

CHRIST'S GREAT SERMON



*According to His greatest modern Mystic
Maria Valtorta (died 1961)*

**Imprimatur for English edition:
1999 Bishop Roman Danylak (see below Appendix)**

[Pope Pius XII's often-quoted declaration was: "Publish this work as it is. There is no need to give an opinion on its origin, whether it be extraordinary or not. Whoever reads it will understand. (These days) we hear of so many visions and revelations. I am not saying that all of them would be true, but there are some of them that are authentic".]

Extracts from "The Poem of the Man-God" by Maria Valtorta (approved by Pope Pius XII, 1948. Since 2012 published as "The Gospel as it was Revealed to Me)

Scholar-Saint recommends Maria Valtorta, who... “in less than four years writes a Work of 10 volumes in which she brings to life again the religious, political and cultural ambient of the first century, and what frightens the specialists themselves all the more, she recounts in proper order--but this order is recognized and established after the visions have ceased--she recounts in proper order the life of Christ, completing the Gospels without ever contradicting them.” **Blessed Gabriel Allegra** (see Appendix below)

With the 1991 publication of the 5th volume of The Poem of the Man-God, Masterwork of the modern Italian mystic, Maria Valtorta [1897-1961†], the English translation is now complete and is rapidly being disseminated and acclaimed in the western hemisphere, especially among the Laity. Many, indeed, who have read it with an open mind and solid commitment hail it as a singular gift of Divine Mercy

to modern man and the Church of our times. The **Poem** is a voluminous Life of Christ and His Mother which Valtorta affirms was revealed to her in Visions given her by Christ. It also contains random Commentaries on these Visions, dictated by Christ or Mary. Essentially, then, it is **the gospel**, but considerably amplified, "fleshed out" with all the details and personages that doubtless initially accompanied the basic skeletal synopsis handed down to us in the New Testament.

Though Valtorta's great Work only began to be known on the Western hemisphere with the appearance of the first English volume in 1987, both she and her Poem have been known for some time in Europe. Indeed, the first preliminary publication was brought out by Pisani Editions as far back as 1956, and the ten-volume Work is now in its third critical Italian edition. In 1970, Pisani also began to publish in Italian a semiannual "Valtorta Bulletin" [Bollettino Valtortiano] for readers of Valtorta's Work. The Bulletin discusses various points or questions about the Work, while also documenting the reactions and evaluations of scholars, scientists, and ecclesiastics who have read it. Not surprisingly, though, the scientific attitude of modern man, and hence of most scholars and ecclesiastics today, spawns in them an abrupt closure and extreme distrust toward any such Work as this claiming "private revelations" as its source.

Given the wide acclaim that Valtorta's Poem has generated, however, both in Europe and now increasingly in our western hemisphere, the scientism pervading academia in the Church today quickly raises the inevitable question: "What would modern biblical scholarship say of this Work? How would a modern exegete Judge it?" But in the face of this pervasive rationalism in ecclesiastical academia today, it would be rare indeed to find a modern biblical scholar who would condescend to give a passing glance to or even browse through a Work of this nature. Nonetheless, in 1952, before the Poem's initial publication, Father (later Cardinal) Augustine Bea, S.J., Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, did willingly read several fascicles of Valtorta's original typescript of the Work and commented:

...As to the exegesis, I have found no prominent errors in the fascicles I examined. I had also been much impressed by the fact that the archeological and topographical descriptions are set forth with much exactness.... Generally speaking, the reading of the Work is not only interesting and pleasing, but truly edifying and, for people less well informed on the mystery of the life of Jesus, instructive. [Bollettino Valtortiano, No. 19, June 1979, page 75].

Nicholas Pende :

The first to define Valtorta's work as a "masterwork" was the illustrious [medical] clinician, [Dr.] Nicholas Pende, who wrote:

"...for me, it is a true masterwork both from the aspect of its style as from the beauty of its language and form."

lingering then on one detail, [he says]:

"...What has aroused in me, a physician, the greatest admiration—and amazement for the expertise with which Valtorta describes a phenomenology which only a few consummate physicians would know how to explain—is the

scene of the agony of Jesus on the cross... Pity and the greatest emotion invade the Christian reader on reading this astonishing page, with its truly medical style, of Maria Valtorta's manuscript."

Pende's statement forms part of the historical endorsements of 1952. In that year the Work was not yet published, but was available in typewritten fascicles which learned and authoritative persons read, later on recording their own impressions. These are integrally related in the book ***Pro e contro Maria Valtorta***. From those famous endorsements, let us take some other passages:

Archbp. Alphonsus Carinci:

"...it seems impossible to me that a woman of a very ordinary theological culture, and unprovided with any book useful to that end, had been able on her own to write with such exactness pages so sublime." [*Archbishop Alphonsus Carinci: then Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, which was later called the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints*]

Camillus Corsánego:

"...I have never found [such] an ensemble of science, of art, of piety and of adherence to the traditional teachings of the Church as in the Work on the Gospels of Signora Maria Valtorta." [*Camillus Corsánego: then dean of the consistorial advocates, and professor at the Pontifical Lateran University.*]

George La Pira:

"...there are no theological improprieties, and it is a matter of very singular interest." [*George La Pira: university professor, deputy and mayor of Florence, now "Servant of God"*].

Msgr. Hugo Lattanzi:

"...these are truly splendid pages both in thought and in form; descriptions of psychological situations worthy of Shakespeare, dialogs conducted in a Socratic manner worthy of Plato, and descriptions of nature and the environment worthy of the most imaginative writer." [*Msgr. Hugo Lattanzi: Professor of fundamental theology at the Lateran Pontifical University*].

Msgr. Angelo Mercati:

"...I well remember the very good impression that remained with me from the reading of the hundreds of different pages communicated to me..." [*Msgr. Angelo Mercati: Prefect of the Vatican Secret Archive*].

Msgr. Maurice Raffa:

"...I found therein incomparable riches...Wanting to express a judgment on its intrinsic and aesthetic value, I point out that to write just one of the many volumes composing the Work, it would need an Author (who today does not exist) who would be at once a great poet, an able biblical scholar, a profound theologian, an expert in archeology and topography, and a profound connoisseur of human psychology."

[Msgr. Maurice Raffa: Director of the International Center of Comparison and Synthesis]

Professor Vitorio Tredici:

"...From a critical angle, what struck me most profoundly in the Work, was the perfect knowledge which the writer had of Palestine and the Places where the Preaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ unfolded. A knowledge which in so many passages surpasses normal geographic or panoramic knowledge, directly becoming topographical and, still more, geological and mineralogical knowledge." [*Professor Vitorio Tredici, mineralogist*]

In line with these 1952 endorsements of which we have reported some passages, there is a letter from Giuseppe Cardinal Siri, archbishop of Genoa, who, on the date of March 6, 1956, expressed himself thus:

Giuseppe Cardinal Siri:

"...my impression from reading the typescript is excellent... I would willingly read some more. A larger volume would further substantiate a judgment, even if it be modest as mine."

In the same year, 1956, the first printed volume of the Work² appeared and began its diffusion, which has never been interrupted.

In 1973, the illustrious Mariologist, Gabriel M. Roschini, O.S.V., expressed himself thus:

"...the Mariology that emerges from the writings of Maria Valtorta has been for me a true revelation. No other Marian writer, and not even the sum total of Marian writings that I have read and studied, had been able to give me so clear, so living, so complete, so luminous and so fascinating an idea — simple and yet sublime — of God's Masterwork [Mary]."

One of the greatest philosophers of our day, Cornelius Fabro, in a letter of 1979, spoke of [Valtorta's *Poem*] as

"a spiritual work and style among the most singular in the contemporary Church for renewing, from within, our faith and love of the Redeemer of the world;"

and in another letter of 1981 he noted:

"...having to live amid philosophical aridity, this reading opens for me a gleam of light even in our time of agony of spirit."

From Volume 2: no.169.

The Sermon of the Mount:

"You Are the Salt of the Earth.

Seen 22nd May 1945

¹Jesus is walking fast along a main road. He is alone. He is going towards a mountain, which rises near a main road running eastwards from the lake, and it begins to rise with a low mild elevation which extends for a good distance, forming a tableland from which one can see all the lake and the form of Tigerish towards the south, as well as other towns, not quite so beautiful, stretching towards the north. There is then a crag and the mountain rises rather steeply up to a peak, and then slopes down and rises once again up to another peak, similar to the previous one, thus forming a kind of strange saddle.

Jesus begins climbing towards the tableland along a mule-track, which is still quite comfortable, and reaches a small village, the inhabitants of which work the tableland, where the corn is beginning to come to ear. He goes through the village and proceeds through the fields and meadows all strewn with flowers and rustling with crops.

The clear day displays all the beauty of the surrounding nature. Besides the lonely little mountain, towards which Jesus is going, to the north lies the imposing peak of Mount Hereon, the top of which looks like a huge pearl laid on a base of emeralds, so white is the peak covered with snow, whereas the woody slope is green. Beyond the lake, which is between the lake and Mount Hereon, the plain is green. Lake Merom is there, but cannot be seen from here. There are more mountains towards the lake of Tigerish on the north-wise side and beyond the lake there is a lovely flat country and other mountains, the contours of which are softened by the distance. To the south, on the other side of the main road, I can see the hills, which I think conceal Nazareth. The more one climbs, the wider the view. I cannot see what lies to the west, because the mountain acts as a wall.

²Jesus meets first the apostle Philip, who seems to have been posted there as sentinel. "What, Master? You are here? We were expecting to meet You on the main road. I am waiting here for my companions who have gone to get some milk from the shepherds who pasture their flocks on these mountains. Down, on the road, there is Simon with Judas of Simon and Isaac, and... Oh! here... Come! Come! The Master is here!"

The apostles, who are coming down with flasks and containers, begin to run and the younger ones, of course, arrive first. The welcome they give the Master is really touching. At last they are all together and while Jesus smiles, they all want to speak and tell Him...

"But we were waiting for You on the road!"

"We were just thinking that You were not coming even today."

"You know, there are many people."

"Oh! We were embarrassed, there are some scribes and even some of Gamaliel's disciples..."

"That's right, my Lord! You left us just at the right moment! I have never been so afraid as I was just then. Don't play such a trick on me again!"

Peter complains and Jesus smiles and asks: "Did anything wrong happen to you?"

"Oh! no! On the contrary... Oh! Master! Don't You know that John gave a sermon?... It sounded as if You were speaking through him. I... we were all

dumbfounded... That boy who only a year ago was able only to cast a net... oh!" Peter is still amazed and he shakes John who smiles but is silent. "Do you believe that it is possible that this boy spoke those words with these smiling lips? He sounded like Solomon."

"Also Simon spoke very well, my Lord. He was really 'the chief'" says John.

"No wonder! He took me and pushed me there! Who knows!... They say that I gave a good sermon. Perhaps I did. I don't know... because what with the surprise at John's words, what with the fear of speaking to so many people and causing You to cut a poor figure, I was bewildered..."

"Causing Me to cut a poor figure? But you were speaking and you would have cut a poor figure, Simon" teases Jesus.

"Oh! As far as I am concerned... I was not worried about myself. I did not want them to sneer at You and consider You a fool for choosing a blockhead as your apostle."

Jesus sparkles with joy because of Peter's humility and love. But He only asks: "And what about the others?"

"Also the Zealot spoke very well. But he... we all know. But this boy was the great surprise! Of course, since we retired to pray, the boy's soul seems to be in Heaven all the time."

"That is true, very true." They all confirm Peter's words. And they continue telling Jesus...

"You know? Among the disciples now there are two, who according to Judas of Simon, are very important. Judas is very active. Of course! He knows many of those... high up and knows how to deal with them. And he likes to speak... He speaks very well. But the people prefer to hear Simon, Your cousins and above all this boy. Yesterday a man said to me: "That young man speaks very well - he was referring to Judas - but I prefer you." Oh! poor fellow! He prefers me and I can hardly put a few words together!... But why did You come here? The meeting place was the road, and we have been there."

"Because I knew I was going to find you here. Now listen. Go down and tell the others to come up, also the known disciples. The people are not to come today. I want to speak to you only."

"In that case it is better to wait until evening. When the sun is about to set, the people spread among the nearby villages and they come back the following morning waiting for You. Otherwise... who will hold them back?"

"All right. Do that. I will wait for you up there, at the top. The nights are mild now and we can sleep in the open."

"Wherever You wish, Master. Providing You are with us."

³The disciples go away and Jesus resumes climbing up to the top, which is the same one as I already saw last year in the vision for the end of the sermon of the Mount and the first meeting with Mary Magdalene. The view is now wider and is becoming brighter in the sunset.

Jesus sits on a rock and is recollected in meditation. And He remains thus until the shuffling of feet on the path warns Him that the apostles are back. It is getting dark, but the sun still shines on the mountain top, drawing scents from every herb and flower... There is a strong smell of wild lilies of the valley while the tall stems of narcissi shake their stars and buds as if they were asking for dew.

Jesus gets up and greets them: "Peace be with you."

There are many disciples who come up with the apostles. Isaac leads them smiling. His smiling face is the thin face of an ascetic. They all gather round Jesus Who is greeting Judas Iscariot and Simon Zealot particularly.

"I wanted you all here with Me, to be for a few hours with you alone and speak only to you. I have something to tell you to prepare you for your mission. Let us take our food and then we shall speak, and while you are sleeping your souls will continue to relish the doctrine."

They have their frugal meal and then form a circle round Jesus Who is sitting on a large stone. They are about one hundred, perhaps more, between disciples and apostles: a circle of attentive faces, which the flames of two fires light up oddly. Jesus speaks slowly, gesticulating quietly. His face looks paler, as it merges from His dark blue tunic and also because it is lit up by the rays of the new moon, which illuminates the spot where He is, a small comma of a moon in the sky, a ray of light that caresses the Master of Heaven and earth.

⁴"I wanted you here, aside, because you are My friends. I called you together after the first test of the Twelve, to widen the circle of My active disciples, and to hear from you your first reactions to being guided by those whom I am giving to you to continue My work. I know that everything went well. I supported with My prayer the souls of the apostles, who had come out of a praying retreat with a new strength in their minds and in their hearts. A strength that does not come from human effort, but from a complete reliance in God.

Those who have been most unmindful of themselves, have given most. It is difficult to be unmindful of oneself.

Man is made of recollections and the ones that raise their voice most are the memories of one's *ego*. You must distinguish between *ego* and *ego*. There is the spiritual *ego* of the soul that remembers God and its origin from God, and there is the inferior *ego* of the flesh that remembers its passions and the numberless exigencies concerning its whole being. They are so many voices as to form a choir, and unless the spirit is quite strong, they overcome the solitary voice of the spirit that remembers its nobility as child of God. It is therefore necessary - with the exception of this holy memory that should always be stimulated and kept green and bright - it is necessary to learn how to forget yourselves, in all the memories, the needs, the timid reflections of the human *ego*, in order to be perfect disciples.

In this first test of My Twelve, those who have given most are the ones who forgot themselves most. They forgot not only their past, but also their limited personality. They are the ones who no longer remembered what they were, and were so united to God as to be afraid of nothing. Why were some stand-offish? Because they remembered their habitual scruples, their usual considerations and prejudice. Why were others laconic? Because they remembered their doctrinal inability and they

were afraid of cutting a bad figure or causing Me to cut one. Why the showy ostentation of others? Because they remembered their usual pride, their desire to show off, to be applauded, to rise above the others, to be "someone". Finally, why the sudden revelation of a triumphal, rabbinic, persuasive, firm eloquence in others? Because they, and they alone did remember God. Like those who so far have been humble and have endeavoured to pass unnoticed and at the right moment were able, all of a sudden, to assume the pre-eminent dignity conferred on them, and which they never wanted to exert before, lest they should presume too much. The first three groups remembered their inferior *ego*. The other group, the fourth, remembered with their superior *ego* and were not afraid. They felt God with themselves and in themselves and were not afraid. Oh! holy boldness which comes from being with God!

⁵Therefore now listen, both you apostles and you disciples. You apostles have already heard these concepts. But now you will understand them in greater depth. You disciples have never heard of them or you have only heard fragments of them. And you must engrave them on your hearts. Because I will make a wider and wider use of you, as Christ's flock is becoming more and more numerous. Because the world will attack you more and more violently, and its wolves will increase in number against Me, the Shepherd and against the flock and I want to put in your hands the weapons to defend both the Doctrine and My flock. What is sufficient for the herd is not sufficient for you, little shepherds. If the sheep are allowed to make mistakes, browsing in herbs which make the blood bitter or desires crazy, you are not allowed to make the same mistakes, leading a large herd to ruin. Because you must realise that where there is an idolatrous shepherd the sheep either die of poison or are devoured by wolves.

You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. But should you fail in your mission you would become a tasteless and useless salt. Nothing could give you flavour again, since God could not give you it, considering that it was given to you as a gift, and you have desalted it, by washing it in the insipid dirty water of mankind, by sweetening it by means of the corrupt sweetness of sensuality, thus mixing with the pure salt of God the corruption of pride, avarice, gluttony, lust, wrath, sloth, so that there is a grain of salt to seven times seven grains of each vice. Your salt, therefore, is but a mixture of stones in which the poor grain of lost salt cannot be found, a mixture of stones screeching under your teeth and leaving in your mouths the flavour of earth, that makes food disagreeable and disgusting. It is not even useful for inferior use, as the flavour of the seven vices would harm also every human employment. The salt then can only be spread and trodden on by the careless feet of the people. How many people will thus be able to tread heavily on the men of God! Because those chosen men will allow the careless people to trample on them, as they no longer are a substance employed to give the flavour of noble heavenly things, as they are nothing but *corruption*.

You are the light of the world. You are like this mountain top which was the last to be kissed by the sun and the first to be silvered by the moon. Who is in a high place shines and can be seen because even the most dreamy eye looks now and again at high spots. I would say that the physical eye, which is said to be the mirror of the soul, reflects the yearnings of the soul, a yearning often unnoticed but always alive as long as a man is not a demon, a yearning after heights where reason by instinct

places the Most High. And searching for Heaven, at least some times in life the eye looks at heights.

I beg you to remember what we all have done, since our childhood, entering Jerusalem. Where do our eyes turn? To Mount Moriah, triumphantly crowned with the marbles and gold of the Temple. And where do we turn our eyes when we are in the enclosure of the Temple? We look at the precious domes shining in the sun. How much beauty there is in the sacred enclosure, spread in its halls, porches and yards! But what is up there strikes our eyes. I also beg you to remember what happens when we are on the way to some place. Where do we turn our eyes, almost to forget the length of the journey, the tedium, the tiredness, the heat, the dust of the road? They turn to the mountain tops, even if they are not very high, even if they are far away. And what a relief it is to see them appear if we are walking in a flat unvarying plain! Is there mud on the road? There is neatness up there. Is it sultry on the plain? It is cool up there. Is the view limited down here? It is wide up there. And only by looking at the mountain tops, we feel less of the heat of the day, the mud is not so slippery, and walking is not so painful. If there is a town shining on the mountain top, no eye will refrain from admiring it. We could say that even a modest place becomes beautiful if placed, when possible, on high spots, and if there was no hill or mountain, they built a stone pedestal, thus building with human labour the elevation on which to lay the temple. Why is that done? Because men want the temple to be seen so that its sight will remind mankind of God.

Likewise I said that you are lights. When in the evening you light a lamp in the house, where do you put it? In a hole under the oven? In the cave used as a cellar? Or do you close it in a chest? Or do you hide it under a bushel? No, you do not. Otherwise it would be useless lighting it. The light instead is placed on top of a shelf, or it is put on a lamp-stand, so that being high up, it may brighten up the whole room and illuminate the people living in it. And precisely because what is placed on a high place is to remind men of God and illuminate, it must be able to fulfil its task.

⁶You must remember the True God. Thus you must ensure that you do not have within yourselves the sevenfold paganism. Otherwise you would become profane high places with thickets sacred to this or to that god, and you would drag into your paganism those who look at you as the temples of God. You must bear the light of God. A dirty wick, a wick not nourished with oil, smokes and gives no light, it has a bad smell and does not illuminate. A lamp hidden behind a dirty quartz-crystal does not create the splendid gracefulness or the dazzling effects of light on the bright mineral. But it fades behind the veil of black smoke that makes the crystal cover dull.

The light of God shines where wills are zealous in removing daily the scum produced by work itself, with its contacts, reactions and disappointments. The light of God shines where the wick is immersed into plenty liquid of prayer and charity. The light of God multiplies into infinite splendid reflections, as many as the perfections of God, each of which excites in the saint a virtue practised heroically, if the servant of God keeps the unattackable quartz of his soul clear from the smoke of every soiling passion. The unattackable quartz. Unattackable! (Jesus thunders out in this conclusion and His voice resounds in the natural amphitheatre).

Only God has the right and the power to scratch that crystal, to write His Most Holy Name on it with the diamond of His will. That Name then becomes the ornament that emphasizes the brighter facets of supernatural beauty on the most pure quartz. But if the foolish servant of the Lord, losing control of himself and the sight of his mission, *a completely and solely supernatural one*, allows false ornaments and scratches, instead of engravings to be cut on his quartz, that is, mysterious and satanic figures made by the hot claw of Satan, then the wonderful lamp no longer retains its intact beauty, but it cracks and breaks and the fragments of the splintered crystal suffocate the flame, and even if it does not break, a tangle of marks of unmistakable nature forms on its surface and soot penetrates into them spoiling it.

Woe, three times woe, to the shepherds who lose charity, who refuse to climb day by day to take upwards their flocks that expect their ascent in order to ascend themselves. I will strike them down and remove them from their positions and I will put out their smoke altogether.

Woe, three times woe, to the masters, who reject Wisdom to become saturated with a science, which is often opposed and always proud, sometimes satanic, because it makes them men, whereas - listen and remember - if every man is destined to become like God, through the sanctification that makes man a son of God, a master, a priest should already have in this world the aspect of a son of God, and only such aspect. He should have the aspect of a creature entirely devoted to souls and to perfection. *He should have* such aspect to lead his disciples to God. Anathema to the masters of a supernatural doctrine, who become idols of human knowledge.

Woe, seven times woe, to those among My priests who are dead to the spirit, who with their lack of savour and ill-living flesh live as miserable sluggish human beings. Their sleep is full of hallucinated apparitions of everything, except God One and Triune, and is full as well of all sorts of calculations, except the superhuman desire to increase the wealth of hearts and of God; they live a material, miserable dull life, dragging into their dead water those who follow them, believing that they are "Life". The curse of God on those who corrupt My little beloved flock. I shall not ask an account and I will not punish those who perish through your laziness, or negligent servants of the Lord, but I will ask you to account for every hour and all the time lost and all evil consequences and I will punish you.

⁷Remember those words. And now go. I am climbing to the top. You may sleep. Tomorrow the Shepherd will open the pastures of Truth to His flock."

170. The Sermon of the Mount. The Beatitudes (Part One).

24th May 1945

¹Jesus speaks to the apostles allotting a place to each one, so that they may direct and watch over the crowd who are climbing up the mountain since the early hours in the morning, with sick people whom they carry in their arms or in stretchers or who have dragged themselves along on crutches. Among the people there are Stephen and Hermas.

The air is clear and rather chilly, but the sun soon softens the fresh mountain air, which on its turn, moderates the heat of the sun, drawing benefit from it, as it becomes pure and cool but not sharp.

The people sit on the stones scattered in the little valley between the two crests, but some wait for the sun to dry the grass, wet with dew, so that they may sit down on the earth. There is a huge crowd from all the districts in Palestine and the people are of all conditions. The apostles disappear in the multitude, but like bees that come and go from the meadows to the beehives, now and again they go back to the Master to inform Him, to ask for advice, and for the pleasure of being seen near Him.

Jesus climbs a little higher up than the meadow, which is at the bottom of the little valley. He leans against the rock and begins speaking.

2"Many have asked Me, during a year of preaching: "You say that You are the Son of God, tell us what is Heaven, what is the Kingdom, what is God. Because our notions are hazy. We know that there is Heaven with God and the angels. But no one has ever come to tell us what it is like, because it is closed to righteous people". They have also asked Me what the Kingdom is and what God is. And I have endeavoured to explain to you what the Kingdom is and what God is. I have striven not because it was difficult for Me to give an explanation, but because it is difficult for many reasons to get you to accept the truth that clashes, as far as the Kingdom is concerned, with a multitude of ideas, which have risen over the centuries and, as far as God is concerned, with the sublimity of His Nature.

Others have also asked Me: "All right. That is the Kingdom and that is God. But how do we achieve them?" Here again I have tried to explain to you patiently the true spirit of the Law of Sinai. Who abides by that spirit conquers Heaven. But to explain the Law of Sinai to you it is necessary to make you hear the loud thunder of the Law-giver and of His Prophet, who, while promising blessings to obedient believers, threaten terrible punishments and maledictions to those who disobey. The Epiphany of Sinai was frightful and its dreadfulness is reflected in the entire Law, and has been reflected throughout centuries and in all souls.

But God is not only a Legislator... God is a Father. And a Father of immense goodness.

Probably, nay, certainly, your souls are not in a position to rise and contemplate the infinite perfections of God, and His goodness least of all, because goodness and love are the rarest virtues amongst men. The reason is that your souls are weakened by original sin, by passions, by your own sins, by your own selfishness and the selfishness of other people: the former closes your souls, the latter irritates them. Goodness! How sweet it is to be good, with no hatred, no envy, no pride! How sweet it is to have eyes that look only for love and hands that stretch out only in gestures of love, and lips that utter only words of love and a heart, above all a heart, that full only of love, urges eyes, hands and lips to acts of love!

3The most learned amongst you know with which gifts God had enriched Adam, both for himself and for his descendants. Also the most ignorant amongst the children of Israel know that there is a soul in us. Only the poor heathens are unaware of this royal guest, of this vital breath and celestial light that sanctifies and gives life to our body. But the most learned know which gifts were given to man and to the soul of man.

God was not less munificent to the soul than to the flesh and blood of the creature made by Him with a little mud and His breath. As He gave the natural gifts of beauty and integrity, of intelligence and will power, and the capability of loving oneself and other people, He also gave moral gifts and the subjection of senses to reason. Therefore the wicked captivity of senses and passions did not permeate the freedom and control of Adam and of his will with which God had gifted him, thus he was free to love, free to wish, free to enjoy in justice, without what makes you slaves, causing you to feel the bite

of the poison that Satan spread and which now overflows, carrying you out of the limpid river-bed on to the slimy fields and putrescent ponds, where the fever of carnal and moral senses fermentates. Because you must realise that also the concupiscence of thought is sensual. And they received super-natural gifts, that is, sanctifying Grace, a heavenly destiny, the vision of God.

⁴Sanctifying Grace: the life of the soul. The most spiritual thing deposited in our spiritual soul. The grace that makes us children of God, because it preserves us from the death of sin, and who is not dead "*lives*" in the house of the Father: Paradise; in My Kingdom; Heaven. What is this Grace that sanctifies and gives Life and Kingdom? Oh! Not many words are required! Grace is love. Grace is therefore God. It is God Who admiring Himself in the creature whom He created perfect, loves Himself, contemplates Himself, desires Himself, gives Himself what is His own to multiply it, to delight in the multiplication, to love Himself in the many others who are others Himself.

Oh! My children! Do not defraud God of this right of His! Do not deprive God of what belongs to Him! Do not disappoint God in His desire! Consider that He acts out of love. Even if you did not exist, He would still be Infinite, and His power would not diminish. But He, although He is complete in His infinite immeasurable measure, does not want anything for Himself and in Himself - which He could not, because He is already Infinite - but for Creation, His creature. He wants to increase His love for all rational creatures contained in Creation, and therefore gives you His Grace: Love, that you may carry it in yourselves to the perfection of saints, and you may pour this treasure, taken from the treasure that God has given you with His Grace and increased by all the holy deeds in all your heroic lives of saints, into the infinite Ocean where God is: into Heaven.

You are divine reservoirs of Love! That is what you are, and no death is given to your being, because you are eternal, as God is, being like God. You shall be, and there will be no end to your being, because you are immortal like the holy spirits that super-nourished you, returning to you enriched by their own merits. You live and nourish, you live and enrich, you live and form the most holy thing which is the Communion of the spirits, from God, the Most Perfect Spirit, down to the last born baby, who sucks his mother's breast for the first time.

Do not criticise Me in your hearts, o learned men! Do not say: "He is crazy, He is a liar! Because He speaks foolishly saying that there is Grace in us, when Sin has deprived us of it. He lies stating that we are already one thing with God". Yes, there is sin and there is separation. But before the power of the Redeemer, Sin, the cruel separation between the Father and the children, will collapse like a wall shaken by a new Samson. I have already got hold of it and I am shaking it and it is about to fall and Satan is trembling with wrath and impotence, as he can avail nothing against My power and he realises that so much prey is being snatched from him and that it is becoming more difficult to drag man to sin. Because when I will have taken you to My Father, through Me, and you have been cleansed and strengthened by My Blood and sorrow, Grace will come back to you, lively and powerful and you will be triumphant, if you so wish. God does no violence to your thoughts or your sanctification. You are free. But He gives you back your strength. He gives you back your freedom from Satan's empire. It is up to you to take upon yourselves the infernal yoke or to put angelical wings on your souls. It depends on you, with Me as your brother to guide you and nourish you with an immortal food.

⁵You may ask: "How can one conquer God and His Kingdom through a milder road than the harsh Sinai one?" There is no other road but that one. But let us look at it not from the point of view of a threat, but from the point of view of love. Let us not say: "Woe to me, if I do not do that!" trembling with fear of sinning, of not being able not to

sin. But let us say: "How glad I will be if I do that!" and with the impulse of a supernatural joy, full of happiness, let us rush towards these beatitudes, brought about by compliance with the Law, as roses sprout from a thorny bush.

"How blessed I will be if I am poor in spirit, because mine shall be the Kingdom of Heaven!

How blessed I will be if I am gentle because I shall have the earth for my heritage!

How blessed I will be if I mourn without rebelling, because I will be comforted!

How blessed I will be if I hunger and thirst for justice more than I do for bread and wine to satisfy the flesh, because Justice will satisfy me!

How blessed I will be if I am merciful, because I will have divine mercy shown me!

How blessed I will be if I am pure in heart, because God will bend over my pure heart and I will see Him!

How blessed I will be if I am peaceful in spirit, because God will call me His son, because love is in peace and God is Love Who loves whoever is like Him!

How blessed I will be if I am persecuted in the cause of right, because God, my Father, to reward me for my earthly persecutions, will give me the Kingdom of Heaven!

How blessed I will be if I am abused and accused falsely for being Your son, o God! It must not cause me desolation but joy, as it will make me equal to Your best servants, to the Prophets, who were persecuted for the same reason and with whom I firmly believe I shall share the same great eternal reward in Heaven, which is mine!".

Let us look thus at the way of salvation: through the joy of saints.

6"How blessed I will be if I am poor in spirit".

Oh! Satanic thirst for wealth, to what frenzy you lead both rich and poor! The rich who live for their gold: the ill-famed idol of their ruined spirits. The poor who live hating the rich because of their gold, and even if they do not murder them physically, they curse the rich wishing them all sorts of evil. It is not enough not to do evil, one must not even wish to do it. He who curses wishing calamities and death is very like him who kills physically, because he wishes the death of the person he hates. I solemnly tell you that *such a wish is like an action held back, it is like a foetus conceived in a womb and formed, but not yet ejected.* A wicked desire corrupts and ruins man, because it lasts longer than a violent action and is deeper than the action itself.

If a rich man is poor in spirit he does not sin for the sake of his gold, but he turns his gold into sanctification, because he turns it into love. Loved and blessed, he is like spring water that saves travellers in a desert, as he gives generously, without avarice, happy to be able to relieve desperate situations. If he is poor, he is happy in his poverty and eats his bread which is sweetened by the joy of being free from the thirst of gold, he sleeps free from nightmares and gets up well rested for his tranquil work, which is always light when done without greed or envy.

What makes man materially rich is gold, what makes him morally rich are his affections. Gold comprises not only money but also houses, fields, jewels, furniture, herds, everything, in other words, that which makes life wealthy materially. Affections include: blood or marriage ties, friendship, intellectual soundness, public offices. As you can see, if for the first group a poor man can say: "Oh! as far as I am concerned, providing I do not envy those who are rich, I am all right because I am poor, and thus I am settled by force of circumstances", with regard to the second group also a poor man must be

careful, because also the poorest man can become sinfully rich in spirit. Who is immoderately attached to a thing, commits a sin.

You may say: "Are we then to hate the wealth that God granted us? Why then does He command us to love our fathers, mothers, wives, children and say: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself?'. You must distinguish. We must love our fathers, mothers, wives and our neighbour, but in the degree indicated by God: "As ourselves". Whereas God is to be loved above everything and with our whole selves. We must not love God as we love the dearest people among our neighbours: because a woman suckled us or because she sleeps on our chest and procreates children for us, but we must love Him with our *whole selves, that is, with all the ability to love* that is in man: the love of a son, of a husband, of a friend and - do not be scandalised - the love of a father. Yes, we must have for the interests of God the same care that a feather has for his children, for whom he lovingly protects his wealth and increases it, and he takes care of and is anxious for their physical growth and intellectual education and for their success in the world.

Love is not an evil and must not become an evil. The graces, which God grants us, are not evil and must not become so. They are love, granted out of love. We must make a loving use of such wealth granted to us by God in personal affections and in worldly goods. And only he who does not make an idol of such wealth but uses it to serve God in holiness, shows that he has no sinful attachment to it. One then practises that holy poverty in spirit that deprives itself of everything in order to be more free to conquer God, the Holy Supreme Wealth. To conquer God: that is to have the Kingdom of Heaven.

7"How blessed I will be if I am gentle".

This may seem to be in contrast with the facts of daily life. Those who are not lowly seem to be prominent and successful in their families, towns and countries. But is theirs a real triumph? No, it is not. It is fear that keeps apparently subdued those who are overwhelmed by the despot, but in actual fact it is nothing but a veil drawn over the rebellion seething against the tyrant. Irascible and overbearing people do not win the love of their relatives, of their own citizens or of their subjects. Neither are intellects or souls convinced to follow the doctrines of masters who impose themselves by stating: "I said so, thus it is". Such masters only create self-taught men seeking the key that can open the closed doors of a wisdom or of a science which they feel to be, and actually is the opposite of what is imposed on them.

Those priests who do not endeavour to conquer souls by means of a patient, humble and loving kindness, do not win any souls to God, but they look like armed warriors who start a fierce attack, such is their intolerant rashness in dealing with souls... Oh! poor souls! if they were holy they would not need you, o priests, to reach the Light. They would already have it within themselves. If they were just, they would not need you, o judges, to be put under the restraint of justice, as they would already have justice within themselves. If they were healthy, they would not need a doctor. Be therefore gentle. Do not put souls to flight. Attract them through love. Because lowliness is love, as poverty in spirit is love.

If you are such you will have the Earth for your heritage and you will take this place to God, whereas before it belonged to Satan, because your lowliness, which besides love is also humility, will have overcome Hatred and Pride, expelling from souls the vile king of hatred and pride, and the world will belong to you, that is, to God, because you will be the just souls that will acknowledge God as the Absolute Master of creation, to Whom praise and blessing are due and everything else which belongs to Him.

8"*How blessed I will be if I mourn without rebelling*".

Sorrow is on the earth and sorrow wrings tears from men. Sorrow did not exist but man brought it on to the earth and because of his corrupt intellect he continuously strives to increase it in every possible way. Besides diseases and calamities ensuing from thunderbolts, storms, avalanches, earthquakes, man, in order to suffer and above all to make other people suffer - because we would like only other people to suffer, and not ourselves, the effects of means studied to make people suffer - man invents deadly weapons, which are more and more dreadful and moral hardships, which are more and more cunning. How many tears man wrings from his fellow man through the instigation of his secret king: Satan! And I solemnly tell you that those tears are not an impairment but a perfection of man.

Man is an absent-minded child, a thoughtless superficial child, a backward born child, until tears make him an adult, thoughtful, intelligent person. Only those who weep or have wept, know how to love and can understand. They know how to love their weeping brothers, how to understand them in their grief, how to help them with their goodness, which is fully aware how bitter it is to weep alone. And they know how to love God, because they have realised that everything is grief except God, because they have understood that sorrow can be soothed if tears are shed on God's heart and they have also realised that resigned tears, which do not cause faith to be lost or prayer to become barren and which loathe rebellion, such resigned tears change nature and instead of sorrow they become comfort.

Yes. Those who weep loving the Lord will be comforted.

9"*How blessed I will be if I hunger and thirst for justice*".

From the moment he is born to the moment he dies, man craves eagerly for food. He opens his mouth at his birth to get hold of his mother's nipple, he opens his lips to swallow some refreshment in the throes of death. He works to feed himself. He makes a huge nipple of the world from which he sucks insatiably for that which is perishable. But what is man? An animal? No, he is a son of God. He is in exile for a few or many years. But his life does not come to an end when he changes his dwelling.

There is a life in life as there is a kernel in a nut. The shell is not the nut, but it is the kernel inside the shell that is the nut. If you sow a shell nothing will come up, but if you sow the shell with the kernel inside it, a big tree will grow. The same applies to man. It is not his flesh that becomes immortal, but his soul. And it is to be nourished to take it to immortality, to which the soul, out of love, will take the body in the blessed resurrection. Wisdom and Justice are the nourishment of the soul. They are taken as food and as drink and they strengthen and the more one takes of them, the more grows the holy eagerness to possess Wisdom and know Justice. But the day will come when the holy insatiable hunger of the soul will be satisfied, It will come. God will give Himself to His child, and will suckle him and the child destined for Paradise will be satisfied with the admirable Mother Who is God Himself, and man will never be hungry again but will rest happily on God's divine bosom. No human science is equal to this divine science. The curiosity of the mind can be gratified, but the necessities of the spirit cannot. Nay, the spirit is disgusted by the difference in taste and makes a wry mouth at the bitter nipple, preferring to suffer the pangs of hunger, rather than be filled with a good that does not come from God.

Be not afraid, o men thirsting or starving for God! Be faithful and you will be satisfied by Him Who loves you.

10"*How blessed I will be if I am merciful*".

Who amongst men can say: "I do not need mercy"? No one. Now, if in the Old Law it is written: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth", why should we not say in the New Law: "Who has been merciful shall find mercy"? Everybody needs forgiveness.

Well, then: forgiveness is not achieved by formulae or by the form of a rite, which are external symbols granted to man's dull mentality, it is instead obtained through the internal rite of love, which is still mercy. If the sacrifice of a goat or a lamb and the offer of a few coins were prescribed, the reason is that every evil is founded on two roots: greed and pride. Greed is punished through the expense for the purchase of the offering, pride by the open confession of the rite: "I am making this sacrifice because I have sinned". It is also done to anticipate the times and the signs of the times, and in the blood which is shed is symbolised the Blood which will be shed to cancel the sins of men.

Blessed therefore are those who are merciful to those who are hungry, nude, homeless, to those who suffer from the greatest misery, which is to have a bad disposition, as it causes grief both to those who have it and to those who live with them. Be merciful. Forgive, bear with people, help them, teach them, support them.

Do not conceal yourselves in a crystal tower saying: "I am pure and I will not descend amongst sinners". Do not say: "I am rich and happy and I will not hear of other people's miseries". Remember that your richness, your health, your family wealth may vanish quicker than smoke blown away by a strong wind. And remember that crystal acts as a lens and consequently what may be unnoticed if you were mixed among the crowds, cannot be concealed if you place yourselves in a crystal tower where you are alone, isolated and illumined on all sides.

Mercy is necessary to offer a continuous, secret, holy sacrifice of expiation and to obtain mercy.

11 "How blessed I will be if I am pure in heart".

God is purity. Paradise is the Kingdom of Purity. Nothing impure can enter. Paradise where God is. Therefore, if you are impure, you will not be able to enter the Kingdom of God. Oh! But what a joy the Father grants to His children in advance! Who is pure has in this world an advance of Heaven because God bends over a pure soul and man from the earth can see his God. He is not familiar with the taste of human love, but relishes the flavour of divine love, to the point of being enraptured, and can say: "I am with You and You are in me, I therefore possess You and I recognise You as the most loving spouse of my soul". And believe Me, who has God enjoys substantial changes, of which he himself is unaware, and thus becomes holy, wise, strong; words embellish his lips and his actions acquire a strength that is not of the creature, but comes from God Who lives in it.

What is the life of those who see God? A beatitude. And do you wish to deprive yourselves of such a gift for the sake of fetid impurities?

12 "How blessed I will be if I am peaceful in spirit".

Peace is one of God's characteristics. God is to be found only in peace. Because peace is love, whereas war is hatred. Satan is hatred. God is peace. No man can say that he is the son of God, neither can God call son a man who has an irascible soul always ready to stir up a storm. Not only. Neither can he be called the son of God who, although not a trouble-maker himself, by means of his own great peace does not help to calm the storms stirred up by other people. Who is peaceful propagates peace also without uttering any words. Master of himself and, I dare say, master of God, he divulges Him as a lamp spreads its light, as a thurible exhales its perfume, as a wineskin holds wine, and this sweet oil, which is the spirit of peace issuing from the children of God, gives light in the

foggy gloominess of ill-feelings, and purifies the air from the miasmas of malice and calms the raging waves of quarrels.

Let God and men say that you are so.

¹³*"How blessed I will be if I am persecuted in the cause of right".*

Man has become so devilish that he hates good wherever it is, and he hates who is good, as if who is good, even when silent, accuses and reproaches him. In fact the goodness of one person makes the wickedness of a wicked person appear even more wicked... In fact the faith of a true believer makes the hypocrisy of a false believer appear more clearly. In fact, he who by his way of living continuously bears witness to justice can but be hated by the unjust. And then the unjust are pitiless towards the lovers of justice.

The same applies here as in wars. Man makes more progress in the satanic art of persecution than in the holy art of love. But he can persecute only what has a short life. What is eternal in man eludes the snare, nay, it achieves a more energetic vitality than persecution itself. Life escapes through the bleeding wounds or because of the privations that consume those who are persecuted. But the blood makes the purple of the future king and the privations are as many steps to ascend the thrones that the Father has prepared for His martyrs, for whom are reserved the royal seats in the Kingdom of Heaven.

¹⁴How blessed I will be if I am accused and abused falsely".

Strive to have your names written in the celestial books, where names are not written according to human falsehood, which is accustomed to praise those who less deserve praise, where, instead, with justice and love are written the deeds of good people in order to give them the reward promised to the blessed ones by God.

In the past, the Prophets were calumniated and abused. But when the gates of Heaven are opened, they will enter the City of God, like imposing kings, and the angels will now singing out of joy. You, too, who have been abused and accused falsely for being the children of God, will have a heavenly triumph and when the time comes to an end and Paradise is full, then every tear will be dear to you, because through it you will have conquered the eternal glory, which I promise you in the name of the Father.

Go. I will speak to you again tomorrow. Only the sick people should remain that I may relieve them from their pains. Peace be with you and may the meditation on salvation lead you, through love, on to the road the end of which is Heaven."

171. The Sermon of the Mount. The Beatitudes (Part Two).

25th May 1945. The Sermon of the Mount continues.

¹It is the same place and the same time. The crowd is larger. In a corner, near a path, there is a Roman, who seems anxious to hear but does not want to upset the crowd. I recognise him from his short tunic and the different style of his mantle. Stephen and Hermas are still there.

Jesus walks slowly to His place and resumes speaking.

"What I told you yesterday must not cause you to think that I have come to abolish the Law. No. But since I am the Man, and I understand the weakness of man, I wanted to encourage you to comply with it, turning your spiritual eyes not to the dark abyss, but to the bright Sublimity. Because if the fear of punishment can hold you back three times out of ten, the certainty of a reward will urge you seven times out of ten. Trust is therefore more efficacious than fear. And I want you to be fully and firmly confident, so that you

accomplish not seven parts of good out of ten, but ten out of ten and thus gain the most holy prize of Heaven.

I will not change one iota of the Law. And Who gave it amongst the peals of thunder on Sinai? The Most High. Who is the Most High? God One and Triune. Where did He take it from? From His Thought. How did He give it? By His Word. Why did He give it? Out of His Love. You can thus see that the Trinity was present. And the Word, obedient as ever to the Thought and Love, spoke on behalf of the Thought and Love. Could I give Myself the lie? No, I could not.

But since I can do everything, I can complete the Law, make it divinely complete, not what men did throughout centuries, as they did not make it complete, but incomprehensible and impossible to be fulfilled. In fact they superimposed precepts and laws taken from *their own* thoughts, according to *their own* gain, and they thus lapidated and suffocated, sterilised and buried the most holy Law given by God. Can a tree survive if it is continuously struck by avalanches, rubble and floods? No, it will die. The Law dies in many hearts, suffocated by the avalanches of too many superstructures. I have come to remove them all, and after unearthing and reviving the Law, I will make it no longer a law, but a queen.

²Queens promulgate laws. The laws are the work of queens, but they are not above queens. I instead make the Law a queen: I complete it, I crown it, putting on its top the wreath of the evangelic counsels. Before it was order. Now it is more than order. Before it was the necessary thing. Now it is more than the necessary thing: now it is perfection. Who weds it, as I present you with it, becomes immediately a king, because he has reached "perfection", because he has been not only obedient, but also heroic, that is, holy, as holiness is the sum of virtues carried to the greatest height attainable by a creature, heroically loved and practised through a complete detachment from every human desire and consideration.

I could say that he is a saint, whom love and desire prevent from seeing everything but God. As his attention is not distracted by inferior sights, his eyes and heart are fixed on the Most Holy Brightness, which is God and in which, since everything is in God, he can see his distressed brothers stretching out their hands suppliantly. And without taking his eyes away from God, the saint devotes himself to his suppliant brothers. Against the flesh, against wealth, against comforts, he pursues his ideal: to serve. Is a saint poor or disabled? No, he is not. He has succeeded in achieving true wisdom and wealth. He therefore possesses everything. And he never tires because while it is true that he is always active, it is also true that he is continuously nourished. And while he understands the sorrows of the world, he feeds on the delights of Heaven. He is nourished by God and delights in God. *He is a creature who has understood the meaning of life.*

As you can see I neither change nor mutilate the Law, neither do I corrupt it by superimposing human fomenting theories. I complete it. The Law is what it is and shall be such until the last day; not one word will be changed, not one precept will be abolished. It is crowned with perfection. To reach salvation it is sufficient to accept it as it was given. To obtain immediate union with God it is necessary to live it according to My advice. But since heroes are an exception, I will speak to common souls, to the mass of souls, so that no one may say that I have made what is necessary unknown, in order to reach perfection., But of everything I tell you, remember this: he who takes the liberty of infringing one of the least of these commandments, will be considered one of the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. And he who will induce others to infringe them, will be considered one of the least both with regard to himself and *led to the infringement*. He, instead, who through his life

and deeds, rather than by words, has convinced others to abide by the Law, will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven and his greatness *will be increased by each of those whom he has led to obey and thus sanctify themselves.*

³I know that what I am about to say will taste bitter to many tongues. But I cannot tell lies, even if the truth I am about to speak will procure Me many enemies.

I solemnly tell you that unless you create anew your justice, detaching it completely from the poor and unfairly defined justice which the Pharisees and Scribes have taught you; unless you are really more just than the Pharisees and Scribes, who think they are just because they increase the number of formulae without any substantial change of their spirits, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Beware of false prophets and erring doctors. They come to you clad as lambs, and they are rapacious wolves; they come clad with holiness and they deride God; they say they love the truth and they feed on falsehood. Study them before following them.

Man has a tongue and speaks with it, he has eyes and sees with them, he has hands and makes signs with them. But he has something else which is a more truthful witness of his real being: his deeds! And what are two hands joined in prayer, if a man is a thief and fornicator? And what are two eyes, which pretending to be inspired, roll in all directions, if after the farce, they greedily stare at a woman or an enemy, out of lust or for murder? And what is a tongue expert in whistling a false song of praise and in seducing by means of honeyed words, if behind your back it calumniates you and is capable of swearing falsely if only it could pass you off as a mean fellow? What is a tongue that says long hypocritical prayers and is then quick in killing the reputation of a neighbour or seducing his good faith? It is disgusting! And disgusting are untruthful hands and eyes. But the deeds of men, the *true* deeds, that is, his behaviour at home, in business, towards his neighbour and servants, are the things that testify: "This man is a servant of the Lord". Because holy deeds are the fruit of true religion.

A good tree does not bear bad fruit and a bad tree does not bear good fruit. Will these thorny bushes ever be able to give you tasty grapes? And those even more stinging thistles, will they ever be able to mature sweet figs for you? No, they will not. In actual fact you will be able to pick only a few sour blackberries from the former and uneatable fruits will come from the latter, which although flowers, are still thorny.

The man who is not just will be able to command respect by his appearance, and only by it. Also the downy thistle looks like a tuft of thin silvery threads adorned with diamonds by the dew. But if inadvertently you touch it, you find out that it is not a tuft, but a bundle of thorns, painful to man, harmful to sheep, so that shepherds uproot them from their pastures and burn them on the fire they light at night so that not even the seed may be spread. A just and provident step. I do not say to you: "Kill the false prophets and hypocritical believers". Nay, I say to you: "Leave the task to God". But I say to you: "Be careful, keep away from them that you may not be poisoned by their juices".

⁴I told you yesterday how God is to be loved. I will insist on how our neighbour is to be loved.

Once it was said: "You shall love your friend and hate your enemy". No, not so. That was all right for the times when man did not have the comfort of God's smile. But now new things have come, when God has loved man so much as to send His Word to redeem him. Now the Word is speaking. And it is already an effusion of Grace. Later the Word will consummate the sacrifice of peace and redemption and there will be not only an effusion of Grace, but Grace will be given to every soul believing in Christ. It is therefore necessary to elevate the love for our neighbour to a perfection that unifies friend and enemy.

Have you been slandered? Love and forgive. Have you been struck? Love and offer the other cheek to him who smacked you, considering that it is better that he gives vent to his wrath on you who can put up with it, rather than on somebody else who would take vengeance for the insult. Have you been robbed? Do not think: "This neighbour of mine is greedy", but charitable say: "This poor brother of mine is needy" and give him also your tunic if he has stolen your mantle. You will make it impossible for him to steal twice, because he will have no need to rob another person of his tunic. You may say: "It may be a vice and not a need". Well, give just the same. God will reward you for it and the wicked man will pay for it. But many times, and this should remind you of what I told you yesterday on lowliness, when he sees how he has been dealt with, his vice will drop from his heart and the sinner will redeem himself making amends for the theft by handing back what he had stolen.

Be generous towards those, who, being more honest, ask you for what they need, instead of robbing you. If the rich were really poor in spirit, as I explained yesterday, there would be no painful social inequalities, the cause of so many human and superhuman calamities. Always consider: "If I were in need, how would I feel if I were denied help?" and act according to the reply of your *ego*. Do to others what you would like done to yourself and do not do to others what you would not like done to yourself.

The old saying: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth", which is not one of the ten commandments, but was added because man, devoid of Grace, is such a beast that he only understands vengeance, the old saying has been cancelled. It has indeed been cancelled by the new word: "Love him who hates you, pray for him who persecutes you, justify him who slanders you, bless him who curses you, help the one who harms you, be pacific with quarrelsome people, be compliant with bothersome persons, willingly help those who have recourse to you without practising usury, do not criticise, do not judge". You do not know the particular reason for men's actions. Be generous and merciful in all kinds of assistance. The more you give the more you will be given and a full pressed down measure will be poured by God on to the lap of him who has been generous. God will not give you only according to what you have given, but He will give you much more. Endeavour to love and be loved. Quarrels are more costly than friendly settlements and a good grace is like honey, the flavour of which lasts for a long time on one's tongue.

⁵Love, love. Love friends and enemies, to be like your Father, Who allows the rain to fall on the good and the wicked and lets the sun shine on the just and unjust and will grant eternal sunshine and dew, and hellish fire and hail, when the good will be chosen, like selected ears of corn, amongst the sheaves of the harvest. It is not enough to love those who love you and from whom you expect reciprocation. That is no merit: it is a joy and also naturally honest men can do it. Also the publicans and the gentiles do it. But you must love according to God and out of respect for God, Who is the Creator also of those who are your enemies or are not very fond of you. I want the perfection of love in you and I therefore say: "Be perfect as your Father, Who is in Heaven, is perfect".

So great is the precept of love for your neighbour, the perfecting of the precept of love for your neighbour, that I no longer say, as it was said: "Do not kill" because he who kills will be condemned by men. But I say to you: "Do not get angry" because a higher judgement is above you and takes into account immaterial actions. Who insults his brother will be condemned by the Sanhedrin. But who treats him as a madman, and consequently has harmed him, will be condemned by God. It is useless to make offers at the altar, unless you, for the sake of God, first sacrifice your ill-feelings in your hearts and you fulfil the most holy rite of forgiveness. Therefore, when you are about to make an offering to God and you remember that you have wronged your brother and you bear him a grudge because of a fault of his, leave your offer before the altar, make first the sacrifice of your self-esteem, by becoming reconciled to your brother, then come to the altar and only then your sacrifice will be holy. Full agreement is always the best business. The judgement of man is precarious and who stubbornly challenges it, may lose the cause and have to pay the opponent down to the last coin or languish in jail.

In everything turn your eyes to God. Ask yourselves: "Am I entitled to do what God does not do to me?" Because God is not so stubborn and implacable as you are. Woe to you if He were! No one would be saved. Let that consideration induce you to mild, humble, pitiful feeling. And then you will certainly receive a reward from God, both here and in the next world.

⁶Here in front of Me, there is also one who hates Me and dare not say to Me: "Cure me" because he knows that I am aware of his thoughts. But I say: "Let it be done as you wish. And as the scales fall from your eyes, so may ill-feelings and darkness fall from your heart".

You may all go with My peace. I will speak to you again tomorrow."

The crowds disperse slowly, waiting perhaps for the cry of a miracle, which, however, is not heard.

Also the apostles and the first disciples, who remain on the mountain, ask: "Who was it? Has he not been cured?" and they insist with the Master, Who is standing, with folded arms, watching the crowd descending the mountain.

Jesus at first does not reply; He then says: "His eyes are cured, but his soul is not. It cannot be cured because it is full of hatred."

"But who is it? That Roman, perhaps?"

"No. A poor wretch."

"Why did You cure him, then?" asks Peter.

"Should I strike by lightening all the people like him?"

"Lord...I know that You do not want to me to say: "yes", and so I will not say it... but that is what I think... and it is the same..."

"It is the same, Simon of Jonah. You should know then... Oh! How many hearts covered with scales of hatred there are around Me! Come. Let us go up there, to the top, to look from the height at our beautiful sea of Galilee. Only you and I."

172. The Sermon of the Mount. The Beatitudes (Part Three).

26th May 1945. The Sermon of the Mount continues.

¹The same place and the same time. The people, with the exception of the Roman, are the same. Perhaps the crowd is larger because many people are standing at the beginning of the paths leading to the little valley.

Jesus is speaking:

"One of the errors easily made by man is to have lack of honesty towards himself. And since man is rarely sincere and honest, he has made some provision for himself in order to be compelled to go along the way he wants. This curb, which, after all, as he is a fiery horse, he soon slackens or gives a pull, as he wishes, and thus changes his gait; or he removes it completely and does as he likes, without considering what reproach he may receive from God, from men and from his own conscience. That bit is the oath. But no oath is necessary amongst honest people and God never taught you it. On the contrary He commanded you: "You shall not bear false witness", without any further addition. Because man ought to be frank without the need of anything except the loyalty of his word.

When in Deuteronomy mention is made of vows, also of the vows that are something which originated from a heart considered to be united to God, either through a feeling of need or a sentiment of gratitude, it is written: "Whatever passes your lips, you must keep to, and the vow that you have freely made with your own mouth to the Lord your God must be fulfilled". Mention is always made of the word given, without anything else but the word. Who feels the need of taking an oath is neither sure of himself nor of the opinion his neighbour has of him. And who makes other people take an oath testifies thereby that he distrusts the frankness and honesty of the swearer. As you can see, the habit of taking an oath is one of the consequences of man's moral dishonesty. And it is a shame for man. It is a double shame because man is not even faithful to the shameful thing which an oath is and by deriding God as easily as he derides his neighbour, he swears falsely with the greatest ease and calmness.

Can there be a more contemptible man than a perjurer? A perjurer in fact convinces his neighbour to believe him, often by using a sacred formula, thus calling God to be his accomplice and to stand surety for him, or by invoking his dearest affections: his father, mother, wife, children, his dead relatives, his very life and most essential organs, to support his false statements. He thus deceives his neighbour. He is an impious person, a thief, a traitor, a murderer. Of whom? Of God, of course, because he contaminates the Truth with his disgraceful lies and jeers at Him, daring Him: "Strike me, give me the lie, if You can. You are there, I am here and I laugh at it". Of course, you may laugh, liars and gibbers! But the

moment will come when you will not laugh and that will happen when He, to Whom all power is entrusted, will appear to you, dreadful in His majesty, and simply by His aspect will make you stand to attention and will strike you with the lightening of His eyes, before His voice hurls you to your eternal destiny branding you with His curse. He is a thief because he takes possession of a reputation which he does not deserve. His neighbour, impressed by his oath, grants it to him, and the serpent adorns himself with it, pretending to be what he is not. He is a traitor because by his oath he promises something which he does not want to keep. He is a murderer: he kills either the honour of his fellow man depriving him of his reputation through false witness or he kills his own soul because a perjurer is a vile sinner in the eyes of God, Who sees the truth, also when no one else sees it.

God cannot be deceived, neither by means of false words, nor by means of hypocritical deeds. He sees. He does not lose sight of each man for a moment. And there is no fortified stronghold or deep cellar which His eyes cannot penetrate. Also within you, God penetrates the stronghold which every man has round his heart. And He judges you not according to what you swear, but to what you do.

²I will therefore substitute another order for the one given to you, when the oath enjoyed great favour to put a restraint on lies and on the easiness of failure to keep a promise. I do not say as the ancients said: "Do not swear falsely, but keep your oath", but I say to you: "Never swear". Neither by Heaven which is the throne of God, nor by the earth which is the stool of His feet, nor for Jerusalem and her Temple which are the City of the Great King and the House of the Lord our God.

Do not swear either by the graves of the deceased or by their souls. Graves are full of the dross of the inferior part of man, which is common also to animals, and with regard to their souls, leave them in their dwellings. Do not cause them to suffer or to be struck with horror, if they are the souls of just people already in the foreknowledge of God. And although they are in such foreknowledge, which is partial knowledge, because they will not possess God in the fullness of His brightness until the moment of Redemption, they can but suffer seeing you sinners. And if they are not just, do not increase their torture by reminding them of their sin through yours. Leave the holy deceased in their peace and the unholy ones in their pains. Do not deprive the former of anything, do not add anything to the latter. Why appeal to the dead? They cannot speak. The saints because charity prevents them from speaking: they would have to give you the lie too many times. The damned because hell does not open its gates and the damned only open their mouths to curse, and their voices are suffocated by the hatred of Satan and of the demons, because the damned are like demons.

Do not swear by the head of your father or of your mother, or by the head of your wife or of your innocent children. You have no right to do so. Are they perhaps money or merchandise? Are they a signature on a document? They are more and they are less than such things. They are blood and flesh of your own blood, man, but they are also free creatures and you cannot use them as slaves to guarantee your false statements. And they are less than your own signature, because you are intelligent, free and grown up, you are not interdicted, neither are you a child who does not know what he is doing and must be represented by his parents. You are a man gifted with reason and consequently responsible for your actions and you must

act by yourself, employing, as a guarantee for *your own* deeds and words, *your own* honesty and your own frankness, the reputation that *you* enjoy with your neighbour, not the honesty, the frankness of your relatives and the reputation they enjoy. Are fathers responsible for their children? Yes, they are, but only as long as they are under age. After, everybody is responsible for himself. Not always just children are born of just parents, nor is it so that a holy woman is married to a holy man. Why then use the justice of a relative as a guarantee? Likewise, holy children may be born of a sinner, and as long as they are innocent, they are holy. Why then appeal to a pure soul for an impure act of yours, such as an oath which you wish to swear falsely?

Do not swear by your own head, your eyes, your tongue, your hands. You have no right to. Everything you have belongs to God. You are only the temporary guardians, the bankers of the moral or material treasures which God granted you. Why then make use of what does not belong to you? Can you add one hair to your head or change its colour? And if you cannot do that, why do you use your sight, your word, the freedom of your limbs to corroborate your oath? Do not challenge God. He could take you at your word and dry your eyes as He can dry up your orchards, or take your children away from you, or crush your houses to remind you that He is the Lord and you His subjects, and that who idolizes himself and thinks he is above God, challenging Him with his falsehood, is cursed.

³Let your speech be simply: yes, it is; no, it is not. Nothing else. Any addition is suggested by the Evil one, who later will laugh at you, because you cannot remember anything and you will contradict yourself and you will be jeered at and recognised as a liar.

Be sincere, My children, both in your words and in your prayers. Do not behave like the hypocrites, who, when praying, love to stand in synagogues or in the corners of squares where they may be seen by people and praised as just and pious men, whereas, within their families, they are guilty towards God and towards their neighbour. Do you not consider that that is like a form of perjury? Why do you want to maintain as true what is not true in order to win a reputation which you do not deserve? An hypocritical prayer aims at saying: "I am truly a saint. I swear it in the presence of those who see me and cannot deny they saw me praying". Like a veil laid on existing wickedness, a prayer said for such purposes becomes blasphemy.

Let God proclaim you saints and live in such a way that your whole life may shout on your behalf: "Here is a servant of God". But you must be silent for your own sake. Do not allow your tongue to be urged by pride and thus become an object of scandal in the angels' eyes. It would be better for you to become mute at once if you do not have the power to control pride and tongue, and you proclaim yourselves just and pleasing to God. leave that poor glory to proud and false people. Leave that fleeting reward to haughty and deceitful people! A poor reward! But that is what they want and they will not have any other, because you cannot have more than one. Either the true reward, the Heavenly one, which is eternal and just, or the sham one, the earthly one, which lasts as long as the life of man, and even less, and which is paid for, after this life, with a truly mortifying punishment, because it is an unjust reward.

⁴Listen how you must pray with your lips and with your work and with your whole selves, urged by your hearts which do love God and feel He is your Father, but they always remember who the Creator is and what the creature is, and in the presence of God they are always full of reverential love, whether you are praying or are busy, whether you are walking or resting, earning or helping.

I said urged by your hearts. It is the first and essential feature. Because everything comes from your hearts and your minds: your words, your eyes, your deeds are like your hearts. A just man draws good from his just heart and the more he draws the more he finds, because the good done creates more good, like blood that is renewed circulating in the veins and flows back to the heart enriched with new elements taken from the oxygen, which it had absorbed or from the food juices, which it had assimilated. Whereas a wicked man can draw but fraud and poison from his gloomy heart full of fraud and poison, which grow more and more because they are corroborated by accumulating sins, while the blessings of God accumulate in a good man. You may be sure that it is the exuberance of the heart that overflows from lips and reveals itself in deeds.

Make your hearts humble, pure, loving, trustful and sincere and love God with the chaste love of a virgin for her bridegroom. I solemnly tell you that each soul is a virgin married to the Eternal Lover, to God Our Lord; this world is the time of engagement during which the guardian angel of every man is the spiritual paranymp, and all the hours and contingencies of life are as many maids preparing the nuptial trousseau. The hour of death is the hour for the accomplished wedding when the introduction, embrace and union take place and the soul can raise the veil of the bridal dress and throw itself into the arms of God and the Spouse will not cause scandal by loving so.

But for the time being, o souls still victimised in the bonds of the engagement to God, when you wish to speak to the Spouse, withdraw to the peace of your abode, above all to the peace of your inner abodes and, angels of flesh helped by your guardian angels, speak to the King of angels. Speak to your Father in the secrecy of your hearts and of your inner rooms. Leave outside everything that belongs to the world: eagerness to be noted and to edify, and the scruples of long prayers full of words, of monotonous, tepid words lacking love.

For God's sake, get rid of standards in your prayers. There are really some people who waste many hours reciting a monologue only with their lips and which is a real soliloquy because not even the guardian angels listen to it; it is such a vain noise that they become absorbed in fervent prayer for the silly men guarded by them, in an effort to find a remedy. There are in fact some men who would not spend those hours in a different way, not even if God appeared to them saying: "The salvation of the world depends on your leaving such soulless manner of speech and going, shall we say, just to draw water from a well and pour it on to the ground for My sake and the sake of your fellow men". There are indeed many who believe that their monologue is more important than the kindness in receiving a visitor or the charity in helping a person in need. They are souls which have fallen into the idolatry of prayer.

Prayer is an act of love. And one can love praying or baking bread, meditating or assisting a sick person, making a pilgrimage to the Temple or looking after the

family, sacrificing a lamb or sacrificing one's desires, even the honest desire to concentrate on the Lord. It is sufficient for you to have your whole selves and all your actions impregnated with love. Be not afraid! The Father sees, understands, listens, grants. How many graces are granted for one single, true perfect sigh of love! How much wealth for an intimate sacrifice made with love. Do not be like the Gentiles. God does not need to be told what He has to do for your needs. The pagans may tell their idols, which cannot understand. But you cannot tell God, the True Spiritual God, Who is not only God and King, but also your Father and knows what you need, even before you ask Him.

⁵Ask and it will be given to you, look and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. Because whoever asks, will receive, whoever looks, will find and it will be opened to whomsoever knocks. When your child stretches his little hand towards you saying: "Father, I am hungry" do you perhaps give him a stone? Will you give him a snake if he asks for a fish? No, you will give him bread and fish, and caresses and blessings over and above, because it is pleasant for a father to nourish his son and see his happy smiles. If therefore you, whose hearts are imperfect, are capable of giving gifts to your children, out of a natural love that is common also to animals for their offspring, how much more will your Father, Who is in Heaven, grant to those who ask Him for the good and necessary things for their welfare. Do not be afraid to ask and do not be afraid not to receive!

However, I wish to warn you against an easy error: do not behave like those who are weak in their faith and in their love. Also amongst believers there are pagans whose poor religion is a mixture of superstition and faith, a building tampered with, into which all kinds of parasitic herbs have penetrated, so much so that it falls to pieces, and they, weak and pagans as they are, feel their faith is dying if they are not heard.

You ask. And you think it is fair to ask. And for that particular moment a certain grace may be right. But life does not end at *that* moment. And what is good today may *not* be good tomorrow. You do not know that, because you know only the present, and that is a grace of God, too. But God knows also the future. And God to save you a greater pain does not hear your prayers.

During My year of public life more than once I heard hearts moaning: "How much I suffered then, when God did not hear me. But now I say: 'It was better thus, because that grace would have prevented me from reaching this hour of God'". I heard others say to Me: "Why, Lord, do You not hear me? You grant it to everybody but not to me?" And yet, although I was sorry to see them suffer, I had to say: "I cannot", because to hear them would have meant hindering their flight to a perfect life.

Also the Father some times says: "I cannot". Not because He cannot satisfy the request immediately, but because He does not want to satisfy it in view of future consequences. Listen. A child is suffering from intestinal trouble. His mother calls a doctor and the doctor says: "He must fast to be cured". The mother, always pitiful, joins her moaning to her son's. She thinks that the doctor's order is severe and hard. She feels that such fasting and crying may be detrimental to her son. But the doctor is inflexible. At last he says: "Woman, I know, you don't. Do you want to lose your son or do you want me to save him?" The mother shouts: "I want him to live". "In

that case" says the doctor "I cannot let him have any food. It would kill him". Also the Father some times says so. You, pitiful mothers of your own *ego*, do not want to hear it weep because some grace has been denied. But God says: "I cannot. It would do you harm". The day will come, or eternity will come, when you will say: "Thank You, my God, for not listening to my foolishness!"

⁶What I said with regard to prayers, I say with regard to fasting. When you fast, do not look sad, as hypocrites do, who on purpose disfigure their faces that the world may know and believe that they are fasting, even if it is not true. They also have received their reward with the praise of the world, and will not receive another one. Instead, when you fast, look happy, wash your faces thoroughly so that they may look fresh and smooth, put oil on your heads and scents on your hair and smile like one who has been well fed. Oh! Truly there is no food that nourishes as much as love does! And who fasts with a loving spirit, feeds on love! I solemnly tell you that even if the world calls you "vain" and "publicans", the Father will see your heroic secret and will give you a double reward. One for your fasting and the other for the sacrifice of not being praised for it.

And now go and feed your bodies, since your souls have been nourished. Those two poor people may stay here with us. They will be blessed guests who will give flavour to our bread. Peace be with you."...

173. The Sermon of the Mount. The Beatitudes (Part Four).

27th May 1945. The Sermon of the Mount continues.

¹The crowd is growing larger and larger as the days go by. There are men, women, old people, children, rich and poor alike. The couple, Stephen and Hermas, is always present, although not yet associated with the old disciples led by Isaac. And there is also the new couple formed yesterday: the old man and the woman. They are in the very front, near their Comforter and they look much more cheerful than yesterday. The old man, to make up for the many months or years during which he was neglected by his daughter, has laid his wrinkled hand on the knees of the woman and she is caressing it out of the inborn instinct of a morally sound woman to be maternal.

Jesus passes near them to climb up too His rustic pulpit; and while passing He caresses the head of the old man who looks at Him as if he already saw Him as God.

Peter says something to Jesus Who makes a gesture as if He wanted to say: "It does not matter." But I do not understand what the apostle says. Peter remains near Jesus, and Judas Thaddeus and Matthew join him. The other apostles are scattered among the crowd.

²"Peace be with you all!

Yesterday I spoke of prayer, of swearing, of fasting. Today I want to instruct you in other perfections. They are also prayer, trust, sincerity, love, religion.

The first thing I will speak too you of is the right use of riches, changed into as many treasures in Heaven by the good will of the faithful servant. The treasures of the earth do not last. But the treasures of Heaven are eternal. Are you fond of what is yours? Are you sorry to die because you will no longer be able to look after your

property and you will have to leave it? In that case transfer them to Heaven. You may say: "What is of the earth will not enter Heaven and You have taught us that money is the filthiest thing on earth. How can we transpose them to Heaven?" No. You cannot take money, material as it is, into the Kingdom where everything is spiritual. But you can take the fruit of money.

When you give a banker your money, why do you do it? That he may make it bear interest. You do not deprive yourselves of it, not even temporarily, that he may give you back ten plus one or even more. Then you are happy and you praise the banker. Otherwise you say: "He is honest, but he is a fool". And, if instead of ten plus one, he should give you nine saying: "I lost the rest", you would denounce him and send him to prison. What is the fruit of money? Does the banker sow your money and water it to make it grow? No. The fruit is given by a skilful handling of business, so that by means of mortgage deeds and loans at interest, the money is increased by the premium rightly requested for the loan of the gold. Is it not so?

Now listen. God gives you earthly riches. To some people he grants a great deal, to some only as much as they need to live, and He says to you: "Now it is up to you. I have given them to you. Gain by these means an end as My love wishes for your own good. I have entrusted you with them, but not that you may turn them into evil. Make your wealth bear interest, for this real Fatherland, both because of the reputation I hold you in, and out of gratitude for My gifts".

³And here is the method to gain this end.

Do not accumulate your treasures on the earth, living for them, being cruel for them, cursed by your neighbour and by God on account of them. It is not worth it. They are never safe in this world. Thieves can always rob you. Fire can always destroy your houses. Diseases of plants and animals can exterminate herds and orchards. How many things undermine your property! Whether it is real estate and unassailable, such as houses and gold; whether its nature is liable to be damaged, such as all living things, vegetables and animals, or precious cloths, they can be ruined. Thunderbolts, fire and floods can destroy houses; thieves, blight, dry weather, rodents and insects can damage fields; catching diseases, fever, crippling, murrain can destroy cattle; moths and mice can ruin valuable pieces of cloth and precious pieces of furniture; oxidization can corrode vases, chandeliers and artistic gates; everything is subject to destruction.

But if you turn earthly welfare into supernatural good, then it becomes free from all damage by time, men and calamities. Store up your treasure in Heaven, where thieves cannot break in, and where no calamities occur. Work with merciful love for *all* the miseries of the earth. You may caress your money and kiss it if you wish so, you may rejoice at the plentiful crops, at the vineyards laden with grapes, at the countless number of olives which bend the branches of the olive-trees, and at your profile sheep with turgid udders. You may rejoice at all that, but not in a sterile or human way. Rejoice with love and admiration, with supernatural delight and foresight.

"Thank You, my God, for this money, for these crops, plants, sheep and for this business! Thank you, sheep, plants, meadows, business, which serve me so well. May you all be blessed, *because* through Your goodness, o Eternal Father, and through yours, o things of mine, I can do so much good to those who are hungry, or

are naked, homeless, sick, alone... Last year I did it for ten. This year - as I have more money, although I gave away much as alms, and the crops are more plentiful and the flocks larger - I will give twice, three times as much as last year. So that everybody, also those who have no wealth of their own, may partake of my joy and bless with me the Eternal Lord". That is the prayer of a just man. A prayer which joined to your deeds, transfers your wealth to Heaven, and not only keeps it eternally for you, but you will find it increased by the holy fruit of love.

Store your treasure in Heaven so that your heart may also be there, above and beyond the risk that not only your gold, your houses, fields and herds may suffer damage, but that your very heart may be attacked and robbed, corroded, burnt and killed by the spirit of the world. If you do that, you will have your treasure in your heart because you will have God within you until the blessed day when you will be in Him.

⁴But in order to diminish the fruit of charity, take care to be charitable in a supernatural spirit. What I said in regard to prayer and to fasting applies also to charity and to any other good action you may do.

Keep the good you may do free from the violating sensation of the world, keep it immune from human praise. Do not profane the scented rose of your charity and of your good deeds, as it is a true censer of perfumes agreeable to the Lord. Good is profaned by a proud spirit, by the desire to be noted when doing good and by the quest for praise. The rose of charity is then dribbled and eaten away by the big slimy snails of satisfied pride and the censer is filled with the fetid straw of the litter on which the proud man basks like a well fed animal.

Oh! Those deeds of charity accomplished to be pointed out by people! It would be better, much better, if they had not been performed at all. Who does not do them, commits a sin of harshness. Who does them letting people know both the amount given and the name of the person to whom it was given, and begging for praise, commits a sin of pride by making the offer known, as he says: "See how much I can afford?", sins against charity because he humbles the beneficiary by making his name known, and commits a sin of spiritual avarice as he wants to store up human praises... It is straw, nothing but straw. Let God and His angels praise you.

When you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you, to draw the attention of passers-by and win their praise, as the hypocrites do, who want to be praised by men and thus give alms only where they can be seen by many people. They, too, have received their reward and will not have another one from God. Do not commit the same sin and do not be so presumptuous. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing, so secret and modest is your almsgiving and then *forget about it*. Do not linger admiring your deed, swelling with it like the toad that contemplates itself with its veiled eyes in the pond and sees also the clouds, trees and a chart near the bank reflected in the still water and when it sees that it is so small as compared to them, which are so large, it swells up with air until it bursts. Also your charity is nothing as compared to the Infinite, which is the Charity of God, and if you wanted to become like Him and make your small charity so big as to be equal to His, you would fill yourselves with the wind of pride and would end up by perishing.

Forget about it. Forget about the action itself. A light, a sweet voice will always be present with you and will make your day bright, sweet and happy. Because that light will be the smile of God, the honey will be the spiritual peace, which still comes from God, and the voice will be the voice of God, the Father Who will say to you: "Thank you". He sees the hidden evil and the concealed good and will give you a reward for them. I can..."

5Master, You give the lie to Your own words!" The sudden resentful remarks comes from the centre of the crowd.

They all turn round in the direction of the voice. There is some confusion. Peter says: "I told You! Eh! When there is one of those over there... everything goes wrong!" Many people in the crowd hiss and grumble against the reviler.

Jesus is the only one who remains calm. He has folded His arms and is standing, tall as He is, on His rock, with the sun in front of Him, in His dark blue tunic.

The reviler, heedless of the reaction of the crowd, goes on: "You are a bad Master because You teach what You do not do and..."

"Be quiet! Go away! Shame!" shout the crowd. And again: "Go back to your Scribes! The Master is quite enough for us! Let the hypocrites go with the hypocrites! You false masters! Usurers!..." and they continue but Jesus thunders out: "Silence! Let him speak" and the crowds no longer shout but they whisper their insults glaring at him at the same time.

"Yes. You teach what You do not do. You told us that we should give alms without being seen, and yesterday in the presence of a whole crowd You said to two poor people: "Stay and I will appease your hunger"."

"I said: "Let the two poor people stay here. They will be the blessed guests who will give flavour to *our* bread". Nothing else. I did not say I wanted to satisfy their hunger. Which poor man has not at least some bread? It was My joy to extend to them our good friendship."

"Of course! You are cunning and You can play the lamb!..."

The old man stands up, turns round and raising his walking stick he shouts: "Infernal tongue who are accusing the Holy One, do you think that you know everything and that you can accuse Him of what you know? As you do not know who God is and who He is Whom you are insulting, so you do not know His deeds. Only the angels and my overjoyed heart know. Listen, men, listen everybody and see whether Jesus is the liar and the proud man that this traitor to the Temple is saying. He..."

"Be quiet, Ishmael! Be quiet for My sake! If I made you happy, please make Me happy by being silent" Jesus begs him.

"I obey You, Holy Son. But let me say only this: the blessing of an old faithful Israelite is on Him Who assisted me in the name of God and God put that blessing on my lips for me and for Sarah, my new daughter. But there will be *no* blessing on your head. I will not curse you. I will not foul, with a curse, my mouth which must say to God: "Receive me". I did not do it to her who disowned me, and I have already received a divine reward for it. But there is One who will take the place of the Innocent you are accusing and of Ishmael, the friend of God, Who assists Him."

A chorus of shouts closes the speech of the old man who sits down again, while a man sneaks away, followed by insults. The crowds then shout to Jesus: "Go on, go on, Holy Master! We will listen only to You. Listen to us, not to those cursed birds of evil omen! They are jealous, because we love You more than we love them! But You are holy, they are wicked. Go on, speak to us. You can see that we have no other wish but to hear You. Our homes, our business? They are nothing, we left them to hear You."

6"Yes, I will speak to you. But do not be upset by what happened. Pray for those poor people. Forgive them as I do. Because if you forgive men their faults, also your Father Who is in Heaven will forgive you your sins. But if you bear men a grudge and do not forgive them, neither will your Father forgive you your shortcomings. And everybody needs to be forgiven.

I was saying to you that God will give you a reward, even if you do not ask to be rewarded for the good you have done. But do not do good to be rewarded, to have a security for tomorrow. Do not do good restricted within narrow limits by fear: "And after, will I have enough for myself? And should I have nothing, who will help me? Will I find anyone who will do what I did? And when I will no longer be able to give, will I still be loved?"

Look: I have mighty friends among rich people and I have friends amongst the poor people of the earth. And I solemnly tell you that the mighty ones are not the most loved. I go to them not for My own sake or profit. But because they can give Me much for those who have nothing. I am poor. I have nothing. I would like to have all the treasures in the world and change them into bread for those who are hungry, into homes for the homeless, into clothes for the naked and into medicines for the sick. You may say: "You can cure people". Yes, I can do that and other things. But I do not always find faith in men, and I cannot do what I would do and would like to do, if the hearts of men had faith in Me. I would like to help also those who have no faith. And as they do not ask the Son of man for miracles, I would like, as a man to man, to help them. But I have nothing. That is why I stretch out My hand to those who are rich and I ask them: "Give me some alms, in the name of God". That is why I have high-placed friendships. Tomorrow, when I am no longer on the earth, there will still be poor people, but I shall not be there to work miracles for those who have faith, nor to give alms to lead to faith. But then My rich friends, who are in touch with Me, will have learned how to help and My apostles, after their experience with Me, will have learned how to give alms out of love for their brothers. And the poor will always receive assistance.

Yesterday, I received from one who has nothing, more than all those who are rich have given Me. He is a friend, and as poor as I am. But he gave Me something which no money can buy, and which made Me happy, bringing back to Me so many serene hours of My childhood and youth, when every evening the hands of a Just One were laid on My head and I went to rest with the blessing as the guardian of My sleep. Yesterday this poor friend of Mine made Me king with his blessing. You thus see that none of My rich friends has given Me what he gave Me. Therefore, be not afraid. Even if you no longer have the power of money, providing you have love and holiness, you can still assist who is poor, tired and distressed.

⁷And I therefore say to you: do not worry too much because you are afraid of having too little. You will always have what is necessary. Do not worry too much about your future. Nobody knows how much future there is ahead of him. Do not worry about what you will eat to support yourselves in life or what clothes you will put on to keep your bodies warm. The life of your souls is by far more precious than its clothes. And your Father knows. You ought to know, too. Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet they do not starve to death because the heavenly Father feeds them. And you men, the favourite creatures of the Father, are worth much more than they are.

Which of you, with all his talent, can add one single cubit to his height? If you cannot raise your height even by a span, how can you possibly change your future conditions, increasing your wealth, to ensure that you will live to a long and happy old age? Can you say to death: "You shall come for me when I want"? You cannot. Why, then, worry about your future? And why go to so much trouble lest you should be left without clothes? Think of the lilies growing in the fields: they do not work or spin, they do not buy any cloth from vendors, yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of them. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field, which is there today and will be thrown into the furnace tomorrow or used to feed the cattle and will thus end up in ash or dung, how much more He will see to you, His children.?

Do not be of little faith. Do not worry about an uncertain future saying: "What shall I eat when I am old? What shall I drink? How will I clothe myself?" Leave such worries to the Gentiles, who do not have the lofty certainty of the divine paternity. You have it and you know that the Father is aware of your needs and loves you. Therefore trust Him. Seek first what is really necessary: faith, goodness, charity, humility, mercy, purity, justice, meekness, the three and four main virtues, and all the others as well, in order to be the friends of God, and have a right to His Kingdom. And I can assure you that all the rest will be given to you as well, without having to ask for it. There is no rich man richer than a saint or any man safer than he is. God is with the saint and the saint is with God. He does not ask anything for his body, and God supplies what is necessary. But he works for his soul, and God gives Himself to him in this world, and Paradise in the next one.

So do not go to any trouble for what is not worth your trouble. Let your imperfections grieve you, not your scanty earthly means. Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself, and you will take care of it when you live it. Why worry today? Is life not already quite full of yesterday's sad memories and of today's troubles, that we should feel the need to add the nightmares of tomorrow's uncertainties? Leave to each day its own trouble! There will always be in life more pains than we would wish, without adding the present pains to future ones! Always say the great word of God: "Today". You are His children, created to His likeness. So say with Him: "Today".

And today I give you My blessing. May it accompany you until the beginning of a new today: of tomorrow, that is when I will give you once again My peace in the name of God."

174. The Sermon of the Mount. The Beatitudes (Part Five). Encounter with the Magdalene.

29th May 1945.

...⁶Jesus goes back to the crowds, towards the poor people and gives them alms according to His own judgement. Everybody is now happy and Jesus can speak.

"Peace be with you.

I explain the ways of the Lord to you, that you may follow them. Could you follow the path that goes down on the right hand side, and at the same time follow the one on the left hand side? You could not. Because if you take one you must leave the other. Even if the two paths were close together you could not walk any length with one foot in one and one in the other. You would end up by being tired and making a mistake, even if there was a wager. But between the path of God and Satan's there is a great distance, which becomes greater and greater, just like the two paths that come out up here, but as they run down the valley they become farther and farther from each other, as one goes towards Capernaum and the other towards Ptolomais.

Such is life, it bestrides past and future, good and evil. Man is in the centre with his will power and free will; at the ends, on one side there is God and His Heaven, on the other side Satan and his Hell. Man can choose. Nobody forces him. Do not say to Me: "Satan tempts us" as an excuse for descending towards the low path. Also God tempts with His love, which is very strong, with His words, which are most holy, with His promises, which are most alluring! Why then should you allow yourselves to be tempted by one only of the two, by the most undeserving one to be listened to? Are God's words, promises, love not sufficient to counteract Satan's poison?

Consider that that is not to your favour. When a man is physically very healthy, he is not immune from contagion, but overcomes it quite easily. Whereas if a man is already ill and consequently weak, he will almost certainly die in the event of catching a new infection, and if he survives, he is more seriously ill than previously because his blood lacks the strength to kill the contagious germs completely. The same applies to the superior part. If a man is morally and spiritually healthy and strong, you may be sure he is not free from temptations, but evil does not strike roots in him. When I hear anyone say to Me: "I approached this man and that one, I read this book and that one, I endeavoured to persuade this person and that one to do good, but in actual fact the evil which was in their minds and in their hearts, the evil which was in the book, entered my heart", I conclude: "Which proves that you *had already created* within yourself a suitable ground for penetration. Which proves that you are a weakling lacking in moral and spiritual strength. Because we must derive some good also from our enemies. By watching their errors we must learn not to fall into the same. An intelligent man does not become the laughing stock of the first doctrine he hears. A man saturated with a doctrine cannot make room in his mind for any other. This explains the difficulties met when one endeavours to convince those, who are persuaded of other doctrines, to follow the true Doctrine. But if you admit that you change your mind like a weathercock, I can see that you are thoroughly empty, that your spiritual stronghold is full of breaches, that the dam of your mind is leaking in hundreds of places, through which good water runs out and foul water runs in and you are so stupid and listless that you are not even aware of it and you do not see it. You are a wretch".

Of the two paths, therefore, choose the good one and proceed on it resisting to the allurements of senses, of the world, of science, of the demon. Leave half faiths, compromises, pacts with two people, one opposed to the other, to the men of the world. They, too, should avoid them, if they are honest. At least you, men of God, must shun them. You cannot have them either with God or with Mammon. You must not have them with yourselves either, because they would be of no value. If your actions are a mixture of good and evil, they are of no value whatsoever. The entirely good ones would be cancelled by the bad ones. The evil ones would lead you straight into the Enemy's arms. Therefore do not indulge in them. Be loyal in your service.. No one can serve two masters with two different minds. He will either love one and hate the other or viceversa. You cannot be both of God and of Mammon. The spirit of God cannot be conciliated with the spirit of the world. The former ascends, the latter descends. The former sanctifies, the latter corrupts. And if you are corrupt, how can you act with purity? Senses light up in corrupt people and other lusts follow senses.

⁷You already know how Eve was corrupted and how Adam became corrupt through her. Satan kissed the woman's eyes and bewitched them, so that every aspect, so far pure, became impure for her and roused strange curiosities. Then Satan kissed her ears and opened them to the words of a new science: his own. Also Eve's mind wanted to know what was not necessary. Then Satan showed her eyes and mind, now awake to Evil, what previously they had not seen or understood, and everything in Eve became sharp and corrupt. And the Woman went to the Man, revealed her secret and persuaded Adam to taste of the new fruit, so beautiful to the eye and so strictly forbidden so far. And she kissed him and looked at him with mouth and eyes already fouled by Satan's gloomy disorder. And corruption penetrated Adam who saw, and through his eyes he craved for what was forbidden and he bit it with his helpmate and fell from such height into mud.

A corrupt person will draw another person to corruption, unless the latter is a saint in the true sense of the word.

Watch your eyes, men. Both the eyes of your bodies and the eyes of your minds. If they are corrupt, they can but corrupt all the rest. The eye is the light of the body. Your thought is the light of your heart. But if your eye is not pure - because since the organs are subject to thought, a corrupt thought will corrupt also senses - everything in you will become obscure, and a seducing haze will create impure phantasms in you. Everything is pure in him who has a pure thought which causes a pure look, and the light of God descends as a master where there is no obstruction of senses. But if out of ill will you have accustomed your eyes to disorderly visions, everything will become darkness in you. In vain you will look at the most holy things. In the darkness they will be nothing but blackness and blackness will be the deeds accomplished by you.

⁸Therefore, o children of God, defend yourselves against yourselves. Look after yourselves diligently against all temptations. There is no evil in being tempted. An athlete prepares himself for victory fighting. But it is evil to be overcome because you are not prepared and you are negligent. I know that everything serves as a temptation. I know that defence is exhausting. I know that it is tiring to have to struggle. But think of what you will gain through these things. And for one hour of

pleasure, whatever kind it may be, would you like to lose an eternity of peace? What does the pleasure of the flesh, of gold, of thoughts leave you? Nothing. What do you gain by rejecting them? Everything. I am speaking to sinners, because man is a sinner. Well, tell me the truth: after satisfying your senses, your pride, your greed, have you felt fresher, happier, safer? In the hour following your satisfaction, which is always the time of meditation, have you sincerely felt that you were happy? I have never tasted the bread of sensuality. But I will reply in your stead: "No. Languor, unhappiness, uncertainty, nausea, fear, restlessness: that was the juice squeezed out of the hour spent in pleasure".

But I beg you: while I say to you: "Never do that", I also say to you: "Do not be inflexible with those who make mistakes". Remember that you are all brothers, made of one flesh and one soul. Consider that there are many reasons why one is led too sin. Be merciful towards sinners and kindly help them and take them back to God, showing them that the path they have followed is full of dangers for the flesh, the mind and the spirit. Do that and you will receive a great reward... Because the Father Who is in Heaven is merciful to good people and He knows how to give you one hundred fold to one.

...The sermon has already started. I understand that it is the Sermon of the Mount. But the Beatitudes have already been proclaimed. I would say that the sermon is drawing towards the close because Jesus says: "Do that and you will receive a great reward. Because the Father Who is in Heaven is merciful to good people and He knows how to give you one hundred fold to one. So I say to you..."

¹¹There is much excitement amongst the people who crowd round the path leading to the tableau. The people closest to Jesus turn their heads round. Everybody's attention is distracted. Jesus stoops speaking and turns His eyes in the same direction as the others. He is serious and handsome in His dark blue tunic, His arms folded on His chest while the first rays of the sun rising above the eastern peak of the hill shine on His head.

"Make room, you plebeians" shouts the angry voice of a man. "Make room for the beauty who is passing..." and four dandies, smartly dressed, come forward, one of whom is certainly Roman, because he is wearing a Roman toga; they are carrying Mary of Magdala, still a great sinner, triumphantly on their hands, crossed to form a seat.

And she smiles with her beautiful mouth, throwing back her head and her golden hair, which is all plaits and curls held by precious hair-pins and a pale gold leaf strewn with pearls, which encircles the upper part of her forehead like a diadem, from which small light curls hang down to veil her splendid eyes, made larger and more seductive by a refined make-up. The diadem disappears behind her ears, under the mass of plaits at the back of her snow-white completely bare neck. And her nakedness extends much further than her neck. Her shoulders are bare down to her shoulder blades and her breast is even more so. Her dress is held on her shoulders by two little gold chains. It is completely sleeveless. ...

"The desire of the goddess has been satisfied" says the Roman. "Rome has acted as a mount for the new Venus. Over there, there is the Apollo you wanted to see. Seduce Him, therefore... But leave some crumbs of your charm also to us."

Mary laughs and with an agile provoking movement she jumps to the ground, showing her small feet shod in white sandals with golden buckles, as well as a good length of her leg. Then her dress covers her whole body. It is in fact a very wide one of snow-white wool as thin as a veil, held tight at the waist, very low, near her sides, by a large belt made of supple gold bosses. And she stands on the green tableland, where there is a vast amount of lilies of the valley and wild narcissi, like a flower of flesh, an impure flower, which has opened there by witchcraft.

She is more beautiful than ever. Her tiny purple lips seem a carnation opening on the whiteness of her perfect set of teeth. Her face and body would satisfy the most exacting painter or sculptor both because of her complexion and her figure. With her broad breast, her perfectly sized sides, her naturally supple slender waist, as compared with her sides and breast, she does look like a goddess, as the Roman said, a goddess sculptured in a light pinkish marble on the sides of which a fabric is draped and then hangs in the front in a mass of folds. Everything has been devised to please.

Jesus stares at her. And she defiantly resists His look while she smiles and twists lightly as the Roman tickles her, running on her bare shoulders and breast a lily picked among the grass. Mary with affected indignation, lifts her veil saying: "Have respect for my innocence" which causes the four to burst into a guffaw.

Jesus continues staring at her. As soon as the noise of the laughter fades away, Jesus resumes speaking, as if the apparition of the woman had kindled the flame of the sermon, which was losing intensity in its conclusion, and *no longer looks at her*. He looks instead at His audience who seem embarrassed and scandalised at the event.

¹²Jesus says: "I told you to be faithful to the Law, to be humble and merciful, to love not only your brothers by the flesh but also those who are brothers because they were born like you, of man. I told you that forgiveness is better than hostility, that compassion is better than stubbornness. But now I tell you that you must not condemn unless you are free from the fault you wish to condemn. Do not behave like the Scribes and Pharisees who are severe with everybody except themselves, who call impure what is exterior and can only contaminate what is exterior and then they receive impurity in the very depths of their hearts.

God does not stay with the impure. Because impurity corrupts what is the property of God: souls, and in particular the souls of children who are angels spread over the earth. Woe to those who tear off their wings with the cruelty of devilish beasts and throw those flowers of Heaven into the mire, by letting them taste the flavour of material things! Woe... It would be better if they died struck by thunderbolts rather than commit such sin!

Woe to you, rich and fast living people! Because it is amongst you that the greatest impurity thrives and idleness and money are its bed and pillow! You are now sated. The food of concupiscence reaches your throats and chokes you. But you will be hungry. And your hunger will be terrible, insatiable and unappeasable for ever and ever. You are now rich. How much good you could do with your wealth! Instead you do so much harm both to yourselves and to other people. But you will experience a dreadful poverty on a day that will have no end. You now laugh. You

think you are triumphing. But your tears will fill the ponds of Gehenna. And they will never cease.

Where does adultery nestle? Where does the corruption of young girls hide? Who has two or three licentious beds, in addition to his own matrimonial one, on which he squanders his money and wastes the strength of a healthy body given to him by God that he may work his , *his* family and not to wear himself out through filthy unions which place him below unclean beasts? You heard that it was said: "You shall not commit adultery". But I tell you that he who looks at a woman lustfully, that she who wished to go with a man, has already committed adultery in his or her heart, *simply by that*. There is *no* reason which can justify fornication. *None*. Neither the abandonment nor the repudiation of a husband. Nor pity for the repudiated woman. You have one soul only. When it is joined to another soul by a pact of faithfulness, it must not lie. Otherwise the beautiful body for which you sin will go with you, o impure souls, into the inexhausted fire. Mutilate your body, rather than fill it for ever by damning it. Come to your moral senses, o rich men, verminous sinks of vice, so that you may not disgust Heaven..."

¹³Mary, who at the beginning listened with a face which was a dream of allurement and irony, sneering now and again, at the end of the sermon becomes livid with rage. She realises that although Jesus does not look at her, He is speaking *to her*. She becomes more and more livid and rebellious and at last can resist no longer.

She spitefully envelops herself in her veil and followed by the glances of the crowds jeering at her and by Jesus' voice which pursues her, she runs down the slope of the mountain, leaving strips of her dress on the thistles and dogrose bushes growing on the edges of the path, laughing out of anger and mockery.

I see nothing else. But Jesus says: "You will see more."

...

¹⁷Jesus smiles and begins to speak.

"You heard that in the old days it was said: "You shall not commit adultery". Those who among you have heard Me in other places know that I have spoken about that sin several times. Because, look, as far as I am concerned, it is a sin not for one person only, but for two or for three. I will make Myself clear. An adulterer sins with regard to himself, he sins with regard to his accomplice, and sins causing the betrayed wife or husband to sin, they may in fact be led to despair or to commit a crime. That with regard to the accomplished sin. But I will say more. I say: "Not only the accomplished sin, but the desire to accomplish it is already a sin". What is adultery? It is to crave for him, who is not ours, or for her, who is not ours. One begins to sin by wishing, continues by seduction, completes it by persuasion, crowns it by the deed.

How does one begin? Generally with an impure glance. And that is connected with what I said before. An impure eye sees what is concealed from a pure eye and through the eye thirst enters the throat, hunger enters the body and fever the blood. A carnal thirst, hunger, fever. Delirium begins. If the person looked at is honest, the delirious looker-on is left alone on tenterhooks, or will denigrate in revenge. If also

the person looked at is dishonest, he will reply to the look and the descent into sin begins.

I therefore say to you: "If a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her because his thought has accomplished the deed of his desire". If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to be without one eye than to be thrown into the infernal darkness for ever. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away, for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell. It is true that it is written that deformed people cannot serve God in the Temple. But after this life, the deformed by birth who are holy and those who are deformed out of virtue, will become more beautiful than angels and will serve God, loving Him in the happiness of Heaven.

¹⁸It has also been said to you: "Anyone who divorces his wife, must give her a writ of dismissal". But that is to be condemned, for it does not come from God. God said to Adam: "This is the helpmate I made for you. Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it". And Adam, full of superior intelligence, because sin had not yet dimmed his reason made perfect by God, exclaimed: "This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh. This is to be called woman, that is: another I, because this was taken from man. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and the two become one body". And in an increased splendour of light the Eternal Light approved smiling Adam's word, which became the first *indelible* law. Now, if owing to the ever increasing hardness of man, the human lawgiver had to give a new law; if owing to the ever increasing inconstancy of man, the lawgiver had to put a restraint and say: "If you have dismissed her you cannot take her back", that does not cancel the first genuine law, passed in the Earthly Paradise and approved by God.

I say to you: "Whoever divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, exposes her to adultery". Because what will the divorced woman do in ninety per cent of the cases? She will get married again. With what consequences? Oh! How much there is to be said about that! Do you know that you can cause involuntary incests by such system? How many tears are shed because of lust. Yes: lust. There is no other name for it. Be frank. Everything can be overcome when the spirit is righteous. But everything is an excuse to satisfy sensuality when the spirit is lustful. Woman's frigidity, dullness, ineptitude for housework, shrewish tongue, love for luxury, everything can be overcome, also diseases and irascibility, if one loves holily. But as after some time one does not love as on the first day, what is more than possible is considered impossible and a poor woman is thrown on to the road and to perdition.

He who rejects her commits adultery. He who marries her after the divorce, commits adultery. Death only dissolves a marriage. Remember that. And if your choice is an unhappy one bear the consequences as a cross, being both of you unhappy but holy, without making also the children unhappy, as they are innocent and suffer more because of such unfortunate situations. The love for your children should cause you to ponder one hundred times, also in the case of death of your partner. Oh! I wish you could be satisfied with what you already have had and to which God said: "Enough!" I wish you, widows and widowers, realised that death is

not an attenuation but an elevation to the perfections of parents! To be a mother in the place of a dead mother. To be a father in the place of a deceased father. To be two souls in one and receive the love for the children from the cold lips of the dying partner and say: "Go in peace, without worrying for those who were born of you. I will continue to love them, on my own and on your behalf, I will love them twice and will be their father and mother and they will not suffer the unhappiness of orphans, neither will they feel the inborn jealousy that the children of a remarried consort experience with regard to him or her who takes the sacred place of mother or father called by God to a new abode".

¹⁹My children, My sermon is drawing to its end, as the day is nearing its end while the sun is setting in the west. I want you to remember the words of this meeting on the mountain. Engrave them in your hearts. Read them over and over again and very often. Let them be your everlasting guidance. And above all be good to those who are weak. Do not judge that you may not be judged. Remember that the moment might come when God could remind you: "That is how you judged. So you knew that that was bad. *You therefore committed a sin, knowing what you were doing.* You must now pay for it".

Charity is an absolution. Be charitable to everybody and in everything. If God gives you much assistance to keep you good, do not be proud of it. But endeavour to climb the full length of the ladder of perfection and give a hand to those who are tired or unaware and to those who are easily disappointed. Why do you observe so diligently the splinter in your brother's eye if first you do not go to the trouble of taking the plank out of your own eye? How dare you say to your brother: "Let me take the splinter out of your eye" while the plank in your eye is blinding you? Son, do not be a hypocrite. Take the plank out of your own eye first and then you will be able to take the splinter out of your brother's eye, without ruining him.

As you avoid being uncharitable, avoid also being imprudent. I said to you: "Give a hand to those who are tired or unaware and to those who are easily disappointed". But if it is charity to teach the ignorant, to encourage the tired, to give new wings to those whose old ones are broken, it is imprudence to reveal the eternal truths to those affected by satanism, who take possession of them to pretend they are prophets, to insinuate themselves among simple people, to corrupt, lead astray and sacrilegiously foul the things of God. Absolute respect, to be able to speak, to be silent, to ponder, to act, are the virtues of the true disciple in order to make proselytes and serve God. You are gifted with the faculty of reason and, if you are just, God will grant you all the light to make a better use of your reason. You must consider that the eternal truths are like pearls, and no one has ever seen pearls thrown in front of pigs, which prefer acorns and rank broth to precious pearls, which they could crush under their feet and then, furious at being mocked at, they would turn against you to tear you to pieces. Do not give dogs what is holy. That is for the present and the future.

I have told you much, My children. Listen to My words; he who listens to them and puts them into practice, can be compared to a thoughtful man, who wishing to build a house, chose a rocky place. He certainly worked hard to lay the foundations. He had to work with pick and stone chisel, he got callous hands and broke his back. But he was able to put lime in the fissures of the rock and lay bricks one close to the

other, like the wall of a fortress, and the house was as solid as a mountain. The house was exposed to the inclemency of the weather and to downpours, the rain caused the rivers to overflow their banks, the winds whistled, the waves beat it, but the house resisted everything. Such is he who has a sound faith. Instead who listens superficially and does not strive to engrave My words in his heart, because he is aware that to do so he would have to work hard, suffer and extirpate too many things, is like a man who out of indolence and foolishness builds his house on sand. As soon as the inclement weather comes, the house quickly built, quickly collapses and the forlorn fool contemplates the rubble of the house and the ruin of his capital. And in that case the ruin can be repaired with expenses and work. But if the edifice of the spirit crashes, because it was badly built, there is no way to rebuild it. One cannot build in future life. Woe to those who present themselves there with rubble!

20I have finished. I am now going down towards the lake and I bless you in the name of the One and Triune God. May peace be with you."

But the crowds shout: "We are coming with You. Let us come. No one has words like Yours!" And they begin to follow Jesus Who goes down on the opposite side from which He came up and which is in the direction of Capernaum.

The descent is steeper but faster and they soon reach the foot of the mountain on a green flowery plain.

EPILOGUE:

183 Jesus at Magdala. He Meets with Mary Magdalene the Second Time.

12th August 1944.

4"Do you remember, Martha, what I told you once? "Mary is ill". You did not want to believe it. Now you can see it. You say that she is mad. She says herself that she is ill and suffers from a sinful fever. I say: she is ill because she is possessed by a demon. It is still a disease. And her incoherent behaviour, her fury, her tears, her affliction, her longing for Me are stages of her illness, which has come to a moment of crisis and has its most violent fluctuations. You are doing the right think in being good to her and patient with her. You are right in speaking to her of Me. Do not be disgusted at mentioning My Name in her presence. Poor soul of My Mary! Her soul also was created by the Father and it is in no way different from all other souls, from yours, from Lazarus', from the souls of the apostles and disciples. Her soul also was included and foreseen to be amongst the souls for whom I became flesh in order to be their Redeemer. In actual fact I have come more for her than for you, Lazarus, the apostles and disciples. Poor soul of My Mary, who is suffering so much! Of My poor Mary who has been poisoned with seven poisons besides the first universal poison! Of My imprisoned Mary! But let her come to Me! Let her breathe the air I breathe, let her hear My voice and meet My glance!... She calls herself: "Manure... Oh! My poor dear soul in whom the demon of pride is the weakest of the seven possessing her! Only because of that she will be saved!"

5"And if she should find someone who may lead her astray once again, when she comes out? She is afraid of that herself..."

"And she will always be afraid of that, now that she has gone so far as to loathe vice. But be not afraid. When a soul already has the desire of coming to God, and is held back only by the diabolic Enemy, who is aware that he is going to lose his

prey, and by the personal enemy of one's ego, which reasons in a human way and judges itself in a human way, ascribing to God its own judgement to prevent the soul from controlling the human ego, then that soul is already strong enough against the attacks of vice and of vicious people. It has found the Polar Star and will no longer deviate. And do not say to her again: "You have not thought of God and You are instead thinking of Israel?" It is an implicit reproach. Do not do that. She has just come out of a fire. She is one big sore. Touch her lightly only with balms of kindness, of forgiveness and hope... Leave her free to come. You must tell her when you are thinking of coming, but do not say to her: "Come with me". On the contrary, if you understand that she wants to come, do not come yourself. Go back and wait for her at home. She will come back to you broken by Mercy. Because I must remove the wicked power that is holding her and for a few hours she will look like a woman whose veins have been cut or whose bones have been removed by a doctor. But later she will feel better. She will be dumbfounded. She will be in great need of caresses and silence. Assist her as if you were her second guardian angel: without letting her perceive your presence. And if you see her weeping, let her weep. And if you hear her asking herself questions, leave her alone. And if you see her smile, and then become serious, and then smile once more in a different way, with a different look, with a different countenance, do not ask her questions, do not make her feel uneasy. She is suffering more now, ascending, than she did, descending. And she must *ascend by herself*, as she descended by herself. She could not bear you to look at her when she was descending, because your eyes were full of reproach. And she cannot bear you to look at her now that her sense of shame has been aroused at last. Then she was strong, because Satan, her master, was with her and a wicked strength supported her and she could challenge the world, and yet she could not bear to be seen by you in her sin. Now Satan is no longer her master. He is still a guest in her, but Mary's will is holding him by the throat. And she has not Me yet. That is why she is too weak. She cannot even bear your caressing sisterly eyes watching her confession to her Saviour. All her energy is employed and consumed in holding the sevenfold demon by the throat. For all the rest she is defenceless and unclothed. But I will reclothe her and fortify her. Go in peace, Martha. And tomorrow tell her tactfully that I shall be speaking near the torrent of the Fountain, here in Capernaum, after vesper. Go in peace. I bless you."

⁶Martha is still perplexed.

"Do not become incredulous, Martha" says Jesus Who is watching her.

"No, my Lord. But I was thinking... Oh! Give me something that I may give Mary, to give her a little strength... She is suffering so much... and I am so afraid that she may not be able to triumph over the demon!"

"You are a little girl! Mary has Me and you. Can she possibly not succeed? However, take this. Give me your hand, which has never sinned, and has always been kind, merciful, active and pious. It has always made gestures of love and prayer. It has never been lazy or idle or corrupt. Now, I will hold it between My hands to make it even holier. Raise it against the demon and he will not endure it. And take this belt of Mine. Never part with it. And every time you see her, say to yourself: "The power of Jesus is stronger than this belt of Jesus and by it everything

can be overcome: demons and monsters as well. I must not be afraid". Are you happy now? My peace be with you. Go in peace."

Martha worships Him and goes out.

Jesus smiles when he sees her climb on to the wagon, which Marcella has called to the gate, and depart towards Magdala.

232. Parable of the Lost Sheep.

12th August 1944.

¹Jesus is speaking to the crowds. Standing on the wooded embankment of a little torrent, He is addressing a large crowd spread in a field where the corn has already been cut and the burnt stubbles are a distressing sight. It is evening. Night is falling, but the moon is already rising. Flocks of sheep are going back to the folds and the sound of cattle-bells mingles with the loud chirping of crickets and the high-pitched drone of cicadas. Jesus takes the passing flocks as a starting point.

He says: "Your Heavenly Father is like a solicitous shepherd. What does a good shepherd do? He looks for good pastures for his sheep, where there is no hemlock or other poisonous herbs, but there is plenty sweet clover, aromatic mint and bitter but wholesome chicory. He looks for places where beside good grass there is the cool shade of trees and the clear water of a stream and he ensures that there are no asps among the green grass. He does not prefer the richest pastures, because he knows that snakes and harmful herbs are quite common there and thus dangerous for his sheep. He prefers instead mountain pastures, where the dew keeps the grass clean and fresh and the strong sunshine keeps snakes away and the breezy air is light and healthy, not like the unhealthy air in the plains. The good shepherd watches his sheep one by one. He cures them when they are sick and if they get hurt he dresses their wounds. He reproaches the sheep that might be sick because they are too greedy for food and he calls to a different place the ones that might be harmed by staying too long in a damp spot or in the sunshine. And if one is unwilling to eat he looks for acidulous aromatic herbs suitable to whet its appetite and he feeds it with his own hands, speaking to it as if it were a friend. That is what the good Father Who is in Heaven does with His children wandering on the earth. His love is the staff that gathers them together, His voice is their guide, His Law is His pasture, Heaven His fold.

²But one of his sheep left him. How fond of it he was! It was young, pure, white, like a cloud in an April sky. The shepherd used to look at it with so much love, thinking of how much good he could do for it and how much love he could receive from it. And it strayed. A tempter passed on the road that runs along the pasture. He does not wear a plain jacket, but has on a many-coloured robe. He does not have a leather belt with hatchet and knife hanging from it, but he wears a golden belt, from which little bells hang, as sweet-sounding as the singing of a nightingale, and phials of inebriating scents... He does not carry a shepherd's staff as the good shepherd does, to gather the sheep together and defend them and should his staff not be sufficient, he is ready to defend them with his hatchet and knife and even with his life. But the tempter who is passing by, is holding in his hands a terrible sparkling with gems and from it smoke rises, which is stench and scent at the same time, and it bewilders as the sparkling of the fake jewels dazzles. He passes by singing and

drops handfuls of salt, which shines on the dark road... Ninety-nine sheep look and remain where they are. The one hundredth, the youngest and dearest one, makes a leap and disappears behind the tempter. The shepherd calls it. But it does not come back. It runs faster than the wind to join the tempter who has just gone by, and to sustain itself while running it tastes some of the salt, which as soon as it is swallowed, causes a strange burning frenzy so that the poor sheep craves for cool water in the deep green shades of forests. And following the tempter it goes into the forests, and it climbs and descends and falls... once, twice, three times. And each time it feels round its neck the slimy embrace of reptiles, and being thirsty it drinks foul water and when it is hungry it eats herbs shining with revolting slobber.

³And in the meantime what does the good shepherd do? He leaves the ninety-nine faithful ones in a safe place and he sets out and does not stop until he finds traces of the lost sheep. Since it does not come back to him, although he calls it in a loud voice begging the wind to carry his call to it, he goes to the sheep. And he sees it from afar, intoxicated in the coils of reptiles, so intoxicated that it does not feel nostalgia for the man who loves it, on the contrary it mocks him. And he is aware that it is guilty of entering, like a thief, the abode of other people, so guilty that it dare not look at him... And yet the good shepherd does not become tired... and he goes on looking for it all the time, following its traces and weeping when he loses them: strips of fleece; traces of its soul; traces of blood; various crimes; filth; proofs of its lust; but he goes on and reaches it. Ah! I found you, my beloved one. I reached you at last! How far have I walked for you, to take you back to the fold. Do not bend your dejected head. Your sin is buried in my heart. Nobody will know about it, except me, and I love you. I will defend you from the criticism of other people, I will shield you with my body to protect you against the stones of accusers. Come. Are you wounded? Oh! let me see your wounds. I know them. But I want you to show them to me with the confidence you had when you were pure, and you looked at me, your shepherd and your God, with innocent eyes. There they are. They have all the same name. How deep they are! Who inflicted these very deep ones in the depth of your heart? It was the Tempter, I know. It is he who has neither staff nor hatchet, but he strikes more deeply with his poisonous bite, and after him, the false jewels of his thurible strike: the ones that seduced you by sparkling... and they were hellish sulphur brought to daylight to burn your heart. Look how many wounds! How much torn fleece, how much blood, how much bramble.

⁴O my poor little disappointed soul! But tell me: if I forgive you, will you still love me? Tell me: if I stretch out my arms to you, will you come to them? Tell me: do you thirst for good love? Well: come and be born again. Come back to the holy pastures. Weep. Your tears and mine will wash the traces of your sin and in order to nourish you, because you are worn out by the evil which has burnt you, I open my chest and my veins and I say to you: "Feed on them, and live!" Come here that I may take you in my arms. We will walk faster to the safe holy pastures. You will forget everything of this miserable hour. And your ninety-nine good sisters will rejoice at your return, because I tell you, my little lost sheep, which I have looked for coming from far away, and I reached and saved, I tell you, there is more rejoicing among the good, for one who was lost and has been found, than for ninety-nine just who never left the fold."

⁵Jesus has never turned round to look at the road behind Him and on which Mary of Magdala has arrived in the dim light of the evening. She is most elegant, but at least she is dressed, and she is wearing a dark veil, which conceals her features and figure. But when Jesus continues His speech from the words: "I found you, my beloved one:", Mary hides her hands under the veil and weeps, softly and continuously.

People cannot see her, because she is on this side of the embankment, which runs along the road. Only the moon, now high in the sky, and Jesus' spirit can see her...

And He says to me: "The comment is in the vision itself. But I shall speak to you again about it. Rest now, because it is time, I bless you, My faithful Mary."

233. Comment on Three Episodes Connected with the Conversion of Mary of Magdala.

13th August 1944.

¹Jesus says:

"As from January, when I let you see the supper in the house of Simon, the leper, you and he who guides you, have wished to know more about Mary of Magdala and the words I spoke to her. Now, after seven months, I reveal those pages of the past to you, to make you happy and to give a rule to those who *must* learn to bend over those women, who are lepers in their souls, and also to invite those poor wretches, who are suffocating in their sepulchres of vice, to come out of them.

²God is good. He is good to everybody. He does not measure by means of human measures. He does not discriminate between mortal sins. Sin, whatever it may be, grieves Him. Repentance pleases Him and makes Him willing to forgive. Resistance to Grace makes Him inflexibly severe because Justice cannot forgive the unrepentant *who will die as such, notwithstanding all the help given to them so that they might be converted*. But the main cause of forty per cent, if not fifty per cent, of non-conversions is the negligence of those responsible for conversions, that is, a mistaken false zeal protecting *real* selfishness and pride, whereby one is happy in one's refuge, without having to descend into dirt to save a heart from it. "I am pure, I deserve respect. I will not go where there is filth and where they may fail to respect me".

But has he who speaks thus not read the Gospel where it is written that the Son of God came to call tax collectors and prostitutes beside the honest people, the only honest ones according to the old Law? Does he not think that pride is impurity of the mind, and lack of charity is impurity of the heart? Will you be despised? I was despised before you and more than you, and I was the Son of God. Will you have to wear your clean robe where there is filth? And did I not touch that filth with My hands to make it stand up and say to it: "Walk on this new way"? Do you not remember what I said to your first predecessors? "Whatever town or village you go into, ask for someone trustworthy and *stay* with him". So that the world may not grumble. *Because the world is inclined to see evil in everything*. But I added: "When you enter houses - 'houses' I said, not 'house' - salute them saying: 'Peace to this house'. And if the house deserves it, peace will descend upon it, if it does not, your peace will come back to you". I said that to teach you that until there is a definite proof of unrepentance, you must have the same heart *for everybody*. And I completed My lesson by saying: "And if anyone does not welcome you and does

not listen to your words, as you walk out of those houses or towns shake the dust from your feet". Sin is but *dust*, and God makes good souls, who have constantly loved Him, like smooth crystal cubes: it is enough to blow or shake the dust and it disappears without doing any harm.

³Be *really* good. Be thoroughly united, with eternal Bounty in the midst of you, and no corruption will be able to foul you above the soles of your sandals which touch the ground. Souls are so high up! I mean the souls of those who are good and thoroughly united to God. Such souls are in Heaven. And no dust or filth can reach up there, not even when thrown angrily at the spirit of an apostle. They may strike your flesh, that is, they may wound you physically or morally, persecuting you or offending you, because Evil hates Good. And so what? Was I not offended and wounded? Did they perhaps carve those blows and foul words into My Spirit? Did they upset Me? No, they did not. Like spittle on a mirror or a stone thrown against the juicy pulp of a fruit, they skidded without penetrating, or they penetrated only superficially, without damaging the kernel enclosed in the stone: on the contrary it fosters its germination because it is easier to sprout from a cracked core than from a whole one. Through death corn germinates and an apostle becomes active. Sometimes through physical death, or dying daily metaphorically, by crushing one's human *ego*. But that is not death: it is Life. The spirit triumphs over the death of humanity.

⁴She ¹ came to Me to satisfy the passing fancy of an idle woman who did not know how to while away the time, and although her ears were almost deafened by the false homage of those who lulled her singing to her sensuality in order to make her their slave, she heard the clear severe voice of Truth. *Of the Truth that is not afraid of being despised or not understood and speaks looking at God.* And like festive bells ringing together, all the voices mingled in the Word: voices want to sing in the open blue sky, spreading over valleys and hills, plains and lakes, to commemorate the glory of the Lord and His festivity.

Do you not remember the solemn festivity that in peace time made the day of the Lord so joyful? The big bell, with its resonant clapper, gave the first peal in the name of divine Law and seemed to be saying: "I am speaking in the name of God, Judge and King". The smaller bells then harmonised: "Who is good, merciful and patient", and the smallest bell, in a silvery angelical voice added "Whose Love urges men to forgive and be indulgent, to teach men that forgiveness is more useful than wrath and compassion is greater than inflexibility".

Likewise, after recalling the Law, trampled on by the sinner, I made her hear the song of forgiveness. I shook the hope of forgiveness in the darkness of sin, like a green-blue silk scarf among dark shades, so that hope might put in its comforting words. Forgiveness! It is like dew on the parching thirst of sinners. Dew is not like hail, which strikes like a dart, bounces and without penetrating the soil kills flowers. Dew descends so lightly that even the most delicate flower does not perceive it resting on its silk petals. But it drinks its refreshing moisture. Dew settles near roots, on parched clods of earth and penetrates the soil... It is a moisture of tears, the tears of stars, the loving tears of mothers on their thirsty children, whom it nourishes together with their sweet bountiful milk. Oh! the mysteries of elements operating also when man rests or sins! Forgiveness is like such dew. It brings not only cleanliness, but also vital juices, taken not from elements, but from divine hearths.

And after the promise of forgiveness Wisdom speaks saying what is legal and what is not legal, and it reproaches and shakes, not out of harshness, but out of maternal anxiety to save. How often your hardness becomes more impenetrable and unyielding to Charity

bending over you!... How often you run away while Charity speaks to you! How often you scorn It! How often you hate It!... If Charity dealt with you as you deal with It, woe to your souls! Instead, see, It is the Untiring Walker who comes looking for you. And It reaches you even if you hide in the darkest of dens.

...I did not say one word to Mary Magdalene. I looked at her for a moment, as if she were a statue, then I left her. I went back to the "living ones" whom I wanted to save. I treated her with *seeming* carelessness, as if she were dead, like or more than a lifeless sculptured piece of marble. But I did not utter a word or make a gesture that did not aim mainly at her poor soul, which I wanted to redeem. And the last words: "I do not insult. Do not insult. Pray for sinners. Nothing else", like a garland of flowers the ends of which are joined together, are to be joined to the first words spoken upon the mountain: "Forgiveness is more useful than wrath and compassion than inflexibility". And these have enclosed the poor wretch in a cool velvet circle, scented with goodness, making her feel how the loving service of God is different from the cruel slavery of Satan, how sweet is the heavenly perfume as compared to the stench of sin, and how relaxing it is to be loved *holily* as compared to being possessed *satanically*.

See how moderate is the will of the Lord. He does not exact immediate conversions. He does not claim the absolute from a heart. He can wait and be satisfied. And while he waits for the lost woman to find her way, for the mad woman to find reason, He is satisfied with what the dejected mother can give her. I ask her only: "Can you forgive?" How many more questions I should have asked her to make her worthy of the miracle, if I had behaved according to human standards! But I measure your strength in a *divine* way. It was already a great success if the poor deranged mother could really forgive. And that is all I ask her, at that moment. After giving her son back to her, I say to her: "Be holy and make your house holy". But while the pangs of grief derange her mind, I ask her but to forgive the culprit. You must not exact *everything* from those who shortly before were in Darkness. That mother was to come later to full light, with her daughter-in-law and the children. For the time being, it was necessary to let first dawning of Light reach her eyes blinded by tears: that is, forgiveness, the dawn of God's day.

Of the people present only one - I am not referring to Judas, I am speaking of the people gathered there, not of My disciples - only one was not to come to the Light. There is always someone for whom the apostle toils in vain. But you must not lose heart because of such defeats. An apostle must not pretend to achieve *everything*. Struggling against him there are adverse powers, with many different names, and like tentacles of an octopus they grasp again the prey that he had snatched from them. But the apostle is still meritorious. Woe to the apostle who says: "I am not going there because I know that I shall not be able to convert anyone". He is an apostle of very little value. It is necessary to go even if only one in a thousand will be saved. His apostolic day will be as fruitful because of that one as it would be for a thousand, because he will have done everything in his power and that is what God rewards. You must also consider that where the apostle is not able to convert, because the person to be converted is too firmly gripped by Satan and the power of the apostle is inadequate to the effort, God may intervene. And then? Who is greater than God?

Another thing that the apostle must absolutely practise is love. *Clear* love. Not only the secret love for the hearts of brethren. That is enough for good brethren. But the apostle is a worker of God and he must not limit himself to prayer: he must act. Let him act with love, with great love. Rigour paralyses the apostle's work and hinders the motion of souls towards the Light. So: not rigour, but love. Love is the incombustible fabric that protects you against the blaze of wicked passions. Love is the saturation of preserving essences which prevent human-satanic purification from entering You. To conquer a soul you

must learn how to love. To conquer a soul you must induce it to love: to love God and disown its petty sinful love.

...⁶The three phases of the salvation of a soul are:

To be thoroughly and strictly honest in order to be able to speak without any fear of being silenced. To be able to speak to a whole crowd so that our apostolic word, addressed to the crowds gathering round our mystical boat, may travel farther and farther, like circles of waves, until it reaches the miry shore, where those who are not interested in knowing the Truth are lying in the mud. That is the first task in order to break the hard crust of the soil and prepare it to receive the seed. It is the hardest task both for him who performs it and for him who receives it, because words, like a sharp ploughshare, must wound the listener in order to open his heart. And I solemnly tell you that the heart of a good apostle is hurt and bleeds because of the grief in having to wound in order to open. But that grief also is prolific. Through the blood and the tears of an apostle waste land becomes fertile.

The second quality :*It is necessary to act also where one*, less conscious of one's mission, *would flee*. The apostle must break his back in the effort to extirpate darnel, cough-grass and thorns in order to clear the soil and plough it and then let the power of God and His bounty shine on it like the sun. And at the same time, like a judge and a doctor, he must be severe and merciful, and remain firm in the period of waiting to give the souls time to surmount their crises, to meditate and make up their minds.

Third phase: *As soon as a soul that has repented in silence, dares to come shyly* towards an apostle, weeping and thinking of its faults, fearing to be driven away, the apostle's heart, must be *greater than the sea, more gentle than a mother's heart*, more loving than a bride's, and *he must open it completely* to allow waves of tenderness to flow from it. If you have God, Who is Charity, within you, you will easily find charitable words to be spoken to souls. God will speak in you and on your behalf and like honey dropping from a honeycomb, like balm flowing from a phial, love will reach parched sickened lips; it will reach wounded souls and will be relief and medicine.

You doctors of souls, make sinners love you. Let them taste the flavour of Heavenly Charity and let them become so eager for it, as to seek no other food. Let them feel in your kindness such a relief, as to seek it for all their wounds. Your charity must free them from all fear, because, as the epistle which you have read today says: "To fear is to expect punishment, and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love". Neither is he perfect who causes people to be afraid. Do not say: "What have you done?" Do not say: "Go away". Do not say: "You cannot have relish for good love".

Say instead, in My name: "Love and I will forgive you". Say: "Come, Jesus' arms are open". Say: "Enjoy this angelical Bread and this Word and forget the pitch of hell and Satan's sneers". Bear the weakness of other people. An apostle must bear his own and other people's weaknesses, with his own crosses and other people's. And while coming to Me, laden with wounded sheep, encourage the poor stray souls saying: "Everything is forgotten by now"; say: "Be not afraid of the Saviour. He came from Heaven for you, just for you. I am but a bridge to carry you to Him Who is waiting for you, on the other side of the river of penitential absolution, to lead you to His holy pastures, which begin here, on the earth, and continue in Heaven, in everlasting nutritious delightful Beauty".

Jesus says: She does not come to Me attracted by sensuality. I am not you or like those who are like you. She comes to Me because My countenance and My word, which she heard by chance, have enlightened her soul, which lust had left in utter darkness. And she comes because she wants to overcome her sensuality and she realises, poor creature, that

she will never succeed by herself. She loves My spirit, nothing but My spirit, which she perceives is supernaturally good. After so much evil that she received from you all, who have taken advantage of her weakness for your own vices, rewarding her with your lashing scorn, she comes to Me, because she realises that she has found Goodness, Joy and Peace, which she sought in vain in the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. Cure the leprosy of your soul, o hypocritical Pharisee, that you may have the right view of things. Forsake pride of mind and lust of flesh. *Their leprosy is much more fetid than the leprosy of your bodies.* My touch can cure you of the latter, because you beg Me to cure you, *but I cannot cure you of the leprosy of your souls, because you do not wish to be cured, as you like it.* But she wants to recover. And thus I cleanse her, and I free her from the chains of her slavery. The sinner is dead. She is still over there, in those ornaments that she is ashamed to offer Me that I may sanctify them, using them for the needs of My disciples and Mine and for the poor, whom I help by means of the surplus of other people, *because I, the Master of the universe, possess nothing now that I am the Saviour of man.* She is still here, in the perfume spread on My feet, the perfume that has been humiliated like her hair, on that part of My body that you disdained, to refresh with the water of your sell, notwithstanding I have walked so far to bring light to you also. The sinner is dead. And Mary is reborn, as beautiful as a modest girl, through her deep sorrow and her righteous love. She washed herself in her tears. And I solemnly tell you, o Pharisee, that between this young man who loves Me in the purity of his youth, and that woman who loves Me in the sincerity of repentance of a heart reborn to Grace, I make no difference. And to the Pure young man and the Repentant woman I entrust the task of understanding My thought as no one else can, as well as the task of rendering the last honours to My Body, and the first greetings (I am not taking into account My Mother's special greetings) when I will rise from the dead". That is what I wanted to tell the Pharisee by means of My countenance.

⁶But I will draw your attention to something else: *for your joy and the joy of many.* Also at Bethany Mary repeated the gesture that marked the dawn of her redemption. There are personal gestures, which are repeated and are peculiar to a person like the person's style. They are unmistakable gestures. But, as it was fair, at Bethany's the gesture was not humiliated so much and it was more confidential in its reverent adoration.

Mary has gone a long way since that dawn of her redemption. A very long way. Love, like a high wind, has blown her high up and far ahead. Love has burnt her like a fire, destroying her impure flesh and making a purified spirit her new master. And Mary, now different in her revived womanly dignity, as she is different in her clothing, which is now as simple as My Mother's, in her hair-style, her looks, her behaviour, her words, this *new* Mary has a new way to honour Me by means of the same gesture. She takes the last of her vases of perfume, which she kept for Me, and pours it on My feet and My head, *without shedding any tears, with a happy countenance due to love and the certainty that she had been forgiven and saved.* Mary can now touch My head and anoint Me. *Repentance and love have cleansed her by means of the fire of seraphim and she is a seraph.*

... 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. »

THE POEM AND THE CHURCH

*(Much has been made of alleged opposition from the Vatican to the publication of "The Poem of the Man-God", and of "The Poem's" inclusion in the "Index of Forbidden Books" - the Index which was subsequently repealed in 1966. The following extracts are from Father Roschini's "The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta" (p. 21 *), and from a statement by Bishop Roman Danylak, formerly of Toronto, Canada, and now stationed in Rome.)*

FATHER ROSCHINI

"On January 6, 1960, the *Osservatore Romano* published an article about *Il Poema dell'Uomo-Dio* as well as a stern censure against it. However, in the article it frankly admitted that we could find in this work 'lessons in Marian Theology which show a complete knowledge of the latest studies by present day specialists on the matter ... These theological lessons are written in the very terms which a professor of our day would use.'

(In a footnote Fr. Roschini's editor adds:) "Oddly enough, the officials who used this censure were not even aware of Pope Pius XII's declaration on February 26, 1948, during the special audience he granted to Fr. Berti and two witnesses ... Within one year, Fr. Berti was able to tell the newly appointed officials of the audience. Within weeks, the censure was tacitly acknowledged to have been invalid and permission was granted to publish the second edition of: *Il Poema dell'Uomo-Dio*."

[Pope Pius XII's often-quoted declaration was: "Publish this work as it is. There is no need to give an opinion on its origin, whether it be extraordinary or not. Whoever reads it will understand. (These days) we hear of so many visions and revelations. I am not saying that all of them would be true, but there are some of them that are authentic".]

* Father Roschini, formerly Professor at the Pontifical Lateran University of Rome, was a philosopher, theologian, writer of saints' lives, and a mariologist of great renown. An author of over 125 books, he said that his most important one was *The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta*. He died in 1977.

BISHOP DANYLAK (RIP 2012)

Thirty-two years of polemics have subsided; the major issues bandied about by various writers, for and against the authenticity of the writings of Maria Valtorta, have been resolved. There are many questions that still await their resolution. Maria herself, in truth and humility, could not ascribe to herself the principle authorship of *the Poem of the Man-God* – as it was known in the first English translations – or *the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Dictated to Me* – as Maria requested her publishers to call this work. Church authorities still insist that the publishers ascribe solely to Maria, the authorship, not only of this work, but also the many other writings that issued from Maria's pen between the years 1943-1954.

And in a sense they are right, for the Church has always ascribed the human authorship of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and the New Covenants to the authors whose names the different books bear, yet acknowledge the Bible as the work of the Holy Spirit Himself. These, and so many other questions, will have to be addressed when and if a cause for the beatification of this elect victim is presented to the Holy See. This was the case with Padre Pio and with Don Orione of our century, and with many saints of the earlier centuries.

Yet although the vituperatives have subsided, there are some who continue to have problems that arose from the unsettled issues of the past.

The principal objections of the censors, that had placed *The Poem of the Man-God* on the Index of Forbidden Books, were that the publishers of the first edition, purporting to present private visions and revelations, had not submitted the work to prior ecclesiastical censorship – which is true. Further, they accused the book of archaeological, geographical and biblical inaccuracies, of bad theology, of foppish sentimentality, etc., etc.

Two Servite theologians - Fr. Corrado Berti, who prepared a scholarly theological and scriptural commentary to the second edition of *the Poem*, and Fr. Gabriel Roschini, a noted Mariologist, and author of *The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta* – attest to the orthodoxy of the Catholic faith, the factual accuracy of the biblical geography and archaeology described in *The Poem*, and the profundity of theological insight in these writings. I wish to include the authority of several other reputable scholars, many of whom were personal friends and admirers of Maria Valtorta in her lifetime. Archbishop Carinci, secretary for many years of the Congregation for Saints; Msgr. Lattanzi, a renowned moral theologian in his time; Card. Augustine Bea, a noted biblical scholar and former president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission; Prof. Corsanego, consistorial advocate for the cause of saints; and many others. For an extensive description of notables and their comments about Maria Valtorta and her work, cf. the second Italian edition of *The Poem of the Man-God*, edited and annotated by the late Fr. Corrado Berti, Servite and professor of theology. Dr. Emilio Pisani, editor and publisher of the writings of Maria Valtorta, continuing the work of his late father Michele, published a review of these writings until the present, in his study, pro and contra Maria Valtorta.

I wish to add to these testimonies my own experiences in reading these lives of Christ and His Blessed Mother. Though gifted herself with artistic and poetic sensibility, Maria's masterly treatment of the story - that develops with the conception of the Blessed Virgin to St. Anne, Her birth, the Annunciation and birth of Christ, the public life of Jesus, His teachings and miracles, through the events preceding the passion, the passion itself, the glorious Resurrection and Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the early life of the Church until the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin – surpasses the genius of many of the great writers of world literature. Her presentation of the cast of hundreds of characters - the profound insights into the inner life; the psychology and emotions of Jesus as He responded to a multiple variety of situations; Maria's portrayal of the responsiveness of the apostles; the friends and foes of Jesus – transcends the capacities of even the most genial and gifted of writers. And in all of this, she does not confuse persons, events, and places. Through her, the reader enters into the very hearts of Jesus and His

Mother. This work – call it Poem or Dictations of Jesus – is not only faithful to the Gospel, but it is the Gospel of Christ expanded. It is a gift of Christ for these, our days, when Jesus is maligned, denied, spurned, persecuted – in His Church, and in a world that is rapidly becoming submerged in the apostasy of faith.

Listen to the testimony of the noted Mariologist, Fr. Roschini, who availed himself of the writings of Valtorta for his course in Mariology in the 1970s at the Pontifical Gregorian University. His course notes became the basis for his final and definitive book on Mariology, *The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta*. Fr. Roschini had been initially very standoffish to the writings of Valtorta. He had a change of heart, overcame his initial reserve, and discovered an immense treasure of insight into the mystery of Mary. He comments in the introduction to this, his last book on Mary (pg. 21 of the English translation), as follows: "On January 6, 1960, the *Osservatore Romano* published an article about *Il Poema dell'Uomo Dio* as well as a stern censure against it. However, in the article it frankly admitted that we can find in this work 'lessons in Marian theology which show a complete knowledge of the later studies by present-day specialists on the matter ... These theological lessons are written in the very terms which a professor of our day would use...'

And in a footnote, Fr. Roschini adds that these officials were not even aware of Pope Pius XII's declaration of February 26, 1948, during a special audience he had granted to Fr. Berti and two witnesses – Fr. Andrea M. Cecchin, Prior, and Fr. Romualdo Migliorini - all three theologians. (Cf. *Osservatore Romano*, Feb. 27, 1948 with the commendation: "**Publish this work as it is. There is no need to give an opinion on its origin, whether it be extraordinary or not.**")

In conclusion, as a priest and bishop of the eastern Church, as I prayed the Divine Office of the Byzantine Church, that has faithfully preserved the names and the early Christian traditions of the protagonists of the early apostolic community and the disciples of Christ, I was surprised to find them alive, as real living personalities - friends and disciples of Jesus from His infancy, His adolescence, and the mature years of His public life in the life of Christ.

Maria had never studied scriptures, and the archaeology and geography of Palestine. She did not peruse the Divine Office of the Roman, still less of the eastern, Church. The Lord accepted the generous sacrifice of her cross, and of dying to herself, and He gave to us, through her, this precious gift of the total Gospel, for this our day.

+ Roman Danylak, titular bishop of Nyssa. Easter 1999

Blessed GABRIEL M. ALLEGRA, O.F.M. (1907-1976†)

Exegete - Theologian - Missionary

Beatified Oct 2012

— INTRODUCTION —

Rare it is to find a biblical scholar reading and enthusiastically re-reading the entire voluminous Poem, applying his own expertise to its study and evaluation. But surely rarest of to find today such a scholar whose cause for beatification had already been opened in 1984, just 8 years after his sudden death, and who was, on December 15, 1994. declared "Venerable" by Pope John Paul II for the heroism of his virtues [Acta Apostolicae Sedis: No. 8, 7 August 1995, pp.723-727]. Yet in the author of the four parts presented in this dossier, we happily have all of these rarities combined in one eminent scripture exegete, theologian and missionary: Father Gabriel M. Allegra, O.F.M.

Father Gabriel of the Friars Minor, a compatriot of Valtorta, was both a missionary to China and a biblical exegete. He is renowned for having started the first Biblical Institute in China and for translating the entire Bible into Chinese. His work as a scripture scholar had enjoyed the support and grateful recognition of successive popes from Pius XI to Paul VI. For some time he also resided in Hong Kong. There he became a friend and frequent visitor at the Cistercian Trappist monastery of Lantau in Hong Kong, where he preached a retreat and gave scripture conferences to the monks, one of whom described him as "a very humble man".

In 1965, a confrere, Father Margiotti, had introduced Father Gabriel to Valtorta's Poem of the Man-God, and thereafter he apparently became a dedicated and profound connoisseur of her Work. In a letter to a relative that same year he stated his desire to publish some formal presentation of this Work in response to those who had asked his opinion of it as a biblical scholar. After his sudden death in 1976, many posthumous notes discovered by the postulator of his cause revealed that he had apparently written such a presentation in the form of a critique, but never published it. Many other spontaneous and random notes of his on Valtorta's Poem were also found, from which he evidently composed his more formal presentation. Along with these were also personal letters to confreres and relatives containing comments on Valtorta's great Work.

On April 23rd, 2002, at the Vatican and in the presence of the Pope, the Decree was promulgated which concludes the Cause for the Beatification of Gabriel M. Allegra, O.F.M.: great Franciscan figure, missionary in China, translator of the Bible into Chinese, reader and admirer of the Work of Maria Valtorta.²

On January 14, 1984, at Hong Kong, in the presence of the diocesan Bishop, Msgr. John B. Wu, the process was opened for the canonization of Fr. Gabriel M. Allegra who had just died in Hong Kong, on January 26, 1976.

Father Allegra was born in 1907, at San Giovanni La Punta, in the province of Catania. At 16, he entered the Order of the Friars Minor, became a priest in 1930, and the following year departed for China, where he distinguished himself as an

exemplary missionary and man of culture, founding a biblical Institute and accomplishing the first translation into Chinese of the whole Bible. His work had had the support and acknowledgment of successive popes from Pius XI to Paul VI.

We should note that Father Allegra was a profound connoisseur of the writings of Maria Valtorta, of whom he became a passionate reader in 1965, when he obtained her volumes from a confrere, Father Fortunato Margiotti. With the intention of illustrating The Poem of the Man-God for eventual translators, the renowned biblical scholar drew up at one stretch in 1970, at Macau, a presentation which occupies 11 closely typed pages. It is an analysis of the Writer, Maria Valtorta, and of her Work [The Poem...], and an exposition of the Work's vicissitudes and criticisms - a serene and conscious judgment as only a scholar who has the gift of humility could give. Father Allegra's presentation turns out to be so interesting that it was hard for us, even if necessary, to select the passages we report here.

— Emilio Pisani, Editor]

A CRITIQUE OF MARIA VALTORTA'S " P O E M O F T H E M A N – G O D "

Gabriel M. Allegra, O. F. M.

The Poem contains, or rather is, a series of visions witnessed by the Writer [Valtorta] as if she were a contemporary of them. She therefore sees and hears whatever concerns the life of Jesus from the beginning of the Birth of Most Holy Mary, which occurred through a Heavenly grace in the old age of Anne and Joachim, up to the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord--or rather, up to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven.

The Visionary-Hearer usually begins by describing the location of the scene which she contemplates; she reports the chatter of the crowd and of the disciples; and then, according to what she sees and hears, she describes the miracles, relates the Discourses of the Lord, or the dialogues of those present with Him or with the disciples, or the dialogues among themselves. This re-evoking of the life of Jesus, its times and surroundings, and in its various aspects: physical, political, social, familial, is done without any effort. The Writer reports what she has seen or heard. Her style does not resound with the erudition notable in the most famous lives of Jesus. It is rather the report of an eye and auricular witness. If Mary of Magdala or Joanna of Cusa had been able during their life to see what Maria Valtorta sees, and had written it down, I believe that their testimony would not differ much from that of the Poem. Valtorta observed with such intensity the place and personages of her visions that anyone who has been in the Holy Land for studies and has repeatedly read the Gospels, need make no excessive effort to reconstruct the scene.

That a novelist or a playwright of genius may create unforgettable characters is a known fact; but of the numerous novelists or playwrights who have approached the Gospel in order to use it in their creations, I do not know of one who has drawn

from it such richness and sketched with such force and so pleasingly the figures of Peter, of John, Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, Judas--especially of Judas and his tragic and pitiful mother, Mary of Simon--and of so many, many others (and I omit for now Jesus and Mary), as does Valtorta with the greatest naturalness and without the least effort.

The Discourses

The most impressive thing, at least for me, are the Lord's Discourses. Naturally there are all those found in the Holy Gospels, but developed; as are also developed a good many themes which in the Gospel are barely sketched or hinted at. There are, moreover, many other Discourses reported of which nothing is said in the Gospel, but which the circumstances led Jesus to pronounce. These too are constructed as the former [i.e., as those found in the Gospel]. It is the same Lord who speaks, whether He adopts the style of the parable--the Poem contains some forty "agrapha" [i.e., "unwritten"] parables--or an exhortative or prophetic style, or finally, whether He employs the sapiential style in use among the rabbis of the New Testament epoch. Therefore, besides the great Discourses of the Gospels, like the one on the Mount, that of the Sending Out of the Apostles, the Eschatological Discourse, those of the last week and of the Last Supper, there are in the Poem many others, e.g., which explain the Decalogue, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, or which constitute special instructions to the men or women disciples, to an individual person, to mixed hearers of Jews and Gentiles.... Finally, there are the Discourses on the Kingdom of God or more clearly on the Church, which are held before the Passion as a colloquy by the Lord with His brother-cousin, James, on Carmel, and are then developed after the Resurrection while He was speaking to the Apostles and the disciples on Tabor and on another mountain of Galilee. The theme of these latter is indicated by St. Luke with the simple phrase: ...speaking of the Kingdom of God (cf. 9:11).

In briefly considering the matter treated in these Discourses, one finds in them all of the Christian Faith, Life and Hope. The tone and the style never belie themselves; they are always the same: lucid, strong, prophetic, at times full of majesty; at others, overflowing with tenderness. I will cite some examples.

We all know the anxiety of the greatest exegetes to situate and explain according to their living context, e.g., the colloquy with Nicodemus, the Discourse on the Bread of Life, the theological-polemical Discourses pronounced at Jerusalem: how many efforts made and how varied! In the Poem, however, their connection is spontaneous, natural, as if flowing logically from the circumstances.

The Events

What is said of the Discourses is valid for the miracles. In the Poem there are so many of them--which the Gospel subsumes under the phrases: and He cured and healed all. There are also some events which neither exegetes nor novelists nor the apocryphal writers have thought of. For example, the evangelization of Judea hinted at by St. John (Jn 1-4) at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus; the merciful

apostolate of the Lord in favor of the Samaritans, of the poor, of the peasant-farmers of Doras and Giocana, of the inhabitants of the district of Ophel, the continuous journeys of the tireless Master through the territory of all the twelve ancient tribes, and the conspiracy plotted, by some in good faith, by most in bad faith, to proclaim Him king and thus to destroy Him more easily by Roman hands--a plot which John (Ch. 6) soberly hints at.

And how forget the heroic fidelity of the twelve Bethlehem shepherds and the double imprisonment of John the Baptist? and those converted by the convert, Zaccheus, and those persons whom Jesus saved even materially, like Syntica, Aurea Galla, Benjamin of Aenon? Or again, the last prophetic voices of the chosen People: Sabea of Bethlechi, the healed Samaritan leper, Saul of Keriot? Or how forget the relationship of Jesus with Gamaliel, with some of the members of the Sanhedrin, with a group of pagan women who gravitated around Claudia Procula, the wife of Pontius Pilate? Or the story and figure of Mary Magdalene, of the little boy, Marziam? or of the individual Apostles, each of whose character is indelibly impressed in the heart of the attentive reader: especially the characters of Peter, John, and Judas and his pious and unfortunate mother?

The Palestinian World

And how much do we not learn about the political, religious, economic, social and familial situation of Palestine in the first age of our era, even from the discourses of the most humble--rather, especially from these--which the seeing and hearing Writer, Valtorta, reports! One might say that in this Work the Palestinian world of the time of Jesus comes back to life before our eyes; and the best and worst elements of the characters of the chosen People--a people of extremes and enslaved by every mediocrity--leaps alive before us.

Private Revelation

The Poem is presented to us as the completion of the four Gospels and a long explanation of them; Valtorta, the Writer, is the illustrator of the Gospel scenes. This explanation and completion is justified in part by the words of St. John: "Many other prodigies Jesus did before His disciples, which are not written in the present book..." (Jn 20:30); and: "Many other things Jesus did which, if they had to be written one by one, I think that the whole world could not contain the books to be written" (Jn 21:25). It is a completion and explanation which is justified, I repeat, only in part or in principle, since from the historical-theological point of view, Revelation was closed with the Apostles and all that is added to the revealed Deposit, even if it does not contradict it but happily completes it, could at most be the fruit of a particular individual charism which obliges to faith the one who receives it, as also those who believe it to be a question of a true charism or charisma--which in our case would be the charism of revelation, of vision, or of discourses of wisdom and discourses of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8; 2 Cor 12:1...).

In summary, the Church has no need of this Work to unfold Her salvific mission until the Second Coming of the Lord, as She had no need of the Apparitions of the

Madonna at La Salette, at Lourdes, at Fatima.... But the Church can tacitly or publicly recognize that certain private revelations can be useful for the knowledge and practice of the Gospel and for understanding its mysteries, and hence, She can approve them in a negative form, that is, by declaring that the revelations are not contrary in word to the Faith. Or She can officially ignore them, leaving Her children full liberty to form their own judgment.

In this negative form the revelations of St. Bridget, of St. Matilda, St. Gertrude, Venerable Mary of Agreda, St. John Bosco and many other saints have been approved.

Comparison With Other Works

Whoever starts out to read [The Poem] with an honest mind and with commitment can well see for himself the immense distance that exists between The Poem and the New Testament Apocrypha, especially the Infancy Apocrypha and the Assumption Apocrypha. And he can also notice what distance there is between this Work and that of Venerable Catherine Emmerich, Mary of Agreda, etc. In the writings of these latter two visionaries, it is impossible not to sense the influence of third persons, an influence which it seems to me must on the contrary be absolutely excluded from our Poem. To be convinced of this it suffices to make a comparison between the vast and sure doctrine--theological, biblical, geographical, historical, topographical--which crowds every page of the Poem, and the same material in the [other visionary] works mentioned above. I am not going to speak of literary works, because there are none which cover the life of Jesus beginning from the Birth to the Assumption of the Madonna, or at least none known to me. But even if we limit ourselves to the basic plots of the most celebrated ones, like: Ben Hur, The Robe, The Great Fisherman, The Silver Chalice, The Spear..., these could not quite bear comparison with the natural, spontaneous plot welling up from the context of events and characters of so many persons--a veritable crowd!--which forms the mighty framework of the Poem.

I repeat: it is a world brought back to life, and the Writer rules it as if she possessed the genius of a Shakespeare or a Manzoni. But with the works of these two great men, how many studies, how many vigils, how many meditations are required! Maria Valtorta, on the contrary, even though possessing a brilliant intelligence, a tenacious and ready memory, did not even finish her secondary education; she was for years and years afflicted with various maladies and confined to her bed, had few books--all of which stood on two shelves of her bookcase--did not read any of the great commentaries on the Bible--which could have justified or explained her surprising scriptural culture--but just used the popular version of the Bible of Fr. Tintori, O.F.M. And yet she wrote the ten volumes of the Poem from 1943 to 1947, in four years!

Striking Details

We all know how much research scholars have done, especially Hebrew scholars, in

designing various maps of the political geography of Palestine from the time of the Maccabees up to the insurrection of Bar Kokba. For more than twenty years they have had to consult a pile of documents: The Talmud, Flavius Josephus, Inscriptions, Folklore, ancient itineraries.... And yet, the identification of a good many localities still remains uncertain. In the Poem though--whatever could be the judgment given about its origin--there is no uncertainty. At least in 4/5ths of the cases, recent studies confirm the identifications supposed in [The Poem]; and the number would grow, I think, if some specialist would be willing to study this question deeply. Valtorta, for example, sees the forking of roads, landmarks which indicate directions, various cultivations according to the differing quality of the terrain, so many Roman bridges thrown across various rivers or streams, springs that are lively in certain seasons and dried up in others. She notes the difference in pronunciation between the various inhabitants of diverse regions of Palestine, and a mass of other things which perplex the reader, or at least make him thoughtful.

There are a series of visions in which the mystery of the Birth of Jesus, His Agony, His Passion, and His Resurrection are described with Heavenly words and images, with an angelic eloquence; while on the other hand, so much light is thrown on the mystery of Judas, on the attempt to proclaim Jesus king, on His two brother-cousins who do not believe in Him, on the impression awakened in the Gentiles about Him, on His love of the lepers, the poor, the aged, children, the Samaritans, and especially on His love, so pleasingly ardent and delicate, for His Immaculate Mother.

And not only from the human point of view, but especially a theological one, who can remain indifferent reading the two chapters on the desolation of His most holy Mother after the tragedy of Calvary, which reveal to us how the Co-redemptrix had been tempted by Satan, and how Her Redeemer-Son had been tempted? The sublime theology of these two chapters may be compared to that of so many of the laments of the Sorrowful Mother.

Historical-Doctrinal Harmony

Exegetes today, even Catholics, take the strangest and most daring liberties over the historicity of the Gospel's Infancy accounts and the narratives of the Resurrection, as if with Form Criticism ["Formgeschichte"] and Redaction Criticism ["Redaktionsgeschichte Methode"] one finds the panacea for all difficulties--difficulties which were not unknown to the Fathers of the Church. Truly, to speak only of some recent exegetes: e.g., Fouard, Sepp, Fillion, Lagrange, Ricciotti..., on these difficult points they spoke their balanced and luminous words. But today there are other masters whom even our own follow with such confidence.... Well then, to come back to us: I invite the readers of the Poem to read the pages consecrated to the Resurrection, to the reconstruction of the events of the day of the Pasch, and they will ascertain how all is harmoniously bound together there--just as so many exegetes who follow the critical-historical-theological method have tried to do, but without fully succeeding. Such pages do not disturb, but gladden the heart of the faithful and strengthen their faith!

Language

But there is another surprise: this woman of the 20th Century who, though confined to a bed of pain became the fortunate contemporary and follower of Christ, heard the Apostles and Jesus talk in Italian, but in an Aramaicized Italian--except for certain moments carefully noted by her: when, that is, the Apostles and Jesus prayed in Hebrew or in Aramaic. Moreover, the Lord, the Madonna, the Apostles, even when treating of subjects dealt with in the New Testament, adopt the theological language of today, that is, the language initiated by the first great theologian, St. Paul, and enriched throughout so many centuries of reflection and meditation, and which has thus become precise, clear, irreplaceable.

There is in the Poem, therefore, a transposition, a translation of the Good News announced by Jesus into the tongue of His Church of today, a transposition willed by Him, since the Visionary was deprived of any technical theological formation. And this is, I think, in order to make us understand that the Gospel message announced today by His Church of today, and with today's language, is substantially identical with His Own preaching of twenty centuries ago.

The Valtorta Phenomenon

A book of great bulk, composed in exceptional circumstances and in a relatively very short time: here is one aspect of the Valtorta phenomenon.

The Writer confesses repeatedly that she is only a "mouthpiece," a "phonograph," one who writes what she sees and hears, while remaining "crucified on a bed". Hence, according to her, the Poem is not her own, it does not belong to her, it was revealed, shown to her. She does nothing else but describe what she has seen, report what she has heard, while also participating with all her heart of a woman and a devoted Christian in the visions. From this intimate participation of hers is born the antipathy she feels for Judas and, on the contrary, the intense affection she feels for John, for the Magdalene, for Syntica..., and I do not even speak of the Lord Jesus and of the most holy Madonna towards whom at times she pours out her heart and her love with words of passionate lyricism worthy of the greatest mystics of the Church.

In the Dialogues and Discourses which form the structure of the Work there is, in addition to an inimitable spontaneity (the Dialogues), something of the ancient and at times the hieratic (the Discourses). In sum, one hears a very good translation of an Aramaic or Hebraic manner of speaking, in a vigorous, multiform, robust Italian. It is again to be noted that in the structure of these Discourses, Jesus either moves in the wake of the great Prophets, or adapts Himself to the method of the great rabbis who explain the Old Testament by applying it to contemporary circumstances. Let us recall the Peshar ["Interpretation"] of Habakkuk found in Qumran and compare it (passing over the word itself) with the "peshar" which Jesus gives us of it.

We may also compare other explanations which the Lord gave for other passages of

the Old Testament and for which we possess, in whole or in part, the commentaries of the rabbis of the 3rd or 4th Century B.C., but which obviously follow a traditional style of composition much more ancient and probably also contemporaneous with Jesus. Besides an external similarity of form, we will perceive such superiority of depth, of substance, that we will finally understand fully why the crowd said: "No one has spoken as this Man."

A Gift of the Lord

I hold that the Work [of Valtorta] demands a supernatural origin. I think that it is the product of one or more charisma and that it should be studied in the light of the doctrine of charisma, while also making use of the contributions of recent studies of psychology and related sciences which certainly could not have been known by old theologians like Torquemada, Lanspergius, Scaramelli, etc.

It is the property of charisma that they are bestowed by the Spirit of Jesus for the good of the Church, for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ; and I do not see how it can be reasonably denied that the Poem upbuilds and delights the children of the Church. Undoubtedly, charity is the most excellent way (1 Cor 13:1); it is also well known that some charisma which abounded in the primitive Church had become rarer later on. But it is equally certain that they have never been wholly extinct. The Church through the centuries must test if they derive from the Spirit of Jesus or are a disguise of the spirit of darkness masquerading as an angel of light: Try the spirits, if they are of God! (1 Jn 4:1)

Now, without anticipating the judgment of the Church which to this moment I accept with absolute submission, I allow myself to affirm that since the principal criterion for the discernment of spirits is the Word of the Lord: From their fruits you will know them..., (Mt 3:20), and with the good fruits which the Poem is producing in an ever growing number of readers, I think that it comes from the Spirit of God.

St. Gabriel Allegra

The Reasons for the Work. Farewell to the Work. (End Volume 5)

[28th April 1947.]

Jesus says:

« The reasons that have induced Me to enlighten and dictate episodes and words of Mine to little John are, in addition to the joy of communicating an exact knowledge of Me to this loving victim-soul, manifold.

But the moving spirit of all of them is My love for the Church, both teaching and militant, and My desire to help souls in their ascent towards perfection. The knowledge of Me helps to ascend. My Word is Life.

I mention the main ones:

I. The reasons mentioned in dictation dated 18th January 1947 and which little John will put here integrally. This is the most important reason because you are perishing and I want to save you.

The most profound reason for the gift of this work is that in the present time, when modernism, condemned by My holy Vicar Pius X, becomes corrupted in more and more harmful doctrines, the Church, represented by My Vicar, may have further material to fight against those who deny:

the supernaturalness of dogmas;

the divinity of the Christ;

the Truth of the Christ God and Man, real and perfect both in the faith and in the history that has been handed down on Him (Gospel, Acts of the Apostles, Apostolic Letters, tradition);

the doctrine of Paul and John and of the councils of Nicaea, Ephesus and Chalcedon, as My true doctrine verbally taught by Me.

My unlimited science, as it is divine and perfect;

the divine origin of the dogmas of the Sacraments of the Church One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic;

the universality and continuity, until the end of time, of the Gospel given by Me and for all men;

the perfect nature, from the beginning, of My doctrine that has not been formed, as it is, through successive transformations, but was given as it is: the Doctrine of the Christ, of the time of Grace, of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the Kingdom of God in you, divine, perfect, immutable. The Gospel for all those thirsting for God.

To the red dragon with seven heads, ten horns and seven diadems on its head, which with its tail drags a third of the stars from the sky and drops them - and I solemnly tell you that they drop even lower than the earth - and persecutes the Woman; to the beasts of the sea and of the earth that many, too many worship, allured as they are by their appearance and prodigies, I ask you to oppose My Angel flying in the middle of the sky, holding the Eternal Gospel well open, also at the Pages so far closed, so that men, through its light, may be saved from the coils of the huge serpent with seven jaws, that wants to drown them in its darkness, and upon My return I may find again faith and charity in the hearts of those who persevere, and they may be more numerous than the work of Satan and of men allow one to hope they may be.

II. To rouse a keen love for the Gospel and for everything pertaining to the Christ in Priests and in laymen. First of all, renewed love for My Mother, in Whose prayers lies the secret of the salvation of the world. She, My Mother, is the Conqueress of the cursed Dragon. Assist Her power by means of your renewed love for Her and of your renewed faith and knowledge of what pertains to Her. Mary has given the Saviour to the world. The world will receive salvation again from Her.

III. To give spiritual masters and directors assistance in their ministry, by studying the different souls of the world in which I lived and the different methods used by Me to save them.

Because it would be foolish to have only one method with all the souls.

The way to attract to Perfection a just person who spontaneously tends to it, is different from that to be used with a believer in sin, and from that to be used with a Gentile. You have many of them also among you, if you succeed in judging, as your Master did, as Gentiles the poor people who have replaced the true God with the idols of power and arrogance, or of gold, or of lust, or with the idol of the pride of their knowledge. And different is the method to be used to save modern proselytes, that is those who have accepted the Christian idea, but not the Christian citizenship, as they belong to separated Churches. No one is to be despised, and these lost sheep less than everyone. Love them and try to lead them back to the Only Fold, so that the desire of the Shepherd Jesus may be fulfilled.

Some people, when reading this Work, will object: "It does not appear from the Gospel that Jesus was in touch with Romans and Greeks, and consequently we reject these pages". How many things do not appear from the Gospel, or can just be detected behind thick curtains of silence, drawn by the Evangelists on episodes, of which they did not approve, because of their unbreakable Jewish frame of mind! Do you think that you know everything I did?

I solemnly tell you that not even after reading and accepting this illustration of My public life will you know everything about Me. I would have killed My little John, in the fatigue of reporting all the days of My ministry and all the actions performed on each day, if I had made him acquainted with everything so that he might transmit everything to you! "Then there are other things done by Jesus, which, if written one by one, I think that the world would not be able to contain the books that should be written" says John. Apart from the hyperbole, I solemnly tell you that if all My single actions had to be written, all My particular lessons, My penances and prayers to save a soul, it would have taken the halls of one of your libraries, and one of the largest, to contain the books speaking of Me. And I also solemnly tell you that it would be much more advantageous for you to burn so much useless dusty poisonous science, to make room for My books, than to know so little of Me and worship so much that press that is almost always soiled with lust and heresy.

IV. To reinstate in their truth the figures of the Son of Man and of Mary, true children of Adam by flesh and blood, but of an innocent Adam. The children of the Man were to be like us, if our First Parents had not depreciated their perfect humanity - in the sense of man, that is of a creature in which there is the double nature, spiritual, in the image and likeness of God, and the material nature - as you know they did. Perfect senses, that is, subject to reason even in their great efficiency. In the senses I include both the moral and the corporal ones. Therefore total and perfect love both for Her spouse, to whom She is not attached by sensuality, but only by a tie of spiritual love, and for Her Son. Most loved. Loved with all the perfection of a perfect woman for the child born of Her. That is how Eve should have loved: like Mary: that is, not for what physical enjoyment her son was, but because that son was the son of the Creator and out of obedience accomplished to His order to multiply the human race.

And loved with all the ardour of a perfect believer who knows that that Son of Hers is not figuratively but really the Son of God. To those who consider Mary's love for Jesus too affectionate, I say that they should consider who Mary was: the Woman without sin and therefore without fault in Her love towards God, towards Her relatives, towards Her spouse, towards Her Son, towards Her neighbour; they should consider what the Mother saw in Me besides seeing the Son of Her womb, and finally that they should consider the nationality of Mary. Hebrew race, eastern race, and times very remote from the present ones. So the explanation of certain verbal amplifications, that may seem exaggerated to

you, ensues from these elements. The eastern and Hebrew styles are flowery and pompous also when commonly spoken. All the writings of that time and of that race prove it, and in the course of ages the eastern style has not changed very much.

As twenty centuries later you have to examine these pages, when the wickedness of life has killed so much love, would you expect Me to give you a Mary of Nazareth similar to the arid superficial woman of your days? Mary is what She is, and the sweet, pure, loving Girl of Israel, the Spouse of God, the Virgin Mother of God cannot be changed into an excessively morbidly exalted woman, or into a glacially selfish one of your days.

And I tell those, who consider Jesus' love for Mary too affectionate, to consider that in Jesus there was God, and that God One and Trine received His consolation by loving Mary, Who requited Him for the sorrow of the whole human race, and was the means by which God could glory again in His Creation that gives citizens to His Heavens. And finally, let them consider that every love becomes guilty when, and only when it causes disorder, that is, when it goes against the Will of God and the duty to be fulfilled.

Now consider: did Mary's love do that? Did My love do that? Did She keep Me, through selfish love, from doing all the Will of God? Through a disorderly love for My Mother, did I perhaps repudiate My mission? No. Both loves had but one desire: to accomplish the Will of God for the salvation of the world. And the Mother said all the farewells to Her Son, and the Son said all the farewells to His Mother, handing the Son to the cross of His public teaching and to the Cross of Calvary, handing the Mother to solitude and torture, so that She might be the Co-Redeemer, without taking into account our humanity that felt lacerated and our hearts that were broken with grief. Is that weakness? Is it sentimentalism? It is perfect love, o men, who do not know how to love and who no longer understand love and its voices!

And the purpose of this Work is also to clarify certain points that a number of circumstances has covered with darkness and they thus form dark zones in the brightness of the evangelic picture and points that seem a rupture and are only obscured points, between one episode and another, indecipherable points, and the ability to decipher them is the key to correctly understand certain situations that had arisen and certain strong manners that I had to have, so contrasting with My continuous exhortations to forgive, to be meek and humble, a certain rigidity towards obstinate, inconvertible opponents. You all ought to remember that God, after using all His mercy, for the sake of His own honour, can say also "Enough" to those who, as He is good, think it is right to take advantage of His forbearance and tempt Him. God is not to be derided. It is an old wise saying.

V. To have an exact knowledge of the complexity and duration of My long passion, that culminates in the sanguinary Passion accomplished in few hours, that had consumed Me in a daily torture that lasted for years and years, and that had increased more and more, and with the passion of My Mother, Whose heart was pierced by the sword of sorrow for the same length of time. And urge you, through this knowledge, to love us more.

VI. To show the power of My Word and its different effects according to whether the person receiving it belonged to the group of men of good will, or to that of those who had a sensual will, which is never righteous.

The Apostles and Judas. Here are the two opposed examples. The former, very imperfect, rough, ignorant, violent, but with good will. Judas, learned more than

most of them, refined by living in the capital and in the Temple, but of evil will. Watch the evolution of the former in Good, their ascent. Watch the evolution of the latter in Evil, and his descent.

This evolution in perfection of the Eleven good ones should be watched above all by those who, through a visual mental fault, are accustomed to perverting the nature of the reality of saints, making of the man who reaches holiness by means of a hard, very hard struggle against heavy obscure powers, an unnatural being without incentives and emotions, and therefore without merits. Because merit is really consequent on the victory over disorderly passions and temptations, a victory achieved through love for God and to attain the final aim: to enjoy God for ever. It should be watched by those who claim that a conversion should come only from God. God gives the means to be converted, but He does not do violence to the will of man, and if man does not want to be converted, in vain he has what serves other people to become converted.

Let those who examine the situation consider the manifold effects of My Word not only on the human man, but also on the spiritual man. Not only on the spiritual man, but also on the human man. My Word, when it is received with good will, transforms both, leading to external and internal perfection.

The apostles who through their ignorance and My humility treated the Son of Man with excessive familiarity - a good master among them, nothing more, a humble and patient master with whom it was permissible to take liberties at times excessive; but it was not irreverence on their part: it was ignorance, and it is to be excused - the apostles quarrelsome with one another, selfish, jealous of their love and of Mine, impatient with the people, somewhat proud of being "the Apostles", eager for stupendous capacities, which point them out to the crowds as gifted with an extraordinary power, slowly but continuously change into new men, bridling their passions first to imitate Me and make Me happy, then, as they became more and more acquainted with My true Ego, changing manners and love so much as to see Me, love Me and treat Me as the divine Lord. At the end of My life on the Earth, are they still perhaps the superficial merry companions of the early times? Are they, above all after the Resurrection, the friends who treat the Son of Man as a Friend? No, they are not. They are the ministers of the King, first. They are the priests of God, later. They are completely different and completely transformed.

This should be considered by those who will find the apostles' nature, which was as it is described, strong, and will judge it unnatural. I was not a difficult doctor and a proud king, I was not a master who judges other men unworthy of him. I was indulgent to people. I wanted to form using raw materials, and fill empty vases with all kinds of perfections, proving that God can do everything, He can raise a son of Abraham from a stone, a son of God, and from a nonentity a master to confuse masters proud of their science, which has very often lost the scent of Mine.

VII. Finally: to make you acquainted with the mystery of Judas, that mystery which is the fall of a spirit that God had favoured in an extraordinary manner. A mystery that is repeated too often and is the wound that aches in the Heart of your Jesus.

To let you know how people fall changing from servants and sons of God into demons and deicides, who kill the God in them by killing Grace, so that such knowledge may prevent you from setting foot on the paths from which one falls into the Abyss, and it may teach you how to behave when trying to hold back the imprudent lambs that push on towards the abyss.

Apply your intelligence to study the horrible and yet common figure of Judas, a complex in which are agitated like snakes all the capital vices that you find and have to fight in this or that person. It is the most important lesson to be learned by you, because it is the one that will be more useful to you in your ministry of spiritual masters and directors. How many people, in every state of life, imitate Judas giving themselves to Satan and meeting eternal death!



Maria is buried in a side chapel of the Mother Church of the World-wide Servite Order, Florence Italy.

On the tomb is written:

Victim given to God
Writer of things divine

This work is given “to support the work of my holy Vicar Pius X to help especially priests in their fight against Modernism”
Words of Jesus Christ to Maria Valtorta.



For more, see www.drbo.org/valtorta.htm