its normal aspect after the bows open it, and their wickedness, under the appearance of good, would have triumphed. But their trick was soon found out and their evil deed was annulled. And the same applies to all the actions of man. At least One is aware of them and provides: God. What is spoken in the dark, ends up by being disclosed by Light, and what is plotted in the secrecy of a room can be disclosed as if it had been planned in a square. Because every man may have an informer. And because every man is seen by God Who can intervene and unmask offenders.

<sup>7</sup>So one must always live honestly in order to live peacefully. <sup>421. 7</sup> And those who live thus need not be afraid, neither in this life nor with regards to the next one. No, My friends, I tell you: who acts righteously need not be afraid. They must not fear those who kill, yes, those who can kill the body, but can do nothing else. I will tell you what you must be afraid of. Be afraid of those who after putting you to death, can send you to hell, that is, of vices, of evil companions, of false teachers, of all those who insinuate sin or doubt into your hearts, of those who try to corrupt your souls more than your bodies, to detach you from God and to drive you to despair of divine Mercy. I repeat to you that that

is what you are to be afraid of, because in that case you will be dead forever. But be not afraid for the rest, for your lives. Your Father does not lose sight even of one of these tiny birds which builds its nest in the leafy branches of trees. Not one of them is caught in the net without its Creator being aware of it. And yet their material value is tiny: five sparrows for two pennies. And their spiritual value is nil. And yet God takes care of them. Will He, therefore, not take care of you? Of your lives? Of your welfare? Every hair on your heads is known to the Father, and no wrong done to His children passes unnoticed by Him, because you are *His* children, that is, you are worth much more than the sparrows which nest on roofs or among leafy branches.

421. 8 <sup>8</sup>And you remain His children until, by your own free will, you renounce to be so. And one renounces such filiation when one denies God and the Word Whom God sent amongst men to lead men to God. Then, when a man will not acknowledge Me in the presence of men, because he is afraid of being damaged by such acknowledgement, God will not acknowledge him as His child, and the Son of God and of man will not acknowledge him in the presence of the angels in Heaven, and those who disown Me in the presence of men, will be disowned as children in the presence of God's angels. And those who have spoken ill of the Son of man or against Him will still be forgiven, because I will plead with the Father for their forgiveness, but those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Why that? Because not everybody can understand the extent of Love, its perfect infinity and see God in a body like the body of every man. The Gentiles, the heathens cannot believe that through faith, because their religion is not love. Also among us the fearful respect of Israel for Jehovah can prevent people from believing that God has become man and the humblest of men. It is a fault not to believe Me. But when it is based on excessive fear of God, it is still forgiven. But he cannot be forgiven, who does not yield to the truth shining through My deeds, and denies that the Spirit of Love has kept the promise to send the Saviour at the fixed time, the Saviour preceded and accompanied by the signs foretold.

421. 9 <sup>9</sup>Those who are persecuting Me, are acquainted, with the prophets. The prophecies are full of Me. They are acquainted

with the prophecies and they know what I do. The truth is evident. But they deny it because they want to deny it. They systematically deny that I am not only the Son of man, but also the Son of God, foretold by the prophets, He Who was born of a Virgin, not by the will of man, but of the Eternal Love, of the Eternal Spirit, Who announced Me so that men could recognize Me. In order to be able to say that the night of the Expectation of the Christ is still enduring, they persist in keeping their eyes closed, so that they may not see the Light which is in the world, and therefore they deny the Holy Spirit, Its Truth and Its Light. And they will be judged more severely than those who do not know. Neither will they be forgiven for saying that I am “satan”, because the Spirit works divine, not satanic deeds for Me. And they will not be forgiven for driving people to despair, when Love had led them to peace. Because those are all offences against the Holy Spirit. Against this Paraclete Spirit Who is Love and grants love and asks for love and Who is awaiting My holocaust of love in order to spread out in wise love, illuminating the hearts of My believers. And when that has happened and they will still persecute you, accusing you before magistrates and princes of synagogues and in courts, do not worry about how to defend yourselves. The same Spirit will tell you what to say to serve the Truth and conquer Life for yourselves, just as the Word is giving you what is necessary to enter the Kingdom of eternal Life.

<sup>10</sup>Go in peace. In *My* Peace. In that Peace with God and which <sup>421.10</sup> God sheds to saturate His children with it. Go and be not afraid. I have not come to deceive you, but to teach you, not to lose you, but to redeem you. Blessed are those who will believe My words. And you, man, who have been saved twice, be firm and remember My peace, so that you may say to tempters: “Do not try to seduce me. My faith is that He is the Christ”. Go, woman. Go with him and be in peace. Goodbye. Go back to your homes and leave the Son of man to His humble rest on the grass, before resuming His persecuted journey in search of other people to be saved, until the end. My peace be with you. »

He blesses them and goes back to the place where they had their meal. The apostles are with Him. After the people disperse, they lie down, resting their heads on their sacks and they soon go

to sleep, in the sultry heat of the afternoon and in the heavy silence of those torrid hours.

#### **422. Discontent of the Iscariot who calls forth a lesson on duties and useless servants.**

24<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

422. 1 <sup>1</sup>The river shore is white in the moonless but very clear night, as thousands of large, unusually large stars are shining in the Eastern sky. It is not an intense light like moonlight, but it is already a pleasant phosphorescence, which enables those whose eyes are accustomed to darkness, to see where they walk and what is around them. Here, on the right hand side of the wayfarers, who are going up northwards along the river, the mild starlight shows the vegetable border made by cane-brakes, willows and then by tall trees, and as the light is faint, they look like a compact continuous wall, without any interruption, impossible to penetrate, with a gap where a stream or torrent bed, completely dry, draws a white line that runs eastwards and disappears at the first curve of the tiny tributary now dried up. On the left hand side, instead, the travellers discern the glittering waters that flow down towards the Dead Sea grumbling, sighing, rustling, quiet and serene. And between the shining line of the blue indigo waters, in the night, and the dark opaque mass of grass, bushes and trees, the clear strip of the river shore, in places wider, in others narrower, is now and again interrupted by tiny ponds, remainders of previous floods, with still a little water, which is slowly absorbed by the soil and in which there are still some tufts of green grass, which elsewhere is dried up on the river shore parched in the hours of sunshine.

The apostles are compelled by those tiny ponds or by tangles of dry bulrushes, as dangerous as blades for their feet half-naked in sandals, to part now and again and then join again in a group around the Master, Who is proceeding with vigorous strides, always solemn, silent most of the time, with His eyes raised to the stars rather than bent to the ground. But the apostles are not silent. They are talking to one another, summarising the events of the day, drawing conclusions or foreseeing future

developments. A few rare words of Jesus, often spoken in reply to a direct question or to correct a wrong or uncharitable opinion, punctuate the chattering of the Twelve. And the march proceeds in the night, marking the night silence with new elements for those desert banks: human voices and shuffling of feet. Nightingales are silent among the branches, surprised at the discordant harsh sounds mixing with and disturbing the usual murmur of water and whispering of breezes, the customary accompaniments of their virtuosi *solos*.

<sup>2</sup>But a direct question, not concerning what has happened but what is to happen, breaks not only the peace of the night, but also the more intimate peace of hearts, with the violence of a rebellion in addition to the sharp tone of voices upset by scorn and anger. Philip asks whether and in how many days they will be home. A latent need of rest, an unexpressed but understood desire for family love is in the simple question of the elderly apostle, who is a husband and father besides being an apostle, and has interests to look after. <sup>422. 2</sup>

Jesus perceives all that and turns around to look at Philip, He stops waiting for him, as Philip is a little behind with Matthew and Nathanael, and when he is near, He embraces him with one arm saying: «Soon, My friend. But I ask you to be kind enough to make another small sacrifice, providing you do not wish to part from Me before... »

«Me? Part from You? Never! »

«Then... I will keep you away for some time from Bethsaida. I want to go to Caesarea on the Sea via Samaria. On our way back we will go to Nazareth and those who have no family in Galilee will remain with Me. Then, after some time, I will join you at Capernaum... And I will evangelize you there to make you even more capable. But if you think that your presence at Bethsaida is necessary... you may go, Philip. We shall meet there... »

«No, Master. It is more necessary for me to stay with You! But You know... Home is sweet... and my daughters... I do not think that I will have them very much with me in future... and I would like to enjoy a little of their modest kindness. But if I have to choose between them and You, I choose You... and for many reasons... » ends Philip with a sigh.

«And you are doing the right thing, My friend. Because I will

be taken away from you before your daughters... »

«Oh! Master!... » says grievously the apostle.

«It is so, Philip» concludes Jesus kissing the temple of the apostle.

<sup>3</sup>Judas Iscariot, who has been grumbling between his teeth since Jesus mentioned Caesarea, raises his voice as if the kiss given to Philip has made him lose control of his actions. And he says: «How many useless things! I don't really understand why it is necessary to go to Caesarea! » and he says so with angry impetuosity; he seems to imply: «and You Who want to go there are a fool. »

«It is not for you to judge the necessity of what we do, but for the Master» Bartholomew replies to him.

«Really, why not? As if He saw natural necessities clearly! »

«I say! Are you mad or sane? Do you realise of Whom you are speaking? » asks Peter shaking him by the arm.

«I am not mad. I am the only one with sound brains. And I know what I am saying. »

«You are saying lovely things! » «Beg God not to take them into account! », «Modesty is not your strong point! », «One might think that you are afraid that by going to Caesarea you might be found out for what you are» say James of Zebedee, Simon Zealot, Thomas and Judas of Alphaeus respectively.

The Iscariot addresses the last one: «I have nothing to be afraid of and you have nothing to find out. But I am tired of seeing that we pass from one error to another, ruining ourselves. Conflicts with the members of the Sanhedrin, arguments with Pharisees. The Romans are the last straw... »

«What? Less than two months ago you were overjoyed, you were full of confidence, you were, you were... you were everything because Claudia was your friend! » remarks Bartholomew ironically who, being the most... uncompromising, is the one who does not rebel against contacts with the Romans only out of obedience to the Master.

Judas is speechless for a moment because the logic of the ironical remark is obvious, and unless he is prepared to appear illogical, he cannot contradict what he said previously. But he soon collects himself and says: «It is not because of the Romans that I am saying that. I mean because of the Romans as enemies.

They... after all they are only four Roman ladies, four, five, six at the most, they promised to help us and they will. <sup>4</sup>But it is because that will increase the hatred of His enemies, and He does not realize that and... »

«Their hatred is intense, Judas. And you know that as well as I do, even *better* than I do » says Jesus calmly stressing the word «better».

«Me? Me? What do You mean? Who knows things better than You do? »

«Just now you said that you are aware of necessities and how to make use of them... » retorts Jesus.

«With regards to natural things, yes. I say that You know spiritual matters better than anybody. »

«That is true. But I was just saying to you that you know better than I do, unpleasant, disgraceful, natural things, if you wish to call them so, such as the hatred of My enemies, such as their purposes... »

«I know nothing! I do not know anything. I swear to it on my soul, on my mother, on Jehovah... »

«That is enough! It is written that you must not swear\*» orders Jesus with such severity that even His countenance seems to become petrified in the perfection of a statue.

«Well, I shall not swear. But I must be allowed to say, since I am not a slave, that it is not necessary, that it serves no purpose, on the contrary it is dangerous to go to Caesarea, to speak to the Romans... »

«And who told you that that will happen? » asks Jesus.

«Who? Everything! You need to make sure of something. You are on the track of a... » he stops realizing that wrath is making him say too much. <sup>5</sup>He then resumes: «And I tell You that You ought to think also of our interests. You have deprived us of everything: home, earnings, affections, peace. We are persecuted because of You and we shall be persecuted even later. Because You, You say so in every possible way, will go away one fine day. But we are staying. We shall be ruined, but we... »

«You will not be persecuted when I am no longer among you. I, who am the Truth, tell you so. And I tell you that I have tak-

\* **not swear** is the precept of “do not commit perjury” (*Leviticus 19, 12*) reformed by Jesus (in 172. 3).



en what you spontaneously and insistently gave Me. So you cannot say that I have taken away from you, with abuse of power, even one of the hairs that fall off when you tidy them. Why are you accusing Me? » Jesus is now less severe, His sad countenance expresses the desire to bring Judas back to reason kindly and I think that his compassion, so full and so divine, acts as a check on the others, who would not be so sympathetic towards the culprit.

Judas also perceives that and with one of the brusque changes of his soul urged by two opposed forces, he throws himself on the ground striking his head and chest and shouting: «Because I am a demon. I am a demon. Save me, Master, as You save so many demoniacs. Save me! Save me! »

«Do not let your desire to be saved be inactive. »

«It exists. You can see that. I want to be saved. »

«By Me. You expect Me to do everything. But I am God and I respect your free will. I will give you the strength so that you may get to say: “I do want”. But to want not to be a slave must come from you. »

«I do want! I do want! But do not go to Caesarea. Don't go!  
422. 6 <sup>6</sup>Listen to me as You listened\* to John, when You wanted to go to Achor. We have all the same rights. We all serve You in the same manner. You are obliged to satisfy us for what we do... Treat me as You treated John! I want it! What difference is there between him and me? »

«The soul is different! My brother would never have spoken as you did. My brother does not... »

«Be silent, James. I will speak. To everybody. And you stand up and behave as a man, as I treat you, not like a slave moaning at the feet of his master. Be a man, since you are so anxious to be treated as John, who, truly, is more than a man because he is chaste and full of Charity. Let us go. It is late. I want to cross the river at dawn. The fishermen will be coming back then after hauling the lobster-pots and it is easy to find a ferry-boat. The moon in her last days raises her thin crescent higher and higher. We will be able to walk faster in her increased light.

422. 7 <sup>7</sup>Listen. I solemnly tell you that no one must boast of doing his

\* **You listened**, in 379. 2.

duty and exact for that, which is an obligation, special favours.

Judas has reminded Me that you have given Me everything. And he told Me that it is My duty to satisfy you for what you do. But just listen. Among you there are some fishermen, some land-owners, some own a workshop, and the Zealot had a servant. Now then. When the boat servants, or the men who helped you like servants in the olive grove, in the vineyard, or in the fields, or apprentices in the workshop, or even the faithful servant who looked after the house and meals, finished their work, did you begin to serve them? Is it not so in every house and in every task? Which man, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, or a workman in a workshop, would say to him when he finishes his work: "Go and have your meal immediately"? No one. But whether he comes back from the fields or he lays down his work—ing tools, every master says: "Get my supper laid, get yourself tidy and with clean clothes wait on me while I eat and drink. You will eat and drink afterwards". Neither can one say that that is insensibility. Because a servant must serve his master, and the master is not obliged to him, because the servant has done what the master had ordered him to do in the morning. Because, while it is true that the master must be kind to his servant, so it is the duty of the servant not to be lazy or a squanderer, but he must cooperate for the welfare of the master who feeds and clothes him. Would you bear your boat assistants, your peasants, work—men, your house servant to say to you: "Serve me because I have worked"? I do not think so.

So with you, when you consider what you have done and you do for Me - and, in future, considering what you will do to continue My work and to continue to serve your Master - you must always say, because you will see that you have always done much less than was fair to do to be on a par with what you received from God: "We are unprofitable servants because we have done but our duty". If you reason thus, you will see that you will no longer feel pretensions and bad temper arise in you, and you will act according to justice. »

Jesus is silent. They are all pensive.

<sup>8</sup>Peter nudges John, who is pondering staring with his blue eyes at the waters, which from indigo have become silver-blue in the moonlight, and says to him: «Ask Him when is it that one

422. 8

does more than one's duty. I would like to be able to do more than my duty, I... »

«I, too, Simon. I was just thinking of that» replies John with his beautiful smile and in a loud voice he asks: «Master, tell me: will the man who serves You never be able to do more than his duty to tell You that he thus loves You entirely? »

«Child, God has given you so much, that in all fairness, all your heroism would always be too little. But the Lord is so good that He does not measure what you give Him with His infinite measure. He measures it with the limited measure of human capability. And when He sees that you have given without parsimony, with a full measure, overflowing generously, He then says: "This servant of Mine has given Me more than it was his duty. I will therefore give him the superabundance of My rewards". »

«Oh! How happy I am! I will give You an overflowing measure to have that superabundance! » exclaims Peter.

«Yes, you will give Me it. You will all give Me it. All those who are lovers of the Truth, of the Light, will give Me it. And they will be supernaturally happy with Me. »

### **423. The departure of the Iscariot which causes the lesson on love and forgiveness without limits.**

25<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

423. 1 <sup>1</sup>They are now on the other bank. On their right are mount Tabor and the little Hermon, on their left the mountains of Samaria, the Jordan is behind them, and in front of them, beyond the plain in which they are, the hills in front of which is Megiddo; (if my memory does not fail me, I heard this name in a remote vision\*, the one in which Jesus joins Judas of Kerioth and Thomas, after the separation brought about by the necessity of concealing the departure of Syntyche and John of Endor). This is precisely as the area looks\*\*.

They must have rested all day in some hospitable house, be-

\* **remote vision**, of five months before in 334. 7.

\*\* **This is precisely as the area looks**: the drawing by M. V. follows on the next page. It shows in the centre, from the North to the South: *Tabor, Small Hermon and the Samaria mountains*; to the East *Jordan*, to the West *Megiddo* with a question mark.



cause it is evening once again and it is evident that they have rested. It is still warm, but dew is already beginning to form, mitigating the heat. And violet shadows of twilight are falling after the last red flares of a blazing sunset.

«We can walk without difficulty here» remarks Matthew happily.

«Yes. If we proceed this fast, we shall be at Megiddo before cock-crow »the Zealot replies to him.

«And at dawn we shall be beyond the hills, in sight of the plain of Sharon» concludes John.

«And of your sea, eh? » says his brother teasing him.

«Yes. Of my sea... » replies John smiling.

<sup>2</sup> «And with your spirit you will depart on one of your spiritu- <sup>423. 2</sup>  
al wanderings» says Peter pressing his arm with strong fatherly affection. And he concludes: «Teach me as well, how to draw certain... angelical thoughts from the sight of things. I have looked at water so many times... I have loved it... but... but it has never been of any avail to me other than to earn my living by fishing in

it. What do you see in it?... »

«I see water, Simon. Like you and everybody else. As I now see fields and orchards... But then, beside the eyes of my body, I have other eyes in here, and I no longer see grass and water but words of wisdom come out from those material things. It is not I who think. I would not be able. It is somebody else who thinks in me. »

«Are you perhaps a prophet? » asks the Iscariot somewhat ironically.

«Oh! no! I am not a prophet... »

«What then? Do you think that you possess God? »

«Even less so... »

«You must be raving then. »

«It might well be so, I am so small and weak. But if it is so, it is pleasant raving and leads me to God. My disease then becomes a gift and I bless the Lord for it. »

«Ha! Ha! Ha! » Judas guffaws maliciously.

Jesus, Who has been listening, says: «He is not ill, he is not a prophet. But a pure soul possesses wisdom. It is wisdom that speaks in the heart of a just man. »

«In that case I will never get there, because I have not always been good... » says Peter, somewhat discouraged.

«What about me, then? » replies Matthew.

«My friends, only few people, too few could possess wisdom because they have always been pure. But repentance and goodwill make man, previously guilty and imperfect, just, and then the conscience is purified in the bath of humbleness, contrition and love, and thus purified, it can vie with those who are pure. »

«Thank You, Lord» says Matthew bending to kiss the hand of the Master.

423. 3 <sup>3</sup>There is silence. Then Judas exclaims: «I am tired! I don't know whether I will be able to walk all night. »

«No wonder! Today you wandered about like a blowfly, while we were sleeping! » James of Zebedee replies to him.

«I wanted to see if I met any of the disciples... »

«What did it matter to you? The Master did not tell you. So... »

«Well, I did it. And if the Master allows me, I will stop at Megiddo. I think a friend of ours is there, he goes there every year, at this time, after harvest-time. I would like to speak to

him of my mother and... »

«Do as you wish. After your errand you will go to Nazareth. We will meet you there. You can thus inform My Mother and Mary of Alphaeus that we shall soon be home. »

«I also say to You, as Matthew did: “Thank You, Lord”. »

Jesus does not reply, and He receives the kiss on His hand as He received Matthew’s. It is not possible to see His countenance because it is the moment in the evening when daylight has disappeared completely and there is no starlight as yet. It is so dark that they are proceeding along the road with difficulty and to avoid all possible trouble Peter and Thomas decide to light some twigs, which they have taken from hedges and which burn with a crackle. But the lack of light previously and the smoky moving light later do not enable one to see the expressions of faces.

In the meantime they are approaching the hills, the dark tops of which are visible because they are darker than the mown fields, where the stubble looks whitish against the black of the night, and they become more and more visible as they are approached and as the light of the first stars illuminates them...

«I would leave You here, as my friend lives a little outside Megiddo. I am so tired... »

«You may go. May the Lord watch over your steps. »

«Thank You, Master. Goodbye, friends. »

«Goodbye, goodbye» say the others without attaching much importance to their greetings.

Jesus repeats: «May the Lord watch over your actions. »

Judas goes away quickly.

<sup>4</sup>«H’m! He doesn’t look so tired» remarks Peter.

423. 4

«True! He was dragging his feet here. But now he is running like a gazelle over there... » says Nathanael.

«Your farewell was a holy one, Brother. But unless the Lord overwhelms him with His will, the assistance of God will not help him to take good steps and do fair actions. »

«Judas, the fact that you are My brother does not exempt you from being reproached! I therefore reproach you for being harsh and pitiless towards your companion. He has his faults. But you also have yours. And the first is that you do not endeavour to help Me to perfect his soul. You exasperate him with your words. It is not with violence that you bend hearts. Do you think that

you are entitled to censor every action of his? Do you consider yourself so perfect as to be able to do so? May I remind you that I, your Master, do not do so, because I love that imperfect soul. It moves Me to pity more than any other soul... just because it is imperfect. Do you think that he is happy with his state? And how will you be able to be a master of spirits in future, if with one of your companions you do not practise to make use of the infinite charity which redeems sinners? »

Judas of Alphaeus has bent his head as from the first words. But at the end he kneels on the ground saying: «Forgive me. I am a sinner. And reproach me when I am wrong, because reproof is love, and only a fool does not appreciate the grace of being corrected by a wise person. »

«You can see that I do it for your own good. And forgiveness is joined to My reproach because I can understand the reason for your severity and because the humbleness of the person corrected disarms him who corrects. Stand up, Judas, and sin no more» and He keeps him beside Himself with John.

423. 5 <sup>5</sup>The other apostles exchange comments with one another, whispering at first, then in louder voices out of their habit of speaking aloud. I can thus hear them make comparisons between the two Judases.

«If it had been Judas of Kerioth to get that reproach, I wonder how he would have reacted! Your brother is good» says Thomas to James.

«But... well... We cannot say that what he said was wrong. He said one thing which is true with regard to Judas of Kerioth. Do you believe the story of the friend who goes to Judaea? I don't» says Matthew frankly.

«It must be... vineyard matters as it happened at the Jericho market» says Peter referring to the scene\* which he cannot forget. They all laugh.

«It certainly takes the Master to pity him so much... » remarks Philip.

«So much? Always, you should say» replies James of Zebedee.

«If it were I, I would not be so patient» says Nathanael.

«Neither would I. Yesterday's scene was disgusting» con-

\* the scene, as in 112. 2.

firms Matthew.

«The man cannot be completely sound of mind» says the Zealot conciliatorily.

«But he knows how to look after his business. He is even too clever. I would bet my boat, my nets, even my house, sure that I would not lose anything, that he has gone to see some Pharisee to beg for protection... » says Peter.

«That's right. Ishmael! There is Ishmael at Megiddo! How come we never thought of that?! We must tell the Master! » exclaims Thomas striking his forehead vigorously with his hand.

«It is of no use. The Master would excuse him once again and would reproach us» says the Zealot.

«Well... let us try. James, go: He loves you and you are a relative of His... »

«We are all alike, as far as He is concerned. Here, He does not see us as relatives or friends, He sees only apostles and He is impartial. But I will go, just to please you» says James of Alphaeus. And he quickens his step to depart from his companions and join Jesus.

<sup>6</sup> «You think that he has gone to see a Pharisee. This one or that one... it does not matter... But I think he did it in order not to come to Caesarea. He does not come there willingly... » says Andrew. <sup>423. 6</sup>

«He seems to have been disgusted with the Roman ladies for some time» remarks Thomas.

«And yet... while you were going to Engedi and I was going with him to Lazarus, he was so happy to speak to Claudia... » says the Zealot.

«Yes... but... I think that he did something wrong just then. And I think that Johanna knows and that is why she sent for Jesus and... and I have been making many suppositions since Judas flew into a passion at Bethzur... » grumbles Peter between his teeth.

«Do you mean that?... » asks Matthew curiously.

«Well... I don't know... Ideas... We shall see... »

«Oh! Don't let us think of evil things! The Master does not approve of that. And we have no proof that he did anything wrong» says Andrew imploringly.

«You are not going to tell me that he acts rightly in griev-



ing the Master, in lacking in respect to Him, in causing ill feelings... »

«Be good, Simon! I can assure you that he is somewhat mad... » says the Zealot.

«Well. He may be. But he sins against the kindness of our Lord. If he spat in my face, if he boxed my ears, I would put up with that and offer it to God for his redemption. I have taken it into my head to make every sacrifice for that and I bite my tongue and I run my nails into the palms of my hands when he plays the fool, in order to control myself. But I cannot forgive him for being bad to our Master. The sin he commits against Him, it's the same as if he committed it against me, and I cannot forgive him. Then... if it were only now and again! But he is always at it! I cannot get over the anger boiling within me about one of his quarrels, and he makes a fresh scene! Once, twice, three times... There is a limit! » Peter is almost shouting his words and is gesticulating impetuously.

Jesus, Who is about ten metres ahead of them, turns around, a white shadow in the night, and He says:

«There is no limit to love and forgiveness. There is none. Neither in God nor in the true children of God. As long as there is life, there is no limit. The only obstacle to the descent of forgiveness and love is the impenitent resistance of the sinner. But if he repents, he is always to be forgiven, even if he sinned not once, twice or three times a day, but much more frequently. You also sin and you want to be forgiven by God and you go to Him saying: "I have sinned! Forgive me". And forgiveness is pleasant to you and it is pleasant to God to forgive. And you are not gods. Consequently the offence given to you by people like yourselves is less serious than that given to God, Who is not like anybody else. Do you not think so? And yet God forgives. Do likewise yourselves. Be careful! Watch that your intolerance does not become detrimental to you by causing God to be intolerant towards you. I have already told you, but I will repeat it once again. Be merciful in order to have mercy. No one is so sinless as to be inexorable towards a sinner. Look at your own burdens before considering those weighing on the hearts of other people. Remove yours from your souls and then turn to those of other people to show them not the severity that condemns, but the love that teaches

and helps to be freed from evil. In order to be able to say - and not be silenced by a sinner - in order to be able to say: "You have sinned against God and against your neighbour" it is necessary not to have sinned or at least to have made amends for the sin. In order to be able to say to those who are dejected because they have sinned: "Have faith that God forgives those who repent" as servants of God Who forgives repentant souls - you must show so much mercy in forgiving. Then you will be able to say: "See, repentant sinner? I forgive your sins seven and seven times, because I am a servant of Him Who forgives countless times those who repent of their sins as many times. Consider then how the Perfect One forgives, if I know how to forgive, simply because I serve Him. Have faith! ". You must be able to say so, and say so with your deeds, not just with words. You must say so forgiving. <sup>423. 8</sup> So if your brother sins, admonish him kindly, and if he repents, forgive him. And if at the end of the day he has sinned seven times and says to you seven times: "I repent", forgive him seven times. Have you understood? Will you promise Me that you will do that? While he is away, do you promise Me to be indulgent to him and to help Me to cure him making the sacrifice of controlling yourselves when he does anything wrong? Do you not want to help Me to save him? He is your brother in spirit as he comes from one sole Father, by race as he comes from one sole people, by mission as he is an apostle like you. So you ought to love him three times. If in your family you had a brother who grieved your father and exposed himself to censure, would you not try to correct him so that your father suffered no longer and no one spoke ill of your family? So? Is your family not a greater and holier one as its Father is God and I am the First-born? Why, then, do you not want to console the Father and Me and help us to improve the poor brother who, believe Me, is not happy to be so?... »

Jesus is anxiously imploring on behalf of the apostle who is so full of faults... And He concludes: «I am the Great Beggar and I ask you for the most valuable alms: I ask you to give Me souls. I go about looking for them, but you must help Me... Satisfy the hunger of My Heart, which seeks love and finds it only in too few people. Because those who do not aim at perfection are like as many loaves of bread of which My spiritual hunger is deprived. Give souls to your Master Who is distressed at not being loved

and understood... »

423. 9 <sup>9</sup>The apostles are moved... They would like to say so many things, but every word seems too mean... They press around the Master, each one wishing to caress Him, to make Him feel that they all love Him.

At last it is meek Andrew who says: «Yes, Lord. With patience, silence and sacrifice, the powerful means of conversion, we will give You souls. Also that one... if God helps us... »

«Yes, Lord. And You help us with Your prayer. »

«Yes, friends. And in the meantime let us pray together for your companion who has gone away. “Our Father Who art in Heaven... ”»

Jesus’ perfect voice repeats the words of the Our Father pronouncing them distinctly and slowly. The others chorus in a subdued tone. And while praying they move away in the night.

#### **424. Thoughts of glory and martyrdom in sight of the Mediterranean coast.**

27<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

424. 1 <sup>1</sup>From the tops of the last risings of the ground, which cannot be called hills, as their height is so minimal, a large stretch of the Mediterranean coast appears; it is limited to the north by the Carmel promontory, while to the south it stretches freely as far as human eyes can see. A placid almost straight coast with behind it a fertile plain interrupted by slight undulations of the ground. Coast-towns are visible with their white houses situated between the green of the country and the blue of the sea, which is placid and serene, a bright blue reflecting the pure azure of the sky.

Caesarea is a little to the north of the place where the apostles are with Jesus and with some disciples, whom they probably met in the villages they passed through in the evening or at dawn. It is now later than daybreak and dawn, although it is very early in the morning. In those beautiful hours of summer mornings, when the sky, after rosy dawn becomes again blue, the air is fresh and clear and fresh is the country. No sail appears on the sea. They are the pure hours of the day, when fresh flowers begin

to open and the dew, drying in the early sun, exhales the sweet smells of herbs, bestowing freshness and perfume on the light breath of the morning breeze, which moves the leaves on stems just lightly and barely ripples the smooth expanse of the sea.

The town appears stretched along the shore, as beautiful as every place where Roman refinement has settled. Thermal baths and marble buildings exhibit their whiteness like solid blocks of snow in the districts closer to the sea, overlooked by a tall white square tower near the harbour: perhaps a Castrum or a look-out post. Then there are the more modest little suburban houses, in Jewish style, and everywhere there are green pergolas, roof-gardens built more or less splendidly on the flat roofs of houses, and tall trees growing everywhere.

The apostles admire the view resting in the shade of a group of plane-trees almost on the top of the hill.

«The sight of this immensity lightens one's heart! » exclaims Philip.

«And you seem to be already feeling all the coolness of those beautiful blue waters» says Peter.

«True! After so much dust, stones, thorns... look what a marvel! How fresh and peaceful! The sea always brings peace... » remarks James of Alphaeus.

«H'm! Except when... it slaps your face and whirls you and the boat round like tops in the hands of boys... » replies Matthew who probably remembers being seasick.

<sup>2</sup>«Master... I think... I think of all the words of our psalmists, <sup>424. 2</sup> of the book of Job, of the words of the wisdom books, where the power of God is celebrated. And, I do not know why, the thoughts coming from what I see make me feel that we shall be elevated to perfect beauty on a blue bright purity thus, if we are just until the end in the great gathering, in Your eternal Triumph, the one which You described to us and which will be the end of Evil... And I seem to be seeing this azure immensity peopled with bright risen bodies and You, shining more than a thousand suns, in the middle of the blessed souls... and no more sorrow, tears, insults, disparagement like yesterday evening's... and peace, peace, peace... But when will Evil stop being harmful? Will it perhaps blunt its arrows against Your Sacrifice? Will it be convinced that it has been beaten? » asks John, who at first was

smiling and now is depressed.

«Never. It will always think that it is triumphant, notwithstanding all the contradictions of the just. And My Sacrifice will not blunt its arrows. But the hour will come, the final hour, when Evil will be defeated, and in a beauty even more infinite than that foreseen by your spirit, the chosen ones will be the only People, the eternal, holy true People of the true God. »

«And shall we all be there? » ask the apostles.

«Yes, all. »

«And what about us? » ask the already large group of the disciples.

«You will all be there, too. »

«All the ones present or all those who are Your disciples? We are many now, notwithstanding those who parted from us. »

«And you will be more and more. But not everyone will be faithful until the end. But many will be with Me in Paradise. Some will have their reward after expiation, some immediately after their death, but the reward will be such that, as you forget the Earth and its sorrows, so you will forget Purgatory with its penitential longing for love. »

424. 3 <sup>3</sup>«Master, You told us that we will suffer persecutions and martyrdom. They may capture and kill us before we have time to repent, or our weakness will prevent us from being resigned to violent death... So? » asks Nicolaus of Antioch, who is among the disciples.

«Do not believe that. Owing to your human weakness you could not suffer martyrdom with resignation. But supernatural assistance will be instilled by the Lord into the great spirits who must bear witness to the Lord... »

«Which? Insensibility, perhaps? »

«No, Nicolaus. Perfect love. They will achieve such complete love that torture, accusations, separations from relatives, from life, from everything, will no longer be depressing matters, on the contrary they will become the base to rise to Heaven, to receive it, to see it and therefore to stretch arms and hearts towards tortures, in order to go where their hearts already are: to Heaven. »

«One who dies thus will be much forgiven» says an old disciple whose name I do not know.

«Not *much*, but completely forgiven, Papias. Because love is absolution, and sacrifice is absolution, and heroic confession of faith is absolution. You can thus see that martyrs will have treble purification. »

«Oh! then... I have sinned much, Master, and I have followed these disciples to be forgiven, and yesterday You forgave me and because of that You were insulted by those who do not forgive and are guilty. I think that Your forgiveness is valid. But for my long years of sin give me the absolution of martyrdom. »

«You are asking for a great deal, man! »

«Not as much as I have to give to have the beatitude which John of Zebedee has described and You have confirmed. I implore You, Lord. Let me die for You, for Your doctrine... »

«You are asking for very much, man! The life of man is in the hands of My Father... »

«But every prayer of Yours is heard, as every judgement of Yours is heard. Ask the Eternal Father that forgiveness for me... »

The man is on his knees at the feet of Jesus, Who looks him in the eye and then says: «And do you not think that it is martyrdom to live when the world has lost all attraction and the heart yearns for Heaven, and to live to teach other people to love and to become acquainted with the disappointments of the Master and to persevere tirelessly to give souls to the Master? Always do the will of God, even if your own should appear to you to be more heroic, and you will be holy... <sup>424. 4</sup>But here are your companions coming with supplies. Let us set out to arrive in town before the torrid hours. »

And He sets out first down the light descent that soon arrives at the plain marked by the white ribbon of the road leading to Caesarea on the Sea.

#### **425. In Caesarea on the sea. Pleasure-seeking Romans and a parable on the use of time and free will.**

30<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Caesarea has large markets where fine victuals pour in for the refined Roman tables, and near the market squares where, in a kaleidoscope of faces, colours and races, more common food- <sup>425. 1</sup>

stuffs can be found, there are stores with richer delicacies, imported both from the various Roman colonies and from remote Italy, to make the separation from the Fatherland less painful. And stores selling wines and delicatessen imported from abroad are in deep porches, because the Romans do not like being burned by the sun or drenched by rain while purchasing refined foodstuffs for their banquets. While satisfying their gluttony like Epicureans, they do not neglect the other parts of their bodies... thus cool shady porches and arches protecting from the rain lead from the Roman district - which is almost entirely grouped around the building of the Proconsul, between the coast road and the square of barracks and tollhouse - to the Roman stores near the Jewish markets.

There are many people under these porches, the end part of which near the markets is comfortable if not beautiful, There are people of all races. There are slaves and freed men and an occasional pleasure-loving gentleman surrounded by slaves, passing listlessly from one shop to another, after leaving his litter in the street, and doing his shopping which the slaves take to his house. And when two Roman gentlemen meet, one can hear the usual idle talk: the weather, the tedium of the town which does not offer the pleasures of remote Italy, regret for great performances, plans for banquets and licentious speech.

425. 2     <sup>2</sup>A Roman, preceded by about a dozen slaves laden with bags and parcels, meets two friends. Reciprocal greetings: «Hail, Ennius!»

«Hail, Florus Tullius Cornelius! Hail, Marcus Heracleus Flavius!»

«When did you come back?»

«The day before yesterday, at dawn, exhausted.»

«You, exhausted? You are never in a sweat!» the young man named Florus says teasing playfully.

«Don't jeer at me, Florus Tullius Cornelius. I am drudging even now on behalf of my friends!»

«Your friends? We did not ask you to drudge» objects the elder friend, named Marcus Heracleus Flavius.

«But my love thinks of you. You cruel people who sneer at me, see this procession of slaves laden with goods? Others have gone before them with other goods. And it's all to honour you.»

«So this is your work? A banquet? »

«Why? » shout the two friends loudly.

«Sh! Noble patricians making such a terrible din! You sound like the plebeians of this country where we are wearing ourselves out in... »

«Orgies and idleness. Because we do nothing else. I am still asking myself: why are we here? What tasks have we got? »

«To be bored to death is one. »

«To teach the hired female mourners here how to live is another one. »

«And... to sow Rome in the sacred pelvises of Jewish women is another one. »

«And to enjoy, here as anywhere else, our wealth and power, to which everything is allowed, is a further one. »

The three alternate as in a litany and laugh. <sup>425. 3</sup>But young Florus suddenly stops and becomes gloomy and he says: «But for some time a fog has been hanging over the merry Court of Pilate. The most beautiful women look like chaste vestals and their husbands comply with their whims. And that spoils the habitual feasts a great deal... »

«Of course! The caprice for that coarse Galilean... But it will soon be over... »

«You are wrong, Ennius. I know that Claudia also is conquered by Him and thus... good morals have strangely installed themselves in her palace. Roman republican austerity seems to be revived there... »

«Alas! What a mouldy smell! Since when? »

«Since sweet April, suitable for love affairs. You don't know... You were not here. But our ladies came back as sad as the mourners of cinerary urns and we poor men have to look elsewhere for many of our amusements. Which we are not even allowed in the presence of the modest ladies! »

«One reason more why I should help you. A great dinner this evening... and a greater orgy in my house. I was at Cynthium and I found delightful things which these stinkers consider impure: peacocks, partridges, and all kinds of moorhens, and little wild boars removed alive from their mother, which had been killed, and bred for our dinners. And wines!. Ah! sweet, precious wines of the Roman hills, of my warm shores near Liter-



num and of your sunny coast near Aciri!... And sweet-smelling wines from Chios, of which Cintium is the pearl. And inebriating wines from Iberia, suitable to excite senses for the final enjoyment. Oh! It must be a great feast, to dispel the tedium of our exile and to convince ourselves that we are still virile!... »

«Will there be women as well? »

«Of course... And more beautiful than roses. Of every colour and... taste. I spent a treasure for all the goods, including the women... But I am generous to my friends!... I was just finishing my shopping here. What might have gone bad during the journey. After the banquet, let us have love!... »

«Did you have a good voyage? »

«Very good. Aphrodite Anadyomene was friendly to me. In any case I am dedicating tonight's rite to her... »

The three men laugh grossly anticipating the on-coming shameful pleasures...

425. 4    <sup>4</sup>But Florus asks: «But why this exceptional feast? What's the reason for it?... »

«Three reasons: my beloved nephew in the next few days will begin to wear his toga virilis. I must celebrate the event. Obedience to the foreboding that Caesarea was changing into a distressing abode and that it was necessary to discredit fate by means of a rite to Venus. The third reason... I will whisper it to you: I am invited to a wedding... »

«You? Liar! »

«I am invited to a wedding. It is a "wedding" every time one relishes the first sip from a sealed amphora. And I am doing that this evening. Twenty thousand sesterces, or if you prefer so, two hundred gold pieces I paid for her, because in actual fact that is what I had to give for her, including brokers and the like. But even if Venus had given birth to her at dawn in April, and had made her with foam and golden beams, I would not have found her more beautiful and pure! A bud, a closed bud... Ah! And I am her master! »

«Profaner! » says Marcus Heracleus jokingly.

«Do not play the censor, for you are my equal... After Valerian left, we were bored to death here. But I am replacing him... We must take advantage of the experience of our forefathers. But I will not be so foolish to wait, as he did, for the girl, who is fairer

than honey and whom I have called Galla Ciprina, to be spoiled by the sadness and the theories of emasculated philosophers who do not know how to enjoy the pleasures of life... »

«Bravo!!! But... Valerian's slave was a learned woman and... »

«... and became mad reading philosophers... Soul!... second life!... virtue!!!... a lot of nonsense!... To live is to enjoy oneself! And we live here. Yesterday I burned every mournful scroll and I ordered the slaves, under pain of death, not to remember the miseries of philosophers and of Galileans. And the girl will know me only... »

«But where did you find her? »

«Well! Somebody was very shrewd and bought slaves after the Gallic wars and used them only as reproducers, treating them well, obliging them only to procreate, to give fresh flowers of beauty... And Galla is one of them. She is now pubescent and her master sold her... and I bought her... ah! ah! Ah! »

«You lustful!... »

«If it had not been me, it would have been somebody else... So... She should not have been born a girl... »

«If He heard you... <sup>5</sup>Oh! Here He is! »

425. 5

«Who? »

«The Nazarene Who cast a spell on our ladies. He is behind you... »

Ennius turns round as if he had an asp behind him. He looks at Jesus Who is coming forward slowly among the people pressing around Him, the poor common people and some Roman slaves as well, and he contemptuously says: «That ragamuffin?! Women are depraved. But let us run away, lest He should cast a spell on us as well! » Then addressing his poor slaves, who have been standing all the time with their loads, like caryatids for whom there is no mercy, he orders: «Go home quickly, because you have been wasting your time so far, and those who are making preparations are waiting for spices and perfumes. Run! Quick! And remember that you will be scourged if everything is not ready by sunset. »

The slaves go away at a run and the Roman follows them slowly with his two friends...

<sup>6</sup>Jesus advances. He is sad, because He heard the end of Ennius' conversation and from the height of His stature He looks with

425. 6

infinite compassion at the slaves running under their burdens. He turns around, looking for the faces of more Roman slaves... He sees some, trembling with fear of being caught by superintendents or being driven away by the Jews, mixed among the crowds surrounding Him. He stops and asks: «Is there anyone among you belonging to that household? »

«No, Lord. But we know them» reply the slaves present.

«Matthew, give them abundant offerings. They will share them with their companions, so that they may know that there is someone who loves them. And remember, and tell the others that sorrow comes to an end with life only for those who were good and honest in their chains, and with sorrow ends also the difference between rich and poor, between free people and slaves. Afterwards there is only one just God for everybody, Who, without taking into account wealth or chains, will reward the good and punish the wicked. Bear that in mind. »

«Yes, Lord. But we, who belong to the households of Claudia and Plautina, are quite happy, like those who belong to Livia and Valeria, and we bless You because You have improved our lot» says an old man to whom everyone listens as if he were their chief.

«To show Me your gratitude be always good and you will have the true God as your eternal Friend. »

And Jesus raises His hand as if to dismiss and bless them and He then leans against a column and begins to speak in the attentive silence of the crowd. The slaves do not go away, they remain listening to the words uttered by the divine lips.

425. 7 <sup>7</sup>«Listen. A father of many children gave each of them, when they became adults, two coins of great value and said to them: “I no longer intend to work for each of you. You are now old enough to earn your living. So I am giving each of you the same amount of money, so that you may invest it as you please and to your own profit. I will remain here waiting, ready to advise you and also to assist you, if through misfortune you should lose all or part of the money that I am now giving you. But remember that I will be inexorable towards those who squander it mischievously, and towards sluggards who waste it or leave it as it is through idleness or vices. I have taught each of you Good and Evil. You cannot therefore say that you are facing life without knowing what life

is. I have set for everyone an example of wise, just activity and of honest life. So you cannot say that I have contaminated your spirits through my evil examples. I have done my duty. It is for you now to do yours, as you are neither stupid, nor unprepared, nor illiterate. Go” and he dismissed them and remained alone, waiting, in his house.

His sons scattered through the world. They all had the same things: two valuable coins of which they could dispose freely, and a greater treasure of health, energy, knowledge and their father’s examples. So they should have all been successful in the same way. But what happened? Some of the sons employed their money wisely and by means of untiring honest work and a simple honest life, in accordance with their father’s teaching, they soon owned a large honest treasure; some at first made an honest fortune, but later they squandered it through idleness and orgies; some made money practising usury or dealing in contemptible business; and some did nothing because they were inactive, lazy, undecided and they finished their valuable coins before they could find any employment.

<sup>8</sup>After some time the father of the family sent servants wherever he knew that his sons were and said to the servants: “You will tell my sons to meet in my house. I want them to give me an account of what they have done during this time and I wish to ascertain myself what their situation is”. And the servants went everywhere, they met the children of their master, they gave the message and each of them went back with the master’s son whom they had met. 425.8

The father received them with great solemnity, as a father, but also as a judge. And all the relatives of the family were present with friends, acquaintances, servants, fellow-villagers and people from neighbouring villages. A solemn meeting. The father was on his seat of head of the family, and around him, in a semi-circle there were all the relatives, friends, acquaintances, servants, fellow-villagers and people from the neighbourhood. In front of him, in a line, his sons. Even without being questioned, their different countenances expressed the truth. Those who had been active, honest, of good morals and had made a holy fortune looked prosperous, peaceful and well-off, like people who are wealthy, enjoy good health and a clear conscience. They looked

at their father with a kind, grateful, humble but at the same time triumphant smile; they were shining with joy having honoured their father and family and because they had been good children, good citizens and faithful believers. Those who had squandered their assets in laziness or vices were mortified, low-spirited, haggard-faced and shabby, with the signs of orgies or starvation clearly visible. Those who had made a fortune by contemptible means had an aggressive hard countenance, with the cruel upset look of beasts which are afraid of the tamer and are prepared to react...

The father began to question these last ones: "How come you who looked so serene when you left, now look like beasts ready to tear people to pieces? Where did you get that mien? "

"Life gave it to us. And your severity in sending us away from home. You put us in touch with the world".

"All right. And what did you do in the world? "

"What was possible for us to obey your orders to earn a living with the mere nothing you gave us".

"All right. Stand in that corner... And now it is your turn, you emaciated, sick looking and shabby people. What did you do to come to this state? You were healthy and well dressed when you left".

"Clothes wear out in ten years... " objected the sluggards.

"So there are no more looms in the world to make cloth for men's garments? "

"Yes... But one needs money to buy it... "

"You had it".

"In ten years... it is more than finished. Everything which has a beginning comes to an end".

"Yes, if you take from it and never put anything back into it. But why have you only taken from it? If you had worked, you could have added to it and taken from it and the money would not have come to an end, on the contrary you could have increased it. Have you been ill, perhaps? "

"No, father".

"Well, then? "

"We felt lost... We did not know what to do, what was right... We were afraid of doing the wrong thing. And not to do wrong, we did not do anything".

“And had you no father to whom you could apply for advice? Have I ever been an uncompromising frightening father?”

“Oh! no! But we were ashamed of having to say to you: ‘We are not capable of taking the initiative’. You have always been so active... We hid ourselves out of shame”.

“All right. Stand in the middle of the room. It’s your turn now! What are you going to tell me? From your outward looks you seem to have suffered not only hunger but also from illness. Were you perhaps taken ill because you had worked too hard? Be frank and I will not reproach you”.

Some of the children who were questioned threw themselves on their knees striking their breasts and saying: “Forgive us, father’ God has already punished us and we deserved it. But you, who are our father, forgive us!... We began well, but we did not persevere. As we had become wealthy so easily we said: ‘Well, let us enjoy ourselves a little, as our friends suggest, then we will go back to work and make up for it’. And we really wanted to do so: go back to the two coins and make them yield again, as if it were a game. And twice (say two), three times (says one) we were successful. Then our good luck abandoned us... and we finished all our money”.

“But why did you not return to reason after the first time?”

“Because the bread spiced with vice corrupts the palate, and one can no longer do without it... ”.

“There was your father... ”.

“True. And we longed for you with regret and homesickness. But we offended you... We implored Heaven to inspire you to send for us, so that we might receive your reproach and your forgiveness; that is what we wanted and are now asking for, more than riches which we do not want anymore because they led us astray”.

“All right. Stand in the middle of the room beside those who were questioned before you. And you who are sick and poor like those, but are silent and show no sign of grief, what are you going to say?”.

“What the first ones said. That we hate you, because your unwise way of doing things has been the cause of our ruin. Since you knew us, you should not have exposed us to temptations! You hated us and we hate you. You set that trap for us to get rid of us.

May you be cursed”.

“Very well. Stay with the first ones in that corner. And now it is your turn, my prosperous, serene, wealthy sons. Tell me. How did you do so well?”.

“By carrying out your teaching, your examples, advice, orders, everything. We resisted temptations, out of love for you, blessed father who gave us life and wisdom”.

“Very well. Come to my right hand side and listen all of you to my judgement and to my defence. I gave each of you the same money, examples and wisdom. My sons have reacted in different manners. From a hard working, honest moderate father different children have come forth: some are like him, some are lazy, some an easy prey to temptations, and some so cruel that they hate their father, their brothers and neighbours, on whom, even if they do not say so, but I know, they have practised usury and committed crimes. And among the weak and lazy ones there are some who are penitent and some impenitent. This is my judgement. The perfect ones are already on my right hand side, equal to me in glory and in deeds; those who are repentant, like children to be educated, will come once again under my authority until they reach a degree of capability which will prove that they are adults again; the unrepentant and guilty ones will be driven out of my property and will be persecuted by the malediction of him who is no longer their father, because their hatred for me annuls our relationship of father and son. But I wish to remind you all that each son has been the author of his own fate, because I gave everybody the same things, which, however, have brought about four different situations in those who received them and I cannot be accused of desiring their evil lot”.

425. 9     <sup>9</sup>The parable is over and I will now explain it to you who have listened to it.

The Father in Heaven is symbolised by the father of the large family. The two coins given by the father to each of his children before sending them into the world are: time and free will, that God grants to every man to be used as he wishes, after being taught and perfected by the Law and the examples of just people. Everyone receives the same gifts. But every man makes use of them as he wishes. Some treasure up time, means, education, wealth, everything, for a good purpose and remain holy and

sound, the owners of increased riches. Some begin well, then become tired and lose everything. Some do nothing as they expect other people to do it. Some accuse the Father of their mistakes; some repent and are willing to make amends; some do not repent and they accuse and curse as if their ruin has been brought about by other people. And God grants rewards to the just at once; He grants mercy to those who repent and time to expiate, so that they may achieve a reward through repentance and expiation; and He gives malediction and punishment to those who trample on love through impenitence, the consequence of their sins. He gives every man what is due to him.

So do not waste the two coins: time and free will, but make the right use of them to be on the right hand side of the Father, and if you fail, repent and have faith in Merciful Love. Go. Peace be with you! »

He blesses them and looks at them moving away in the sun flooding the square and streets. <sup>10</sup>But the slaves are still there... 425. 10

«Are you still here, My poor friends? Will you not be punished? »

«No, Lord, if we say that we have been listening to You. Our mistresses venerate You. Where are You going now, Lord? They have been wishing to see You for such a long time... »

«To the rope-maker near the harbour. But I am leaving this evening, and your mistresses will be at the party... »

«We shall tell them just the same. Months ago they told us to inform them every time You come here. »

«All right. Go. And make good use of your time and thoughts, which are always free, even if a man is in chains. »

The slaves bend to the ground and go away towards the Roman quarters. Jesus and His apostles go towards the harbour, along a narrow street.

#### **426. With the Roman women in Caesarea on the sea. Prophecy in Virgil. The young slave girl saved.**

1<sup>st</sup> May 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus is a guest of the rope-maker's humble family. Their 426. 1  
house is low, with a saltish smell, close as it is to sea water. At the



rear there are some smelly storehouses where goods are unloaded before they are collected by the various buyers. At the front there is a dusty road, furrowed by heavy wheels, very noisy because dockers, urchins, carters and seamen come and go incessantly. Beyond the street there is a little dockyard with dirty water soiled by the rubble thrown into it, and by its own stagnation. From the dockyard a canal flows into the actual port, capable of taking large ships. On the western side there is a large sandy square where ropes are made with squeaky twisting winches worked by hand. On the eastern side there is another little square, much smaller but more noisy and untidy, where men and women are patching up nets and sails. And beyond lie low hovels with a saltish smell, crowded with half-naked children.

One certainly cannot say that Jesus has chosen a magnificent abode. Flies, dust, bustle, the smell of stagnant water, the stink of hemp steeped before being used, reign there. And the King of kings, lying with His apostles on heaps of coarse hemp, tired as He is, falls asleep in that poor environment, partly a lumber-room, partly a storeroom, which is at the rear of the little house and from which, through a door as black as tar, one can enter the kitchen, which is also black, and through a worm-eaten door, corroded by dust and salt, so that it looks whitish-grey like pumice-stone, one comes out into the square where ropes are being made and from which comes the stench of steeped hemp.

426. 2 <sup>2</sup>The sun is blazing down on the square notwithstanding that there are four huge plane-trees, two at each end of the rectangular square, under which are the winches to twist the hemp. I do not know whether I am giving the implement the right name. The men, wearing tunics reduced to the bare essential for decency, running with sweat as if they were under a shower, keep turning their winches with continuous motion, as if they were galley-slaves... They speak only to say the words essential to their work. Thus, without the squeaking of the winch wheels, and the creaking of the hemp stretched in twisting, there is no other noise in the square, a strange contrast with the din in the other places around the house of the rope-maker.

Thus the exclamation of one of the workers is most surprising as it is uttered unexpectedly: «What? Women? At this awful time of the day?! Look! They are coming here... »

«They may be in need of ropes to tie their husbands... » says a young rope-maker jokingly.

«They may need some hemp for some work. »

«H'm! It's unlikely that they need ours, which is so coarse, when they can get it combed! ? »

«Ours is cheaper. See? They are poor... »

«But they are not Jewesses. See, their mantles are different... »

«Perhaps they are not Jewesses. There are all races in Caesarea now... »

«Perhaps they are looking for the Rabbi. They may be ill... See how they are all covered, even in this heat... »

«Provided they are not lepers... Poverty, yes, but leprosy, no; I do not want it, not even to be resigned to God» says the rope-maker whom everybody obeys.

«But did you not hear the Master?: “We must accept everything God sends us”. »

«But leprosy is not sent by God. It is sent by sins, vices, contagion... »

The women are now behind them, not behind those who are speaking and are at the very end of the square, but behind those who are on the side near the house, thus the first to be met, and one of them bends to say something to one of the rope-makers, who turns around astonished and remains like a blockhead.

«Let us go and listen to them... Covered like that... With all the children I have, leprosy would be the last straw!... » says the owner who has stopped turning his winch and goes towards the women. His companions follow him...

«Simon, this woman wants something, but she speaks a foreign language. Since you have travelled, listen to her» says the man to whom the woman had spoken.

«What do you want? » asks the rope-maker rudely, trying to see her through the dark dyed byssus which covers her face.

And in the purest Greek the woman replies: «The King of Israel. The Master. »

«Ah! I see. But... are you lepers? »

«No. »

«Who can assure me? »

«He can. Ask Him. »

The man hesitates... He then says: «Well. I will make an act of faith and God will protect me... I am going to call Him. Stay where you are. »

The four women do not move, a greyish silent group, looked at with amazement and evident fear by the rope-makers, who have gathered together a few steps apart.

426. 3 <sup>3</sup>The man goes into the storeroom and touches Jesus Who is sleeping. «Master... Come out. They are looking for. You. »

Jesus wakes and gets up immediately asking: «Who? »

«Who knows!... Some Greek women... they are all covered... They say that they are not lepers and that You can assure me... »

«I will come at once» says Jesus tying His sandals which He had taken off, and buttoning the top part of His tunic near His neck, and putting on the belt which He had taken off to be more free in His sleep. And He goes out with the rope-maker.

The women make the gesture of starting towards them. «Stay where you are, I tell you! I do not want you to walk where my children are playing... I want Him to say first that you are healthy. » The women stop.

Jesus joins them. The tallest one, not the one who previously spoke Greek, says a word in a low voice. Jesus addresses the rope maker: «Simon, you need not worry. The women are healthy and I have to listen to them in peace. May I go into the house?... »

«No. The old woman is there and she is more curious and chatty than a magpie. Go over there, to the end, under the shed of the vats. There is also a little room. You will be alone there and in peace. »

426. 4 <sup>4</sup>«Come... » says Jesus to the women. And He goes with them to the end of the square, under the unsavoury shed, into the little room as narrow as a cell, where there are broken tools, rags, refuse hemp, huge cobwebs, and where the smell of macerating-vats and mould is so strong as to catch their throats. Jesus, Who is very serious and pale, smiles lightly saying: «It is not a place in accord with your tastes... But I have nothing else... »

«We do not see the place, because we see He Who lives in it just now» replies Plautina removing her veil and mantle, imitated by the other ladies, who are Lydia, Valeria and Albula Domitilla, a freed woman.

«From which I infer that after all you still believe that I am a

just man. »

«More than a just man. And Claudia has sent us precisely because she believes that You are more than just and she does not take into consideration the words she heard. But she wishes to have Your confirmation to double her veneration for You. »

«Or to deprive Me of it, should I appear as they tried to picture Me. But you can assure her. I have no human ambitions. My ministry and My desire are only and entirely supernatural. I do want to gather all men into one only kingdom. But what part of men? Their flesh and blood? No. I leave that, a fleeting matter, to fleeting monarchies, to unsteady empires. I want to gather under My sceptre only the spirits of men, immortal spirits in an immortal kingdom. I reject all other accounts of My will, irrespectively of whoever gave them, if they differ from that one. And I beg you to believe and to tell her who sent you, that the Truth has but one word... »

«Your apostle was so sure of himself when he told us... »

«He is an overexcited youngster. He is to be listened to as such... »

«But he is detrimental to You! Reproach him... Send him away... »

«And what about My mercy? He acts through mistaken love. So must I not pity him? And what would change if I sent him away? He would do double harm to himself and to Me. »

«So he is like a cannon-ball tied to Your foot!... »

«He is a poor wretch to be redeemed... »

<sup>5</sup>Plautina falls on her knees stretching out her arms and saying: «Ah! Master, greater than anybody else, how easy it is to believe that You are holy when one feels Your heart in Your words! How easy it is to love and follow You because of Your charity, which is even greater than Your intelligence! »

«Not greater. But more understandable for you... whose intellects are hampered by too many errors and you are not generous in clearing them to receive the Truth. »

«You are right. Your clairvoyance is as great as Your wisdom. »

«As wisdom is a form of holiness it gives enlightenment of judgement, both on past or present events, and on forewarning of future ones. »

«So your prophets... »

«Were holy. God therefore communicated with them in great fullness. »

«Were they holy because they belonged to Israel? »

«They were holy because they belonged to Israel and because they were just in their actions. Because not all Israel is or was holy, although they belonged to Israel. The fact that one belongs by chance to a people or to a religion cannot make one holy. Those two conditions can be of great assistance to be so, but they are not the essential factors of holiness. »

«Which is then the factor? »

«The will of man. The will that leads the actions of man to holiness if it is good, to wickedness if it is bad. »

«Then... it is not fair to say that just people cannot be found also among us. »

«Certainly not. Nay, some just people were certainly among your ancestors, and there are certainly some among those who are living now. Because it would be too dreadful if the whole heathen world were made of demons. Those among you who feel attraction to Good and Truth and repulsion to Vice, and shun evil deeds as disgracing man, believe Me, they are already on the path of justice. »

«Claudia then... »

«Yes. And you as well. Persevere. »

«But if we should die before being... converted to You?... Of what use would it be to have been virtuous?... »

«God is just in judging. But why hesitate to come to the true God? »

The three ladies lower their heads... Silence... Then the great confession, the one which explains so many cruelties and so much resistance of the Romans against Christianity... «Because, by doing so, we would appear to be betraying our Fatherland... »

«On the contrary you would serve your Fatherland, making it morally and spiritually greater, strengthened by the possession and protection of God, in addition to its armies and riches. Rome, the City of the world, the City of the universal Religion!... Just think of that... »

There is silence...

426. 6 «Then Livia, blushing like a peony, says: «Master, some time

ago we were seeking information on You also in the pages of our Virgil. Because, as far as we are concerned, prophecies in no way connected with any of the beliefs of Israel are of greater value to us than those of your prophets, as we feel that the latter are influenced by millenary beliefs... And we discussed the matter... comparing those who presaged You in all times, nations and religions. But no one presaged You so justly as our Virgil... How much we spoke on that day with Diomed also, the Greek freedman, an astrologer dear to Claudia! He maintained that that happened because the time was nearer and the stars spoke with their conjunctions... And in support of his thesis he put forward the fact of the three Wise men from the three Eastern countries, who had come to worship You, still a baby, causing the massacre, which struck Rome with horror... But we were not persuaded because... for over fifty years none of the wise people in the world spoke of You explaining the voices of the stars, although we are even closer to Your present revelation. Claudia exclaimed: "We would need the Master! He would speak the truth and we would know the place and the immortal destiny of our greatest poet! ". Would You tell us... for Claudia... A gift to prove that she is not disliked by You because of her doubt about You... »

«I understood her reaction of a Roman and I have had no grudge against her. You may reassure her. And listen. Virgil was not great only as a poet, was he? »

«Oh! no! Also as a man. In the midst of a society already corrupt and vicious he shone with spiritual purity. No one knew him to be lewd, fond of orgies and debauchery. His writings are chaste, but even chaster was his heart. So much so that where he lived mostly, he was called the "little virgin" with mockery by vicious people, with respect by good people. »

«So, could God not be reflected in the limpid soul of a chaste man, even if that man was a heathen? Will perfect Virtue not have loved the virtuous man? And if he was granted love and the sight of Truth because of the pure beauty of his soul, could he not have had a flash of prophecy? As prophecy is nothing but the truth which is revealed to those who deserve to know the Truth as a reward and a spur to greater and greater virtue? »

«So... he did prophesy You? »

«His mind inflamed with purity and genius was elevated to the knowledge of a page concerning Me, and he can be called the just heathen poet, a pre-Christian prophetic spirit as a reward to his virtues. »

«Oh! Our Virgil! And will he be rewarded? »

«I said: “God is just”. But do not imitate the poet stopping at his limit. Go on, because the Truth did not reveal itself to you by intuition and partly, but completely and it spoke to you. »

426. 7 «Thank You, Master... 7 We are going away. Claudia told us to ask You if she can be useful to You in moral matters » says Plautina without replying to Jesus’ remark.

«And she told you to ask Me, if I was not an usurper... »

«Oh! Master! How do You know? »

«I am more than Virgil and the prophets... »

«It is true! It is all true! Can we serve You?... »

«For Myself I need but faith and love. But there is a creature who is in great danger and whose soul will be killed this evening. Claudia could save her. »

«Here? Who? Soul killed? »

«One of your patricians is giving a dinner-party and... »

«Ah! Yes! Ennius Cassius. My husband also is invited... » says Livia.

«And mine... And we, too, really. But as Claudia is not going, we will not go either. We had decided to withdraw immediately after dinner, in the event we had gone... Because... our dinners end in orgies... which we can no longer bear... And with the contempt of neglected wives we let our husbands remain... » says Valeria severely.

«Not with contempt... With pity for their moral misery... » corrects Jesus.

«It is difficult, Master... We know what happens there... »

«I also know many things which happen in hearts... and yet I forgive... »

«You are holy... »

«You must become so. Urged by My desire and spurred by your will... »

«Master!... »

«Yes. Can you say that you are as happy now as you were before meeting Me, happy with the poor brute sensual happiness of

heathens unaware that they are more than flesh, now that you know a little of Wisdom?... »

«No, Master. We admit it. We are discontented, annoyed, like one who is looking for a treasure and cannot find it. »

«And it is in front of you! What annoys you is the yearning after Light of your spirits, which suffer because of your delay... in giving them what they ask for... »

<sup>8</sup>There is silence... Then Plautina, without replying to Jesus' <sup>426. 8</sup> remark, says: «And what could Claudia do? »

«She could save that creature. A girl purchased for pleasure by the Roman. A virgin who will not be such tomorrow. »

«If he bought her... she belongs to him. »

«She is not a piece of furniture. Within her body there is a soul... »

«Master... our laws... »

«Women: the Law of God!... »

«Claudia is not going to the feast... »

«I am not telling her to go. I am telling you to say to her: “The Master, to be sure that Claudia does not blame Him, asks her for help for the soul of that girl”... »

«We will tell her. But she will not be able to do anything... A slave purchased... is an object of which one may dispose... »

«Christianity will teach you that a slave has a soul like the soul of Caesar, in most cases even better, and that that soul belongs to God, and he who corrupts it is cursed. » Jesus is imposing while saying so.

The women perceive His authority and severity. They bow without discussing. They put on their mantles and veils again and say: «We will report. Hail, Master. »

«Goodbye. »

The women go out into the warm square. But Plautina turns around and says: «With regards to *everybody* we were Greek women. Is that clear? »

«I understand. Go without worrying. »

Jesus remains under the low porch and they go away along the same road they came.

The rope-makers go back to their work...

<sup>9</sup>Jesus walks back to the storeroom slowly. He is pensive. He <sup>426. 9</sup> does not lie down again. Sitting on a pile of rolled up ropes He



prays fervently... The eleven apostles are still fast asleep...

Some time goes by thus... About one hour. Then the rope-maker looks in and beckons Jesus to go to the door. «There is a slave who wants You. »

The slave, a Numidian, is outside in the square still exposed to the sun. He bows and without speaking he gives Jesus a waxed tablet.

Jesus reads it and says: «Tell her that I will wait until dawn. Have you understood? »

The man nods assent and to make Jesus understand why he does not speak, he opens his mouth to show that his tongue has been cut off.

«Poor wretch! » says Jesus caressing him.

Two tears stream down the dark cheeks of the slave who takes Jesus' white hand in his dark ones, which are so much like those of a big monkey, and he rubs it against his face, he kisses it, and then throws himself on the ground. He takes Jesus' foot and lays it on his head... A language of gestures to express his gratitude for that gesture of pitiful love...

And Jesus repeats: «Poor wretch! » but He does not cure him.

The slave stands up and wants the waxed tablet back... Claudia does not wish to leave any trace of her correspondence... Jesus smiles and hands the tablet to him. The Numidian departs and Jesus approaches the rope-maker.

«I must remain here until dawn... Will you allow Me?... »

«Everything You wish. I am sorry that I am poor... »

«I am pleased that you are honest. »

«Who were those women? »

«Foreigners needing advise. »

«Healthy? »

«As you and Me. »

426. 10 «Good!... <sup>10</sup>Here are Your apostles... »

In fact, rubbing their eyes, stretching themselves, still half sleeping, the Eleven come out of the storeroom and go towards the Master.

«Master... we will have to have supper if You wish to leave this evening... » says Peter.

«No. I am not leaving until dawn. »

«Why? »

«Because I have been asked to do so. »

«But why? Who asked You? It was better to walk by night. It's new moon now... »

«I hope to save a creature... And that is brighter than the moon and more refreshing for Me than the coolness of the night. »

Peter draws Him aside: «What has happened? Have You seen the Roman ladies? What mood are they in? Is it them who are becoming converted? Tell me... »

Jesus smiles: If you let Me reply I will tell you, o most inquisitive man. I saw the Romans. They are going towards the Truth only very slowly. But they are not going back. It is already a lot. »

«And... with regards to what Judas said... what is the situation? »

«That they are continuing to respect Me as a wise man. »

«But... for Judas? Is he not involved?... »

«They came to see Me, not him... »

«Why then was he afraid to meet them? Why did he not want You to come to Caesarea? »

«Simon, it is not the first time that Judas is strangely capricious... »

«That is true. And... are the Romans coming tonight? »

«They have already come. »

«Why are we waiting until dawn, then? »

«And why are you so inquisitive? »

«Master, be good... Tell me everything. »

«Yes, I will... to remove all doubt... You also heard the conversation of those three Romans... »

«Yes, I did. Filthy! Plague! Demons! But what have we got to do with that?... Ah! I see! The Roman ladies will go to the dinner and then they will come and ask to be forgiven for taking part in filthiness... I am surprised that You agree. »

«And I am surprised at your rash judgement! »

«Forgive me, Master! »

«Yes, you had better know that the Roman ladies are not going to the dinner-party and that I asked Claudia to intervene on behalf of that girl... »

«Oh! But Claudia can do nothing! The girl was bought by the Roman and he can do what he likes with her! »

«But Claudia can exert much influence upon the Roman.

And Claudia sent word to Me to wait until dawn before leaving. Nothing else. Are you satisfied? »

«Yes, Master, I am. But You have not rested... Come now... You are so tired! I will watch to ensure that You are left in peace... Come... » and lovingly tyrannical he pulls and pushes Jesus, compelling Him to lie down once again...

426. 11 <sup>11</sup>Hours go by. It is sunset, work comes to an end, and children shout louder in the streets and little squares and swallows screech in the sky. The first shades of evening descend upon the earth, and swallows go back to their nests, and children to bed. One by one all noises cease, so that one can hear only the light rippling of the water in the canal and the louder lapping of the waves on the shore. Houses, the houses of tired workmen are closed, lights go out and rest descends to make everyone blind and dumb... remote... The moon rises and adorns with her silver also the dirty sheet of water of the little dockyard, which now looks like a sheet of silver.

The apostles are sleeping once again on the hemp... Jesus, sitting on one of the winches, His hands in His lap, is praying, thinking, waiting... He does not lose sight of the street coming from town.

The moon rises, rises... She is perpendicularly above His head. The noise of the sea is louder, the smell of the canal is stronger, and the cone of the moon which plunges its beams into the sea becomes wider and wider, embracing all the expanse in front of Jesus, and fades away farther and farther: a path of light which seems to be coming towards Jesus from the end of the world, along the canal, finishing in the basin of the dockyard. And a little white boat is coming along that path. It is proceeding without leaving any trace on the liquid path, as the water becomes smooth again after it passes... It comes up the canal... It is now in the silent dockyard... It draws closer and stops. And three shadows land from it. A robust man, a woman and between them a slender figure. They direct their steps towards the house of the rope-maker.

426. 12 <sup>12</sup>Jesus stands up and goes to meet them. «Peace to you. Whom are you looking for? »

«For You, Master» says Lydia unveiling her face and coming forward alone. And she goes on: «Claudia has fulfilled Your de-

sire because it was a just and completely moral matter. That is the girl. Valeria will take her later as a nurse for little Fausta. In the meantime she asks You to keep her, or, better still, to entrust her to Your Mother or to the mother of Your relatives. She is completely pagan. Nay, more than pagan. The master who brought her up, put *absolutely nothing* into her. She knows nothing about Olympus or anything else. She has only a holy terror of men, because life was revealed to her in all its brutality only a few hours ago... »

«Oh! How sad! Too late? »

«No, not from a material point of view... But he was preparing her for his... let us say: sacrilege. And the girl is terrified... Claudia had to leave her with that satyr while dinner lasted, as she intended to take action when wine had impaired his capability of pondering. I need not remind You that if man is always lewd in his sensual love affairs, he is much more so when he is drunk... But only then he is a laughing-stock who can be urged by force and despoiled of his treasure. And Claudia took advantage of the situation. Ennius wants to go back to Italy, whence he was sent away as he had fallen out of favour... Claudia promised his return in exchange for the girl. Ennius swallowed the bait... But tomorrow, when he is sober, he will rebel, will look for her, he will cause an uproar. It is true that tomorrow Claudia will have the means to silence him. »

«Violence? No!... »

«Oh! violence used for a good purpose is useful! But it will not be used... Only Pilate, still stunned by the quantity of wine he drank this evening, will sign the order for Ennius to go and report to Rome... Ha! Ha!... And he will leave with the first military ship. But in the meanwhile... it is wise for the girl to be elsewhere, lest Pilate should repent and revoke the order... He is so uncertain! And it is better for the girl to forget, if she can, human filth. <sup>13</sup>Oh! Master!... We went to the dinner for that purpose... <sup>426. 13</sup> But how were we able to go to such orgies up to a few months ago, without feeling sick? We ran away as soon as we achieved our purpose... Our husbands are there just now emulating brutes... How disgusting, Master!... And we have to receive them after they... »

«Be austere and patient. You will improve your husbands

through your exemplary conduct. »

«Oh! it is not possible!... You do not know... » The woman weeps more out of scorn than sorrow. Jesus sighs. Lydia resumes: «Claudia asked me to tell You that she did this to prove to You that she reveres You as the Only Man Who deserves veneration. And she wants me to inform You that she thanks You for teaching her the value of a soul and of purity. She will never forget that. Do You want to see the girl? »

«Yes. And who is the man? »

«The dumb Numidian whom Claudia employs in the most secret matters. There is no danger of delation... He has no tongue... »

As in the afternoon Jesus repeats: «Poor wretch! » But even now He does not work a miracle.

<sup>426. 14</sup> <sup>14</sup>Lydia goes and takes the girl by the hand and almost drags her before Jesus. She explains: «She knows few Latin words and even fewer Judaeen... A little wild animal... Just an object of pleasure. » And she says to the girl: «Don't be afraid. Say "thanks" to Him. It is He Who saved you... Kneel down. Kiss His feet. Cheer up! Do not tremble!... Forgive her, Master! She is terrified by the last caresses of drunken Ennius... »

«Poor girl! » says Jesus laying His hand on the veiled head of the girl. «Be not afraid! I will take you to My Mother, for some time. To a Mother, do you understand? And you will have so many brothers around you... Be not afraid, My dear daughter! »

What is there in Jesus' voice and looks? Everything: peace, confidence, purity, holy love. The girl perceives that, she throws back her mantle with hood to look at Him better, and the slender figure of a girl hardly at the threshold of puberty, almost still a little child, somewhat immature in comeliness, innocent looking, appears in a dress too wide for her...

«She was half-naked... I put on her the first garments I found, and I put some also in her sack... » explains Lydia.

«A little girl! » says Jesus compassionately. And stretching out His hand towards her, He asks: «Do you want to come with Me, without any fear? »

«Yes, sir. »

«No. I am not your owner. Call Me: Master. »

«Yes, Master» says the girl with more confidence and a tim-

id smile replaces the expression of fear previously visible on her very pale face.

«Are you capable of walking a long distance? »

«Yes, Master. »

«Then you will rest at My Mother's, in My house, awaiting Fausta... a little girl of whom you will be very fond... Are you pleased? »

«Oh! Yes!... » and the girl confidently raises her clear grey-blue eyes, which are most beautiful between her golden eye-brows and she dares to ask: «No more that master? » and a flash of terror upsets her once again.

«Never again» Jesus promises once more laying His hand again on the girl's thick hair of the shade of blond honey.

«Goodbye, Master. In a few days' time we shall be on the lake as well. Perhaps we shall meet again. Pray for the poor Roman ladies. »

«Goodbye, Lydia. Tell Claudia that these are the conquests which I expect, and nothing else. Come, child. We are leaving at once... » And holding her by the hand He looks in at the door of the storeroom calling the apostles.

While the boat, without leaving any trace of its voyage sails back to the open sea, Jesus and the apostles, with the girl wrapped in a mantle in the middle of the group, go towards the country through narrow desert streets of the outskirts...

#### **427. Aurea Galla, educated by Bartholomew and then sent to Nazareth.**

2<sup>nd</sup> May 1946.

<sup>1</sup>Summer dawns are so early that the time between the setting of the moon and daybreak is short. So that, although they have walked very quickly, at the darkest hour of the night they are still in the neighbourhood of the town of Caesarea, and a branch of thorn-bush which they have lit, does not give sufficient light. They are compelled to stop for some time, also because the girl, who is not accustomed to walking by night, often stumbles over stones half buried in the dust.

«It is better to stop for a little while. The girl cannot see and

she is tired» says Jesus.

«No, I can go on... Let us go far, far away... He may come. We passed here to go to that house» says the girl with chattering teeth, mixing Hebrew and Latin in a new language to make herself understood.

«We will go behind those trees and nobody will see us. Do not be afraid» Jesus replies to her.

«Yes, be not afraid. That... Roman is dead drunk under the table by now... » says Bartholomew to reassure her.

«And you are with us. And we love you! We will not let anybody hurt you. I say! We are twelve strong men... » says Peter, who is little taller than she is, but as sturdy as she is lean, and as burnt by the sun as she is snow-white, a poor flower brought up in the shade so that she might be more exciting and valuable.

«You are a little sister. And brothers defend their sisters... » says John.

The girl, at the last flash of light of the improvised torch, looks at her consolors with her clear iron-grey eyes, lightly tinged with blue, two limpid eyes still shining with the tears shed in the moment of terror shortly before... She is suspicious. And yet she trusts them. And together with the others she crosses the dry rivulet beyond the road to enter an estate at the end of which there is a thick orchard.

427. 2 <sup>2</sup>They sit down in the dark, waiting. The men perhaps would like to sleep. But every noise makes the girl moan and the gallop of a horse causes her to cling convulsively to the neck of Bartholomew, who, perhaps because he is old, inspires confidence and trust. It is thus impossible to sleep.

«Don't be afraid! When one is with Jesus, nothing harmful happens anymore» says Bartholomew.

«Why? » asks the girl trembling and still clinging to the apostle's «Because Jesus is God on the Earth, and God is stronger than men. »

«God? What is God? »

«Poor creature! How have they brought you up? Have they not taught you anything? »

«To keep my skin white, my hair shiny, to obey masters... to always say yes... But I could not say yes to the Roman... he was ugly and he frightened me... He frightened me all day long... He

was always there... at the bath, when I was getting dressed... those eyes... and hands... oh!... And who does not say “yes” gets beaten... »

«You will not be beaten. Neither the Roman nor his hands are here any longer... There is peace... » Jesus replies to her.

And the others remark: «It is horrible! Treated like valuable animals, no better than animals! Worse!... Because an animal knows at least that they teach it to plough, to have a saddle on and a bit, because that is its task. But this girl was thrown there without knowing anything!... »

«If I had known I would have thrown myself into the sea. He had said: “I will make you happy”... »

«And he did make you happy. But in a way that he had never imagined. Happy for the Earth and for Heaven. Because to know Jesus is happiness » says the Zealot.

<sup>3</sup>There is silence: everybody is meditating on the horrors of <sup>427. 3</sup> the world. Then, in a low voice, the girl asks Bartholomew: «Will you tell me what is God? And why He is God? Because He is good and handsome? »

«God... How can one teach you, since you are completely devoid of religious ideas? »

«Religious? What is it? »

«Most High Wisdom! I am like one who is getting drowned in a deep sea! What shall I do in front of this abyss? »

«What seems so difficult to you, Bartholomew, is so simple. It is an abyss, but an empty one. And you can fill it up with the Truth. It is worse when the abyss is full of filth, poison, snakes... Speak with simplicity, as you would speak to a baby. And she will understand you better than an adult would. »

«Oh! Master! But could You not do it? »

«I could. But the girl will accept the words of one like her more easily than she would listen to My words of God. And in any case... You will have to face such abysses in future, and fill them with Me. After all, you must learn to do so. »

«That is true! I will try. Listen, girl... Do you remember your mother? »

«Yes, sir. Flowers have bloomed for seven years without her. But before that I was with her. »

«All right. And do you remember her? Do you love her? »



«Oh! » a sob joined to her exclamation says everything.

«Don't weep, poor creature... Listen... The love you feel for your mother... »

«... and my father... and my little brothers... » says the girl sobbing.

«Yes... for your family, the love for your family, your thoughts for it, your desire to go back to it... »

«Never again!... »

«Who knows!... All that is something which can be called the religion of the family. So religions, religious ideas, are the love, the thought, the desire to go where He or they are, in whom we believe, whom we love and desire. »

«Ah! If I believe in that God there, I will have a religion... It is easy! »

«Well. What is easy? To have a religion or to believe in that God there? »

«Both. Because it is easy to believe in a good God like that one there. The Roman mentioned so many of them and swore... He used to say: "by goddess Venus! ", "by god Cupid". But they could not be good gods because he did things which were not good, while mentioning them. »

«The girl is not stupid» remarks Peter in a low voice.

427. 4 «But I still do not know what is God. I see Him a man like you... So God is a man. And how can one tell? In what is He stronger than everybody? He has neither swords nor servants... »

«Master, help me... »

«No, Nathanael! You are doing so well... »

«You are saying so out of kindness... However, let us see how we can proceed. Listen, girl... God is not a man. He is like a light, a look, a sound, so big that He fills the sky and the earth illuminating everything, He sees everything, directs everything and gives orders to everything... »

«Also to the Roman? Then He is not a good God. I am afraid! »

«God is good and gives good orders, and He had ordered men not to make war, not to make slaves, to leave little girls to their mothers and not to frighten them. But men do not always listen to the orders of God. »

«But you do... »

«Yes, I do. »

«But if He is stronger than anybody else, why does He not make men obey Him? And how can He speak if He is not a man? »

«God... oh! Master!... »

«Go on, Bartholomai. You are so wise a teacher, you can express the most sublime thoughts with so much simplicity, and you are afraid? Do you not know that the Holy Spirit is on the lips of those who teach Justice? »

«It seems so easy when we listen to You... and all Your words are in here... But to draw them out when we have to do what You do!... Oh! misery of us poor men! What worthless teachers we are! »

«To acknowledge your worthlessness is to predispose your spirits to the teaching of the Paraclete Spirit... »

«All right. Listen, girl. God is strong, very strong, stronger than Caesar, than all men put together with their armies and war-machines. But He is not a cruel master who makes people always say yes, under pain of the lash if one does not say so. God is a father. Did your father love you? »

«So much! He named me Aurea Galla because gold is precious and Gaul is our fatherland, and he used to say that I was dearer to him than the gold he had once possessed and than our fatherland... »

«Did your father beat you? »

«No. Never. Even if I was naughty he used to say to me: “My poor daughter!” and he wept... »

«There you are! That is what God does. He is a father and He weeps if we are bad, but He does not compel us to obey Him. But those who are bad will be punished one day with horrible tortures... »

«Oh! lovely! The master who took me away from my mother and took me to the sland and the Roman in tortures! And will I see them? »

«You will be near God and you will see, if you believe in Him and you are good. But to be good you must not hate even the Roman. »

«No? How can I do that?!... »

«Praying for him or... »

«What is to pray? »

«It is to speak to God telling Him what we want... »

«But I want a dreadful death for my masters! » says the girl with wild vehemence.

«No, you must not. Jesus will not love you if you say so... »

«Why? »

«Because we must not hate those who injured us. »

«But I cannot love them... »

427. 5 «Forget them for the time being... Try to forget them. Later, when you know more about God, you will pray for them... <sup>5</sup>So we were saying that God is powerful but He leaves His children free. »

«Am I a child of God? Have I two fathers? How many sons has He? »

«All men are children of God, because He made them all. See the stars up there? He made them. And these plants? He made them. And the earth on which we are sitting, and that bird which is singing and the sea which is so big, everything and all men. And men are His children more than anything else, as they are His children because of that thing which is called soul and which is light, sound, look, not as big as His, which fill Heaven and Earth completely, but are beautiful and they never die as He never dies. »

«Where is the soul? Have I got one? »

«Yes and it is in your heart, and it is that thing that made you understand that the Roman was bad, and that certainly will not make you wish to be like him. Is that right? »

«Yes... » The girl ponders after her uncertain yes... She then says with confidence: «Yes! It was like a voice within me and a need to have help... and with another voice, but that one was mine, I called my mother... because I did not know that there was God, that there was Jesus... If I had known, I would have called Him with that voice which I had within me... »

«You have understood well, child, and you will grow in Light. I am telling you. Believe in the true God, listen to the voice of your soul, devoid of acquired wisdom, but devoid also of evil will, and you will have a Father in God, and in death, which is the passage from the Earth to Heaven for those who believe in the true God and are good, you will have a place in Heaven, near your Lord » says Jesus laying His hand on the head of the girl, who changes position and kneels down saying:

«Near You. It is nice to be with You. Do not part from me, Jesus. I now know who You are and I prostrate myself. At Caesarea I was afraid to do so... But You seemed a man to me. I now know that You are a God hidden in a man and You are a Father and Protector to me. »

«And Saviour, Aurea Galla. »

«And Saviour. You saved me. »

«And I will save you even more. You will have a new name... »

«Are You going to deprive me of the name which my father gave me? The master on the island called me Aurea Quintillia, because they divided us according to complexion and number and I was the fifth blonde... But why do You not leave me the name given to me by my father? »

«I am not taking it off you. But you will have in addition to your old name, a new one, the eternal one. »

«Which? »

«Christian. Because the Christ saved you. <sup>427. 6</sup>But it is dawning. Let us go... See, Nathanael, it is easy to speak of God to empty abysses... You spoke very well. The girl will improve quickly in Truth... Aurea, go ahead with My brothers... »

The girl obeys but timidly. She would prefer to remain with Bartholomew, who understands and promises: «I am coming at once, too. Go, be obedient... » And when he is with Jesus, Peter, Simon and Matthew, he remarks: «It's a pity that Valeria will have her. She is always a heathen... »

«I cannot impose her on Lazarus... »

«There is Nike, Master» suggests Matthew.

«And Eliza... » says Peter.

«And Johanna... She is a friend of Valeria and Valeria would cede the girl to her willingly. She would be in a good home» says the Zealot.

Jesus is pensive and silent...

«You will decide... I am going to join the girl, as she is always turning around. She trusts me because I am old... I would keep her... one daughter more... But she is not from Israel... » and he goes away, the good but too Israelite Nathanael.

Jesus looks at him depart and shakes His head.

«Why that gesture, Master? » asks the Zealot.

«Because... it grieves Me to see that wise people are also

slaves to prejudice... »

«However... let us keep this to ourselves... Bartholomew is right... and in actual fact... You should provide... Remember Syntyche and John... Don't let the same thing happen... Send her to Syntyche... » says Peter who is afraid of trouble in case the heathen girl should stay with them.

«John will not live long... Syntyche is not yet mature enough to be the teacher of a girl like this one... It is not a suitable place... »

«And yet You must not keep her. Consider that Judas will soon be with us. And Judas, Master, allow me to tell You, is a lustful man and a... one who is inclined to speak to gain some profit... and he has too many friends among the Pharisees... » insists the Zealot.

«That's it! Simon is right! Just what I was thinking! » exclaims Peter. «Do as he says, Master!... »

Jesus ponders but is silent... He then says: «Let us pray! And the Father will help us... » and, at the rear of the others, they pray fervently.

427.7 <sup>7</sup>Dawn is breaking... They pass by a village and resume walking in the country... The sun is becoming warmer and warmer. They stop to eat in the shade of a huge walnut-tree.

«Are you tired? » Jesus asks the girl who is eating with no relish. «Tell Me and we will stop. »

«No, no. Let us go... »

«We have asked her several times. But she always says no... » says James of Alphaeus.

«I can go on, I am fit! Let us go far away... »

They resume their journey. But Aurea remembers something. «I have a purse. The ladies said to me: “You will give it when you are near the mountains”. The mountains are here and I am giving it. » And she rummages in the sack where Livia put some clothes for her... She takes out the purse and gives it to Jesus.

«Their offerings... They did not want to be thanked. They are better than many among us... Take it, Matthew. And keep this money. It will be used as secret alms. »

«Shall I not tell Judas of Kerioth? »

«No. »

«He will see the girl... »

Jesus does not reply... They set out again, but they proceed with difficulty because of the intense heat, the dust and dazzling light. Then they begin to climb the first ramifications of Mount Carmel, I think. Although it is more shady and cooler here, Aurea walks slowly and often stumbles.

Bartholomew goes back to the Master. «Master, the girl is feverish and exhausted. What shall we do? »

They consult. Should they stop? Or proceed carrying her? They are undecided. At last they decide that they must at least reach the road to Sicaminon to ask assistance of some wayfarer on horseback or in a wagon. And they would like to carry the girl in their arms, but she is heroic in her will to go farther away and keeps repeating: «I can walk, I am fit! » and wants to proceed by herself. She is flushed, her eyes are feverish and she is really exhausted. But she does not give up... She walks slowly, agreeing to be supported by Bartholomew and Philip... But she proceeds... They are all really tired. But they realize that they must go on and they do so...

They are on the top of the hill. There is the opposite slope... The plain of Esdraelon is down there, and beyond it the hills among which is Nazareth...

«If we do not find anybody, we will stop at the peasants... » says Jesus...

<sup>8</sup>They go on... Almost down on the plain they see a group of disciples. There is Isaac and John of Ephesus with his mother, and Abel of Bethlehem with his mother, and other disciples whose names I do not know. For the women there is a rustic cart drawn by a strong little mule. There are also two shepherds, Daniel and Benjamin, Joseph the boatman and others.

«It is Providence helping us! » exclaims Jesus and He tells everybody to stop while He goes to speak to the disciples and to the two women in particular.

He takes them aside with Isaac and tells them part of Aurea's adventure: «We took her away from a lustful master... I would like to take her to Nazareth to cure her because she is suffering from fear and exhaustion. But I have no vehicle. Where were you going? »

«To Bethlehem in Galilee, to Myrtha's. It is impossible to stand the heat in the plain» replies Isaac.

«Go to Nazareth first, I ask you to do so out of charity. Take the girl to My Mother and tell Her that I will be with Her in two or three days' time. The girl has a temperature, so pay no attention to her raving. I will tell you later... »

«Yes, Master. As You wish. We will leave at once. Poor creature! Did he thrash her? » ask the three.

«He wanted to profane her. »

«Oh!... How old is she? »

«About thirteen... »

«The coward! The lewd rogue! But we will love her. We are true mothers, not because we have been promoted such by merit, is that right, Naomi? »

«Of course it is, Myrtha. Lord, are You keeping her as a disciple? »

«I do not know yet... »

«If You keep her, we are here. I am not going back to Ephesus. I have sent friends to sell everything. I am staying with Myrtha... Remember us for anything the girl needs. You saved our sons and we want to save her. »

«We will see later... »

«Master, the two women disciples are reliable because of their holiness... » says Isaac pleading.

«It does not depend on Me... Pray fervently and do not mention anything to anybody. Have you understood? To anybody. »

«We will hold our tongues. »

«Come with the cart. » And Jesus goes back followed by Isaac who is driving the cart and by the two women.

The girl is lying on the grass seeking refreshment for her high temperature.

«Poor creature! But she will not die, will she? »

«What a beautiful girl! »

«My dear, do not be afraid. I am a mother, you know? Come... Hold her up, Myrtha... She is tottering... Help us, Isaac... Over here where she will not be jolted so much... Put her sack under her head... Let us put our mantles under her... Isaac, wet these linens and we will put them on her forehead... What a temperature, poor child... »

The two women are careful and motherly. Aurea is so overwhelmed by the high fever, that she is almost absent...

Everything is ready... The cart can start... Isaac before using his whip remembers: «Master, if You go to the bridge, You will find Judas of Kerioth. He is waiting for You like a beggar... It was he who told us that You were coming here. Peace to You, Master. We will get to Nazareth during the night! » <sup>427. 9</sup>

«Peace to You, Master» say the women disciples.

«Peace to you! »...

The cart trots away...

«Thanks be to the Lord!... » says Jesus.

«Yes. It is a good thing for the girl and because of Judas... It is better if he knows nothing... »

«Yes. It is better. So much better that I ask your hearts to make a sacrifice. We will part before arriving at Nazareth, and you people of the lake will go to Capernaum with Judas, whereas I with My brothers, Thomas and Simon will go to Nazareth. »

«We will do that, Master. And what will You say to these disciples who are waiting for You? »

«That it was urgent for us to inform My Mother of My arrival... Let us go... » and He joins the disciples who are so happy to be with their Master, that they do not ask any question.

## **428. The parable of the vineyard and of the vine-dresser, that is figures of the soul and free will.**

4<sup>th</sup> May 1946.

<sup>1</sup>«Peace to you, My friends. The Lord is good. He grants us to meet for a brotherly meal. Where were you going? » Jesus asks the ex-shepherds while making His way into a thicket to protect Himself from the sun. <sup>428. 1</sup>

«Some towards the sea, some towards the mountains. We came here together, growing in numbers all the time, as other groups joined us along the road» says Daniel, formerly a shepherd in Lebanon.

«Yes, and the two of us would like to go as far as Great Hermon to nourish our hearts where we pastured our flocks» says his companion Benjamin.

«It is a good idea. I will go to Nazareth for some time, later I will be at Capernaum and Bethsaida until the new moon of Elul.



June I am telling you so that you may find Me in case of need. Sit down and let us put together our victuals to share them according to justice. »

They do so spreading their... wealth on a piece of doth: cakes, cheese, salt fish, olives, some eggs, the first apples... and they share out the food as cheerfully as they had laid it down, after Jesus has offered and blessed it.

How pleased they are with the unhopd-for feast of love! They forget tiredness and heat, lost as they are in the joy of listening to Jesus, Who inquires about what they have done, gives them advice, or tells them what He has done. And although the very warm hour of a sultry day would make one drowsy, they are so interested that no one yields to sleep. And when the meal is over and the few provisions left have been collected and divided into equal parts among them, they move into the thickest part of the nearest brushwood on the hill, and sitting around Jesus in the shade of the trees, they beg Him to tell them a beautiful parable, which they may use as a practical rule of life and teaching.

428. 2     <sup>2</sup>Jesus, Who is sitting facing the plain of Esdraelon, now bare of crops but luxuriant in vineyards and orchards, turns His eyes around looking at the panorama as if He were looking for a subject in what He sees. He smiles. He has found it. He begins with a general question: «The vineyards in this plain are beautiful, are they not? »

«Yes, very beautiful. They are extraordinarily laden with grapes which are maturing. And they are very well kept. That is why they yield so much. »

«They must be plants of great value... » insinuates Jesus. And He concludes: «As the plain is divided into estates belonging to rich Pharisees, they have cultivated it with good plants regardless of expenses. »

«Oh! It would have been of no use to purchase the best plants, if they had not been taken care of continually. I am an expert in the matter because I grow vines in all my property. But if I do not toil hard, that is, if I had not toiled hard at it, as my brothers continue to do now, believe me, Master, I would not be able to offer You at vintage time grapes like those of last year» says a strong man, about forty years old, whom I think I have already seen, but whose name I do not remember.

«You are right, Cleopas. The whole secret to have good fruits is to take care of our property» say another man.

«Good fruits and good profits. Because if the land gave only what one spends on it, it would still be a bad investment of money. The land must yield the fruit of the capital it costs us, plus a profit enabling us to increase our wealth. Because we must consider that a father has to divide his property among his sons. And of one property, be it land or money, he has to make several parts, one for each son, to give each of them what to live on. I do not think that we are to be blamed if we increase our property for the benefit of our children» insists Cleopas.

«You are not, if you achieve it by honest work and in an honest manner. So you say that notwithstanding the good quality of the seedlings planted out, it is necessary to toil hard at them to have a profit? »

«Most certainly so! Before we have the first bunches... Because it takes time, you know! Because one must have patience and work as well while the young shoots have only leaves. And later, when they begin to yield fruit and are strong, one must watch that there are no useless vine-branches, harmful insects and that parasitic grass do not impoverish the soil. And you have to ensure that the vine-branches are not suffocated by the foliage of bushes and bindweed and you have to dig around the foot of the vine forming circles so that dew may penetrate and water may stagnate a little longer than elsewhere nourishing the plant, and you have to spread manure... Hard work! But it is necessary, even if it is unpleasant, because grapes, so sweet, so beautiful, that each bunch seems a collection of precious stones, grow exactly by sucking fetid black manure. It seems impossible but it is so! And one has to thin out the leaves so that the sun may shine on the bunches, and when vintage is over, one has to arrange the vines, tying and pruning them, covering the roots with straw and excrement, to protect them against frost, and also during winter one has to go and see whether the wind or some robber has pulled off the stakes and whether the weather has loosened the withes by which the branches are tied to the stakes... Oh! there is always something to be done until the vine is completely withered... And then there is still work to be done to remove it from the soil, which is to be cleaned out taking away all the roots

so that it may be ready to receive a new plant. And do You know how one must work patiently with a light hand and eyes wide awake extricating the vine-shoots of the dead plants entangled with those of the vines still alive? If one acted foolishly and with a heavy hand, how much damage would be caused! One must be of the trade to know that!... The vines? They are like children! And before a child becomes a man, how hard one has to work to  
428. 3 keep him sound in body and mind!... 3But I am speaking all the time and I am not letting You speak... You promised us a parable... »

«Actually you have already told it. It would be sufficient to apply your conclusion and say that souls are like vines... »

«No, Master! You must speak. I... I have talked nonsense and we cannot do the work of application by ourselves... »

«All right. Listen.

When we had an animal body in the womb of our mother, God created a soul in Heaven to make the future man in His likeness and He infused it into the body which was forming in the womb. And man, when it was time for him to be born, was born with a soul, which up to the age of reason was like land left uncultivated by its master. But when man reached the age of reason, he began to reason and to tell Good from Evil. He then realized that he had a vineyard to cultivate to his liking. And he became aware that he had a vine-dresser in charge of his vineyard: his free will. In fact the freedom to guide himself, which God granted to man, His son, is like an efficient servant, granted by God to man, His son, to assist him to make his vineyard fertile, that is his soul.

If man did not have to work by himself to become rich, to build for himself an eternal future of supernatural prosperity, if he should have had to receive everything from God, what merit would he have in re-creating himself in holiness, after Lucifer had corrupted the initial holiness given gratuitously by God to the first parents? It is already a great gift that the creatures, who had fallen by inheritance of fault, are granted by God the possibility to deserve a reward and become holy, by being born again, through their own will, to the initial nature of perfect creatures, as the Creator had given to Adam and Eve, and to their children, if the first parents had remained free from the original Fault.

Man, who had fallen, must become a chosen man through his free will. Now, what happens to souls? This. Man entrusts his soul to his will, to his free will, which begins to work the vineyard that had remained so far a piece of ground without vines, a good ground, but bare of durable plants. During the first years of its existence only frail grass and caducous flowers had grown on it: the instinctive goodness of a child who is good because he is an angel still unaware of Good and Evil.

You may ask: “How long does he remain such? ”. We generally say: for the first six years. But in actual fact there are precocious reasons\* so that we have children who are responsible for their actions before the age of six. There are children who are responsible for their actions also at three, four years of age, and they are responsible because they know what is Good and what is Evil, and they freely want the former or the latter. The moment a child can tell a good action from a bad one, that child is responsible. Not before. Thus a fool, even if one hundred years old, is irresponsible, but his guardians are responsible in his place and they must lovingly watch over him and his neighbour who may be damaged by the dull-witted or foolish fellow, so that he may not harm himself or other people. But God does not impute any fault to the idiot or fool, because unfortunately they are deprived of reason. But we are talking of intelligent beings, sound in mind and body.

<sup>428. 4</sup> So man entrusts his uncultivated vineyard to his vine-dresser: his free will, which begins to cultivate it. The soul, that is the vineyard, has a voice and makes the free will hear it. It is a supernatural voice nourished by supernatural voices which God never denies souls: the voice of the Guardian, those of the spirits sent by God, the voice of Wisdom, those of the supernatural remembrances which every soul recollects, although man does not have a precise perception of them. And the vineyard speaks to the free will, in a kind and imploring voice, begging it to adorn it with good plants, to be active and wise so that it may not become a wild, sterile, poisonous thicket of thorn-bushes, where serpents and scorpions nest, foxes have their earths and martens and other evil quadrupeds their holes.

\* **precocious reasons**, as explained in 7. 7.

Free will is not always a good cultivator. It does not always watch over the vineyard and defend it with an impassable hedge, that is with firm goodwill, aiming at protecting the soul from robbers, from parasites, from all harmful things, from strong winds which might cause the little flowers of good resolutions to fall off when they have hardly begun to be desired. Oh! what a high strong hedge is required around the heart to save it from evil! How one must watch to ensure that it is not forced, and that no one opens either large gaps through which dissipations may enter, or sly little openings, at its base, through which vipers creep in: the seven capital vices! How necessary it is to hoe, to burn weeds, to prune, to trench, to manure through mortification and take care of one's soul through love for God and for our neighbour. And it is necessary to watch with wide open bright eyes and mind wide awake that the vine-shoots which appeared to be good, do not turn out to be bad, and if that should happen, they are to be extirpated mercilessly. One plant only, but perfect, is better than many useless or noxious ones.

We have hearts, we have therefore vineyards which are always cultivated, in which new vines are planted by an extravagant cultivator who piles up new plants: he wants to do this work and that one, he has ideas, which are not even wicked, then he neglects them and they become evil, they fall on the ground, they degenerate and die... How many virtues perish because they are mingled with sensuality, they are not cultivated, because, in short, free will is not supported by love! How many thieves enter to rob, to tamper with things, to extirpate, because one's conscience falls asleep instead of being vigilant, because one's will loses its strength and becomes corrupted, because one's free will is seduced, and although free, it becomes a slave to Evil. But consider! God made it free and yet free will becomes a slave to passions, to sin, to concupiscence, to Evil in a word. Pride, wrath, avarice, lust, first mixed with, then triumphant over good plants!... A disaster! How much drought there is that parches plants, because people no longer pray, whereas prayer is union with God, and therefore a dew of beneficial juices for the soul! How much frost freezes roots through lack of love for God and our neighbour! How much poorness of soil, because people refuse the manuring of mortification and humbleness! What an in-

extricable tangle of good and bad vine-shoots, because one has not the courage to suffer cutting off what is noxious! That is the state of a soul whose guardian and cultivator is an extravagant free will inclined to Evil.

Whereas the soul whose free will lives in an orderly way - and therefore in submission to the Law given so that man may know what is order, how it is and how it is kept - and is heroically faithful to Good, because Good elevates man and makes him similar to God, whereas Evil makes him brutal and similar to a demon, is a vineyard bedewed with the pure, plentiful useful waters of faith, appropriately shaded by trees of hope, warmed by the sun of charity, controlled by will, matured by mortification, tied with obedience, pruned by strength, guided by justice, watched over by wisdom and conscience. And Grace increases assisted by so much help. Holiness increases and the vineyard becomes a wonderful garden, where God descends for His delight. Providing the vineyard always remains a perfect garden till the death of the creature, God has such work of a willing good free will brought by His angels into the great eternal Garden of Heaven.

You certainly want that lot for yourselves. So watch that the Demon, the World and the Flesh do not seduce your free will and ruin your souls. Watch that there is love in you, but not self-regard, which extinguishes love and puts the soul in the power of various sensualities and disorder. Be vigilant until the end and storms may wet you but not hurt you, and laden with fruit you will go to your Lord for the eternal reward.

I have finished. <sup>5</sup>Now meditate and rest until sunset while I <sup>428. 5</sup> retire to pray. »

«No, Master. We must not delay in setting out to arrive at some house» says Peter.

«Why? There is time until sunset! » say many.

«I am not thinking of sunset or of the Sabbath. I am thinking that within an hour there will be a violent storm. See those tongue-shaped dark clouds which are rising slowly from the mountain ranges of Samaria? And those which are so white and are progressing rapidly from the west? A lower wind is blowing the former, an upper wind the latter. But when they are here above us, the upper wind will yield to sirocco and the dark

clouds, laden with hailstones, will come down and clash with the white ones, laden with lightning, and then you will hear some music! Come on, quick! I am a fisherman and I can read the sky. »

Jesus is the first to obey and they all set off quickly towards the farm-houses in the plain.

428. 6

‘At the bridge they meet Judas who shouts: «Oh! My Master! How much I have suffered without You! Praised be the Lord Who has rewarded my perseverance in waiting for You here! How did things go at Caesarea? »

«Peace to you, Judas» briefly replies Jesus and He adds: «We will speak in the house. Come, a storm is impending. »

In fact gusts of wind begin to raise clouds of dust from the parched roads, the sky becomes overcast with clouds of all shapes and shades, and the air is yellow and lurid... And the first large, warm, sparse drops begin to fall and the first lightning furrows the sky, which is now almost dark...

They begin to run and goaded by the desire not to get drenched to the skin, they arrive at the first house when, amid the roar of a thunderbolt which falls nearby, a deluge of rain and hailstones falls upon the area causing a strong smell of damp earth and of ozone exhaling from the incessant lightning.

They go in and fortunately the house is provided with porches and is inhabited by peasants believing in the Messiah. And with veneration they invite the Master to make Himself at home with His companions «as if He were in His own house. But raise Your hand and disperse the hail, out of pity for our work» they say crowding around Jesus.

Jesus raises His hand and blesses the four cardinal points, and rain only pours from the sky to water orchards, vineyards, meadows and to purify the heavy atmosphere.

«May You be blessed, Lord! » says the head of the family. «Come in, my Lord! »

And while the rain is pelting down, Jesus enters a very large room, a storeroom, and tired as He is, He sits down surrounded by His apostles.

## 429. Judas Iscariot seeking information from the Master.

6<sup>th</sup> May 1946.

<sup>1</sup>It must have continued to rain all the previous day and during the night, because the ground is very damp and the roads are becoming muddy. But to compensate for this the atmosphere is clear, free from dust at all levels. And the sky smiles up there, and looks as fresh and clear after the storm as if it were spring-time, and the earth also smiles, dewy, fresh, clean, with a reminiscence of spring in the serene fresh dawn. And the last drops of rain, held by the entangled foliage or hanging from vine-tendrils shine like diamonds in the sun, while fruits washed by the heavy rain display the hues of their skins, the pastel shades of which are becoming day by day the perfect hues of full maturity. Olives and grapes, still hard and unripe, mingle with the green foliage, but each little olive has a tiny drop hanging from its base, and the compact bunches of grapes are like a network of tiny drops hanging from the stalks of the grapes. 429. 1

«It is pleasant to walk today! » say Peter trampling joyfully on the ground which is not dusty, does not scorch and is not slimy either.

«You seem to breathe purity. But look at the hue of the sky! » Judas Thaddeus replies to him.

«And those apples? That bunch over there, all around that branch. I do not know how it can hold the weight and come out of the mass of fruits with a cluster of leaves? How many colours! The green of the hidden ones is shading into yellow, the others are turning to red, and the two which are more exposed are completely red where the sun shines. They look as if they were covered with sealing wax! » says the Zealot.

And they walk on happily contemplating the beauties of creation until Thaddeus, immediately imitated by Thomas and the others, intones a psalm celebrating the creative glory of God.

<sup>2</sup>Jesus smiles upon hearing them sing so happily and He joins in the chorus with His beautiful voice. But He cannot finish because the Iscariot, while the others continue to sing, approaches Him and says: «Master, while they are busy and inattentive singing, tell me: how did the trip to Caesarea go and what did You do? You have not told me yet... And this is the first moment 429. 2



that we are alone and can speak about it. At first there were our companions and the disciples and the peasants who welcomed us, then our companions and the disciples, now that the disciples have gone ahead of us... I have never been able to ask You... »

«You are greatly interested... But at Caesarea I did not do what I will do in Johanan's estate. I spoke of the Law and of the Kingdom of Heaven. »

«To whom? »

«To the citizens. Near the markets. »

«Ah! Not to the Romans?! Did You not see them? »

«How is it possible to be at Caesarea, the residence of the Proconsul, and not see Romans? »

«I know. But I say... Well... You did not speak to them personally? »

«I repeat: you are greatly interested! »

«No, Master. Simple curiosity. »

«Well. I did speak to the Roman ladies. »

«To Claudia also? What did she say to You? »

«Nothing, because Claudia did not come. Nay, she made Me understand that she does not wish anyone to know that she is in touch with us. »

Jesus lays much stress on the sentence and diligently watches Judas who, although an impudent fellow, changes colour, blushes lightly and then blanches.

But he soon collects himself and says: «She does not want? She no longer esteems You? She is mad. »

«No, she is not mad, She has a well-balanced mind. She can tell and distinguish her duty as a Roman lady from her duty towards herself. And if she procures light and breath for herself, for her soul, by coming towards Light and Purity, as she is a creature who instinctively seeks the Truth and will not rest in the falsehood of paganism, at the same time she does not want to be detrimental to her Fatherland, not even in theory, as she might be by making people think that she sides with a possible competitor of Rome... »

«Oh! but... You are King of the spirit!... »

«But you apostles, although you know that, cannot convince yourselves that it is true. Can you deny that? »

Judas blushes again and then grows pale, he cannot lie and

says: «No! But it is our excessive love that... »

«Even more so who does not know Me, that is Rome, can mis-trust Me as a competitor. Claudia is acting righteously both to-wards God and her Fatherland, by honouring Me as king and master of the spirit, if not as God, and by being loyal to her Fa-therland. And I admire loyal, just, non-obstinate spirits. And I would like My apostles to deserve the praise which I give the heathen woman. »

<sup>3</sup>Judas does not know what to say. He is about to part from the Master. But curiosity goads him again. Rather than curiosity it is the desire to find out how much the Master knows... and he asks: «Did they ask after me? » 429. 3

«Neither after you nor any other apostle. »

«What did you speak about, then? »

«Of chaste life. Of their poet Virgil. You can see that the sub-ject was of no interest to Peter, John or anybody else. »

«But what had that got to do with it? A useless conversa-tion... »

«No. It helped Me to make them consider that a chaste man has a bright intellect and an honest heart. Very interesting for heathen ladies... and not only for them. »

«You are right... I will not keep You further, Master» and he almost runs away to join those who have finished singing and are waiting for the two left behind...

Jesus joins them more slowly and He says: «Let us take that path in the wood. We will shorten the road and will be sheltered from the sun which is already becoming strong. We will also be able to stop in the thick of the wood and eat in peace. »

And they do so going towards north-west, towards Johanan's estate, because I can hear them talk about the peasants of that Pharisee...

<sup>4</sup>Jesus says: «And you will put here the vision of 16<sup>th</sup> June 1944: Jesus, the fallen nest and the Pharisee. » 429. 4

**430. The fallen nest and the cruel scribe.  
The letter and the spirit of the Law.**

16<sup>th</sup> June 1944. Later, 10. 30 a. m.

430. 1

<sup>1</sup>I see Jesus wearing a white tunic with His dark-blue mantle thrown over His shoulder, while He is walking along a woody path. It is woody because there are trees and shrubs on both sides. Narrow tracks cut through the green entanglement, but it is not a solitary place remote from any village, as they often meet other people. I would say that it is the road linking two villages close to each other, running through the fields of the villagers. The country is flat, and mountains can be seen in the distance. I do not know what place it is.

Jesus, Who was speaking to His disciples, stops and listens, looking round, He then takes a little path in the thicket and goes towards a large group of small trees and shrubs. He bends and searches. And He finds. There is a nest in the grass. I do not know whether it was knocked down by a storm, as one would think from the damp soil and the branches still dripping, as is usual after a storm, or whether anybody tampered with it and left it there, not to be caught with the brood in his hands. I do not know. I can only see a small nest interwoven with hay and full of dry leaves, down of plants and wool, among which five little birds, only a few days old, are stirring and chirping: they are reddish, without feathers, rather ugly looking because of their wide open beaks and bulging eyes. High above, on a tree, their parents are screeching desperately.

Jesus picks up the little nest carefully. He holds it in the hollow of one hand and He looks for the spot where it was or where it can be placed safely. He finds a tangle of brambles so compact that it looks like a little basket, and so deep in the bush as to be safe. Without minding the thorns which scratch His arms, after handing the nest to Peter - and the apostle so elderly and stout looks funny with the little nest in his short rough hands - Jesus rolls up His long wide sleeves and works to make the entangled branches more concave and thus safer. It is done. He takes the nest and places it in the bush and secures it by pulling long cylindrical blades of grass which look like very thin reeds. The nest is now safe. Jesus stands aside and smiles. He then gets one

of the apostles, who is carrying his sack across his shoulder, to give Him a piece of bread and He crumbles some on the ground, on a stone. Jesus is now happy. He turns around to go back to the main road while the birds fly down to the rescued nest screeching with joy.

<sup>2</sup>A little group of men is standing on the roadside. Jesus finds them facing Him and looks at them. His smile fades away and His face becomes very severe, I would say sombre, while it was so compassionate when He was picking up the nest and so happy when He had arranged it safely. 430. 2

Jesus stops. And He continues to look at His unexpected witnesses. He seems to be looking at their hearts with their secret thoughts. He cannot go any farther because the group have blocked the path. But He is silent.

But Peter does not keep quiet. «Let the Master pass» he says.

«Be quiet, Nazarene» replies one of the group. «How did your Master take the liberty of going into my wood and do manual labour on the Sabbath? »

Jesus looks straight at him with a strange expression. It is and it is not a smile. And if it is a smile it is not one of approval. Peter is about to reply. But Jesus asks: «Who are you? »

«The landlord of this place. Johanan ben Zaccai. »

«A renowned scribe. For what do you reproach Me? »

«For profaning the Sabbath. »

<sup>3</sup>«Johanan ben Zaccai, do you know Deuteronomy? » 430. 3

«Are you asking me? Me, a true rabbi of Israel? »

«I know what you want to tell Me: that I, as I am not a scribe, but a poor Galilean, cannot be a “rabbi”. But I ask you once again: “Do you know Deuteronomy? ”. »

«Certainly better than You do. »

«To the letter... certainly, if you wish to think so. But do you know it in its true meaning? »

«What is said is said. There is but one meaning. »

«True, there is but one meaning. And it is a meaning of love; or, if you do not want to call it love, of mercy; or if it annoys you to call it so, say: of humanity. And Deuteronomy says\*: “If you see your brother’s sheep or his ox straying, even if they are

\*says, in: *Deuteronomy 22, 1-4. 6-7.*

not close at hand, you must not make off, but you will take them back to him, or you will keep them until he comes for them". It says: "If you see your brother's donkey or ox fall, do not pretend you have not seen, but help him to put it on its feet again". It says: "If in a tree or on the ground you find a nest with the mother bird sitting on the chicks or the eggs, you must not take the mother (because she is sacred to procreation) you may take the chicks only". I saw a nest on the ground and the mother weeping over it. I felt sorry for her because she was a mother. And I gave her chicks back to her. I did not think I was profaning the Sabbath by consoling a mother. We must not let the sheep of our brother go astray, but the Law does not say that it is a sin to put a donkey on its feet again on a Sabbath. It says only that we must have mercy on our brother and humanity for the donkey, a creature of God. I thought that God had created that mother that she might procreate, and that she had obeyed God's command, and that to prevent her from bringing up her offspring was to interfere with her obedience to a divine command. But you do not understand that. You and your friends consider the letter, not the spirit. You and your friends do not consider that you infringe the Sabbath twice, nay, three times, by degrading the divine Word to the pettiness of human mentality, by interfering with a command of God and by lacking in mercy towards your neighbour. In order to injure by means of a reproach, you do not consider *that it is wrong to speak unnecessarily*. This, which is also work, but neither useful, nor necessary, nor good, does not seem a profanation of the Sabbath to you.

430. 4 <sup>4</sup>Johanan ben Zaccai, listen to Me. As today you have no mercy on a blackcap and according to Pharisaic practice you would let her die of grief, and you would let her offspring perish miserably, left at the mercy of asps or wicked people, likewise tomorrow you will have no mercy on a mother and you will make her die a miserable death and you will have her offspring killed, saying that it is right to do so out of respect to *your* law. To *yours*, not to God's. To the law which you and those like you have made to oppress the weak so that you, the strong ones, may triumph. But see. The weak always find a saviour. Whereas the proud, those who are strong according to the law of the world, will be crushed under the weight of their own heavy law. Goodbye, Johanan ben Zaccai.

Remember this hour and mind you do not profane yourself another Sabbath with the satisfaction of a crime committed. »

And Jesus casts a fulminating glance at the irascible old man, whose face is red with anger, and looking down on him, because the scribe is short and stout and Jesus seems a palm-tree compared with him, He passes by walking on the grass, because the scribe does not step aside.

<sup>5</sup>Jesus says:

430. 5

«I wanted to uplift your spirit with a true vision, even if it is not mentioned in the Gospels.

This is the lesson for you: that I have so much mercy on little birds without nests, even if the name instead of being blackcap, is Mary or John. And I take care to give them a nest again, when an event has deprived them of it.

And this is the lesson for everybody. That too many know the words of the Law, still too many although they are few, because everybody ought to know them, but they know the “words” only. They do not live them. That is the error.

Deuteronomy prescribed humane laws, because men in those days, because of their spiritual childhood, were brutal and half-savage. They had to be led by hand along the flowery paths of pity, respect, love for the brother who lost an animal, for the animal which fell, for the bird sitting on eggs, to teach them to rise to higher pity, respect, love. But when I came I perfected the Mosaic rules and I opened wider horizons. The letter was no longer “everything”. The spirit became “everything”. Beyond the little human act for a nest and its inhabitants, it is necessary to consider the secret meaning of My gesture: that I, the Son of the Creator, bowed before the work of the Creator. That brood also is His work.

Oh! *happy those who can see God in everything and serve Him with spirit of reverent love!* And woe to those, who like a snake, cannot raise their heads above their filth and as they cannot sing the praises of God, Who reveals Himself in the work of their brothers, they bite them because of the excess of poison choking them. There are too many who torture the better ones saying, to justify their perversity, that it is right to do so out of respect to the law. *Their* law. Not God’s. But if God cannot stop

their wicked deeds, He can avenge His “little ones”.

And let this be given to those who deserve it. May My vigilant peace be with you. »

### **431. Thomas goes to prepare the meeting of Jesus with the peasants of Johanan.**

6<sup>th</sup> May 1946.

431. 1 <sup>1</sup>After the incident they continue to walk for some time in silence. But when they arrive at a road junction in the country, James of Zebedee says: «Here we are! This road here will take us to Micah’s house... But... are we still going there? That man will certainly be waiting for us in his property in order to ill-treat us... »

«And to prevent You from speaking to the peasants. James is right. Don’t go there » advises the Iscariot.

«They are waiting for Me. I sent word that I am going there. Their hearts are rejoicing. I am the Friend Who is coming to console them... »

«You can go some other time. They will resign themselves» says Judas shrugging his shoulders.

«You do not resign yourself so easily when you are deprived of something for which you hoped. »

«My matters are serious ones. Theirs... »

«And what is more serious or greater than the perfecting and relief of a heart? Everything tries to separate those hearts from peace and hope... And they have but one hope: that of a future life. And they have but one means to go there: My help. No. I will go to see them at the cost of being stoned. »

«No, Brother! No, Lord! » say together the Zealot and James of Alphaeus. «It would only serve to have those poor servants punished. You did not hear him, but Johanan said: “So far I have tolerated the situation, but I will no longer do so. And woe betide the servant who will go to Him or welcome Him. He is a reprobate and a demon. I don’t want corruption in my household”, and he said to a companion: “Even if I have to kill them, I will cure them of their devilish attachment to that cursed man”. »

Jesus lowers His head thinking... and suffering. His grief is

evident... The others are sorry, but what can they do?

<sup>2</sup>The situation is resolved by Thomas' practical serenity: «Let us do this. We will stay here until sunset, in order not to infringe the Sabbath. In the meantime one of us will steal away to the houses and say: "At dead of night, at the fountain outside Sephoris". And we will go there after sunset and wait for them in the thickets at the foot of the mountain on which is Sephoris. The Master will speak to those poor people and comfort them, and at daybreak they will go back to their houses and we will cross over the hill and go to Nazareth. » <sup>431. 2</sup>

«Thomas is right. Bravo Thomas! » say many.

But Philip remarks: «And who will go and warn them? He knows everyone of us and he may see us... »

«Judas of Simon could go. He knows the Pharisees well... » says Andrew innocently.

«What are you trying to insinuate? » replies Judas aggressively.

«I? Nothing. I am saying that you know them because you were for such a long time at the Temple and you have good friends there. You always boast about them. They will do no harm to a friend... » says meek Andrew.

«Don't you believe that, in no way. Let no one believe it. If we were still protected by Claudia, perhaps... I could... but not now. Because now, in short, she has disengaged herself, hasn't she, Master? »

«Claudia continues to admire the Wise Man. She has done nothing else or more than that. From such admiration she may pass to believe in the true God. But only the illusion of an excited mind could believe that she nourished other feelings for Me. And if she did, I would not want them. I can accept their heathenism, because I hope to change it into Christian faith. I cannot accept what would be idolatry on their side: that is, the adoration of a poor idol Man on a poor human throne. » Jesus says so calmly, as if He were speaking to everyone lecturing them. But He is so resolute as to leave no doubt about His intention and His decision to repress every possible deviation in that direction among His apostles.

<sup>3</sup>No one therefore replies in regards to human regality, but they ask: «So what are we going to do for the peasants? » <sup>431. 3</sup>



«I will go. I made the proposal, I will go, if the Master allows me. The Pharisees will certainly not eat me... » says Thomas.

«You may go. And may your charity be blessed. »

«Oh! It is such a trifle, Master! »

«It is such a great thing, Thomas. You understand the desires of your brothers: Jesus and the peasants, and you feel sorry for them. And your Brother in the flesh blesses you also on their behalf » says Jesus laying a hand on the lowered head of Thomas, who is deeply moved and whispers: «I... Your... brother?! It is too great an honour, my Lord. I Your servant, You my God... That yes... I am going. »

«Are you going alone? I will come, too! » say Thaddeus and Peter.

«No. You are too impetuous. I can turn everything into laughter... the best means to disarm certain... characters. You become furious at once... I will go by myself. »

«I will come» say John and Andrew.

«Yes! One of you, yes, also one like Simon Zealot or James of Alphaeus. »

«No. I never react. I keep quiet and I act» insists Andrew.

«Come» and they go away in one direction while Jesus and those left with Him go in the other...

### **432. With the peasants of Johanan at Sephoris.**

8<sup>th</sup> May 1946.

432. 1 <sup>1</sup>«Will they come? » Matthew asks his companions who are sat in a wood of holm-oaks in the lower slopes of the hill on which Sephoris rises. The Esdraelon plain is no longer visible, as it is beyond the hill where they are. But there is a much smaller plain between this hill and those in the region of Nazareth and which can be seen clearly in the bright moonlight.

«They promised. And they will come» replies Andrew.

«At least some of them. They were going to leave half-way through the first watch and they will be here at the beginning of the second one» says Thomas.

«Later» says Thaddeus.

«It took us less than three hours» objects Andrew.

«We are men and in full strength. They are tired and will have women with them» replies Thaddeus again.

«Provided their master does not find out! » says Matthew with a sigh.

«There is no danger. He left for Jezreel, where he will be the guest of a friend. <sup>432. 2</sup>The superintendent is there. But he is coming as well, because he does not hate the Master» says Thomas.

«Will that man be sincere? » asks Philip.

«Yes, because there is no reason why he should not be. »

«Well! To get into his master's good graces and... »

«No, Philip. When vintage time is over he will be dismissed by Johanan just because he does not hate the Master» replies Andrew.

«Who told you? » several of them ask.

«He himself and the peasants... each on his own account. And when two people of different categories agree in saying the same thing, it means that what they say is true. The peasants were weeping because the superintendent is leaving. He was very humane. And he said to us: "I am a man and not a clay puppet. Last year he said to me: 'Honour the Master, approach Him, become one of His believers'. I obeyed. Now he says to me: 'Woe betide you if you love my enemy and if you allow the servants to love Him. I do not want my land to be anathematised by receiving that cursed man'. But now that I know Him, how can I consider that order just? I said to the master: 'Last year you spoke differently, but He is always the same'. He beat me a first time. I said: 'I am not a slave, and even if I were, you would not be in possession of my thought. My thought judges Him to be holy Who you say is cursed'. He beat me again. This morning he said to me: "The anathema of Israel is in my property. Woe to you if you disobey my order. You will no longer be my servant'. I replied: 'You are right. I will no longer be your servant. Look for another one who has a heart like yours and who is as rapacious about your property as you are about other people's souls'. And he threw me on the ground and struck me... But the work of the year will soon be over and at the new moon of Tishri I will be free. I am only sorry for these... » and he pointed at the peasants» says Thomas.

«But where did you see him?... »

«In the wood, as if we were highwaymen. Micah, to whom we had spoken, had informed him and he came while he was still bleeding and servants and maid-servants came a few at a time... » says Andrew.

432. 3     <sup>3</sup>«H'm! so Judas was right! He is familiar with the mood of the Pharisee... » remarks Bartholomew.

«Judas knows too many things!... » says James of Zebedee.

«Be quiet! He may hear you! » advises Matthew.

«No. He has gone away saying that he is sleepy and has a headache... » replies James.

«Moon! Moon in the sky and moon in his head. It is so: he is more changeable than the wind» pronounces Peter who has been silent so far.

«Yes! A real misfortune among us! » says Bartholomew with a sigh.

«No, don't say that! Not a misfortune! On the contrary: a way to sanctify oneself... » says the Zealot.

«Or to damn oneself, because he makes one lose one's virtues... » says Thaddeus resolutely.

«He is a poor wretch! » remarks Andrew sadly.

432. 4     <sup>4</sup>There is silence. Then Peter asks: «But is the Master still praying? »

«No. While you were dozing He passed by and joined John and his brother James, placed as sentries on the road. He wants to be with the poor peasants at once. Perhaps it is the last time He will see them» replies the Zealot.

«Why the last time? Why? Don't say that. It seems to bring bad luck! » says Thaddeus excitedly.

«Because you can see it... We are persecuted more and more... I don't know what we will do in future... »

«Simon is right... Eh! it will be lovely to be all spiritual... But... if we had been permitted to have a little... humanity... a pinch of protection from Claudia would have done no harm» says Matthew.

«No. It is better to be alone... and above all to be free from contacts with the heathens. I... do not approve of them» says Bartholomew resolutely.

«Not much myself... But... the Master says that His Doctrine must spread all over the world. And that we have to do that... We

have to sow His words everywhere... So we will have to adapt ourselves to approaching Gentiles and idolaters... » says Thad-deus.

«Impure people. It seems to me something sacrilegious. Wisdom to pigs!... »

«They have a soul, too, Nathanael! You felt sorry for the girl yesterday... »

«Because... she is... a mere nothing which is to be perfected. She is like a new-born baby... But the others!... And she is not a Roman... »

«Do you think that the Gauls are not idolaters? They have their cruel gods as well. You will find out if you have to go and convert them!... » says the Zealot who is more learned than the others, I would say, in a cosmopolitan manner.

«But she does not belong to the race of those who are profaning Israel. I will never preach to the enemies of Israel, neither to the present nor to the old ones. »

«Then... you will have to go very far away, among the hyperboreans, because... it does not seem so, but Israel has had a taste of all the neighbouring peoples... » says Thomas.

«I will go far away... <sup>432. 5</sup>But here is the Master. Let us go and meet Him. How many people! They have all come! Even the children... »

«The Master will be happy... »

They join the Master Who is advancing with difficulty on the meadow, pressed as He is by so many surrounding Him.

«Is Judas still absent? » asks Jesus.

«Yes, Master. But we will call him, if You wish so... »

«It is not necessary. My voice will reach him where he is. And his free conscience speaks to him with *its* own voice. It is not necessary for you to add your voices and force a will. Come, let us sit down here with our brothers. And forgive Me if I have not been able to break the bread with you in a feast of love. »

They sit in a circle with Jesus in the centre, and Jesus wants around Him all the children who press against Him affectionately and full of confidence.

«Bless them, Lord! That they may see what we long to, see: freedom to love You! » shouts a woman.

«Yes. They are depriving us also of that. They do not want

Your words to be impressed in our souls. And now by forbidding You to come, they are preventing us from meeting... and we will have no more holy words! » moans an old man.

«If we are abandoned thus, we will become sinners. You taught us to forgive... You gave us so much love that we could bear our master and his ill-will... But now... » says a young man. I cannot see their faces very well, so I do not know exactly who is speaking. I base myself on the tones of the voices.

«Do not weep. I will see that you do not lack My word. I will come again, as long as I can... »

«No, Master and Lord. He is wicked and so are his friends. They could injure You and because of us. We will make the sacrifice of losing You, but do not give us the sorrow of having to say: “He was caught because of us”. »

«Yes, save Yourself, Master. »

432. 6 «Do not be afraid. ‘We read\* in Jeremiah how the prophet told his secretary Baruch to write what the Lord dictated to him and to go and read what he had written to those who had gathered in the house of the Lord, and to read it in place of the prophet who was in prison and could not go there. I will do the same. Among My apostles and disciples I have many faithful Baruchs. They will come and tell you the word of the Lord and your souls will not perish. And I will not be caught through your fault, because the Most High God will conceal Me from their eyes until the hour when the King of Israel is to be shown to the crowds so that the whole world may know Him. And do not be afraid either of losing the words which are in you. We read, always in Jeremiah, that also after the destruction of the scroll by Jehoiakim, king of Judah, who by burning the scroll hoped to destroy the eternal truthful words, what God had dictated remained, because the Lord gave this order to the prophet: “Take another scroll and write down all the words that were written on the scroll burnt by the king”. And Jeremiah gave a scroll to Baruch, a scroll without any writing, and he dictated once again to his secretary the eternal words and he added some more as well to complete the previous ones, because the Lord mends the damages caused by men when such amends are useful to souls, and

\* We read, in: *Jeremiah 36.*

He does not allow hatred to cancel the work of love. Well, even if I, comparing Myself to a scroll full of holy verities, should be destroyed, do you think that the Lord would let you perish without the help of other scrolls, which will contain My words and those of My witnesses telling you what I cannot tell you, as I am a prisoner of Violence and destroyed by it? And do you think that what is impressed in the scrolls of your hearts can be cancelled with the passing of time on the words? No. The angel of the Lord will repeat those words to you, keeping them fresh in your souls eager for Wisdom. Not only. But he will explain them to you and you will be wise through the word of your Master. You seal your love for Me by means of the seal of sorrow. Can what resists persecution perish? It cannot. I am telling you. God's gifts cannot be cancelled. Sin only can cancel them. <sup>432. 7</sup>But you certainly do not wish to commit sin, do you, My friends? »

«No, Lord. It would mean losing You in the next life» reply many.

«But they will make us sin. He has ordered us not to leave his fields anymore on Sabbaths... and there will be no more Passovers for us. So we will commit sin... » say others.

«No. You will not sin. He will. He only, as he does violence to the right of God and of His children to embrace and love one another in sweet conversation of love and teaching on the day of the Lord. »

«But he makes amends through many fasting-days and offerings. We cannot, because the food we get is already too scanty as compared with the work we do, and we have nothing to offer... We are poor... »

«You offer what is appreciated by God: your hearts. Isaiah speaking\* to false penitents in the name of God says: "Look, on your fast-days your will is revealed and you oppress your debtors. Look, you fast to quarrel and squabble and fight cruelly. Do not fast anymore as you have done so far, if you want to make your voice heard on high. Is that the sort of fast that pleases Me? That man for one day should just afflict his soul and torment his body and lie down on ashes? Is that what you call fasting, a day acceptable to the Lord? The fasting I prefer is a different

\* Isaiah speaking, in: *Isaiah 58, 3-7.*

one. Break the chains of sin, undo oppressive obligations, let the oppressed go free, remove all burdens. Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the poor and pilgrims, clothe the naked and do not despise your neighbour". But Johanan does not do that. You are his creditors because of the work you do for him making him rich, and he treats you worse than defaulting debtors and he raises his voice to threaten you and his hand to strike you. He is not merciful and he despises you because you are servants. But a servant is a man just like his master, and if it is his duty to serve, it is also his right to receive what is necessary to a man, with regards both to his body and to his spirit. The Sabbath is not honoured even if a man spends it in the synagogue, if on the same day the man who keeps it puts chains on his brothers and gives them aloë to drink. Keep your Sabbaths talking with one another of the Lord, and the Lord will be among you. Forgive and the Lord will glorify you.

432. 8 <sup>8</sup>I am the Good Shepherd and I have mercy on all My sheep. But I certainly love with particular fondness those which idolatrous shepherds have beaten, so that they may go away from My way. For them, more than for any other, I have come. Because your Father and Mine ordered Me: "Pasture these sheep for slaughter, killed mercilessly by their masters who have sold them saying: 'We have become rich!' and on which the shepherds had no mercy". Well, I will pasture the flock for slaughter, o poor people of the herd, forsaking to their wickedness those who distress you and afflict the Father Who suffers in His children. I will stretch out My hand to the little ones among the children of God and I will draw them to Me, so that they may have My glory. The Lord promises that through the lips of the prophets who celebrate My pity and power as Shepherd. And I promise directly you who love Me. I will provide for My flock. To those who accuse good sheep of making the water turbid or spoiling the pasture to come to Me, I will say: "Go away. You are the ones who cause the springs of My children to dry up and their Pastures to parch. But I have led and will lead them to other pastures; to the pastures which satisfy the spirit. I will leave you a pasture for your big bellies, I will leave you the bitter spring which you made well up and I will go with My sheep, separating the true sheep of God from the false ones, and My lambs will no longer be distressed by

anything, but they will exult forever in the pastures of Heaven”.

Persevere, My beloved children! Be patient a little longer, as I am. Be faithful, doing what your unfair master allows you to do. And God will judge that you have done everything and will reward you for everything. Do not hate, even if everything urges and teaches you to hate. Have faith in God. See: Jonah was relieved of his suffering and Jabez was taken towards love. And what the Lord did to the old man and to the boy, He will do to you: partly in this life, completely in the next one.

¶I have but money to give you to make your material situation <sup>432. 9</sup> less painful. I will give it to you. Give it to them, Matthew, so that they may share it. It is much, but always too little for you who are so many and so poor. But I have nothing else... materially. But I have My love, and the power of being the Son of the Father, so that I can ask infinite supernatural treasures for you, to comfort your grief and enlighten your darkness. Oh! your sad life can be made bright by God! By Him alone!... And I say: “Father, I pray You for them. I do not pray You for the happy and rich people in the world. But I pray for these, who have but You and Me. Let them rise so high in the ways of the spirit, that they may find all comfort in Our love, and let us give Ourselves to them with love, with all our infinite love, to fill their days and their work with peace, serenity, courage, with supernatural peace, serenity and strength, so that, as if they were estranged from the world through Our love, they may endure their calvary and after their death, they may have You, Us, infinite beatitude”. »

Jesus has prayed standing up, slowly freeing Himself from the children who had fallen asleep leaning against Him. And He is solemn and kind in His prayer.

He now lowers His eyes and says: «I am going. You must go now, to be back in your homes in time. We will meet again. And I will bring Marjiam. But even when I can no longer come, My Spirit will always be with you and My apostles will love you as I did. May the Lord lay His blessing upon you. Go! » And He bends to caress the sleeping children and He gives Himself up to the effusive warm-heartedness of the poor people who cannot make up their minds to part from Him...

At last they all go their ways and the two groups part while the moon is setting and branches of trees are to be lit to illumi-



nate the road. And the pungent smoke of the dampish branches is a good excuse for shining eyes...

432. 10 <sup>10</sup>Judas is waiting for them leaning against the trunk of a tree. Jesus looks at him and does not say anything, not even when Judas says: «I feel better. »

They go on thus, as best they can during the night, then much quicker at dawn.

When they are in sight of a cross-roads Jesus stops and says: «Let us part. Thomas, Simon Zealot and My brothers will come with Me. The others will go to the lake and wait for Me. »

«Thank You, Master... I did not dare ask You, But You are helping me. I am really tired. And if You allow me, I will stop at Tiberias... »

«At a friend's» James of Zebedee cannot refrain himself from saying.

Judas opens his eyes wide... but nothing else.

Jesus hastens to say: «As far as I am concerned it is enough if you go to Capernaum on the Sabbath with your companions. Come, that I may kiss you, you who are leaving Me. » And He fondly kisses the apostles who are departing, giving each of them a piece of advice in a whisper...

No one objects. Peter only, when leaving, says: «Come soon, Master. »

«Yes, come soon» say the others, and John concludes: «The lake will look very sad without You. »

Jesus blesses them again and promises: «I will see you soon! » and then they all go their own way.