

The woman at the well

(St. John 4) from the Poem of the Man-God Vol 2 by Maria Valtorta

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143. Photinai, the Samaritan Woman. (cf St. John ch 4)

22nd April 1945. The disciples are talking with Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Jesus says: « I will stop here. You go into town and buy what is necessary for our meal. We shall eat here. »

« Shall we all go? »

« Yes, John. You had better be all together. »

« And what about You? You will be left alone... They are Samaritans... »

« They will not be the worst enemies of Christ. Go. I will pray, while waiting for you. I will pray for you and for them »

The disciples reluctantly go away, and they turn round three or four times to look at Jesus, Who has sat down on a little wall, exposed to the sun, near the low broad edge of a well. It is a big well, so wide that it seems a cistern. In summer it is shaded by tall trees, which are now bare. It is not possible to see the water, but the little puddles and ring marks of wet pitchers on the ground near the well, are clear signs that water has been drawn. Jesus sits down and meditates, in His usual attitude, His elbows resting on His knees, His hands stretched out and joined, His body slightly bent forward and His head lowered. When He feels the mild warmth of the sun, He lets His mantle drop from His head and shoulders and holds it round His waist. He raises His head and smiles at a flight of wrangling

sparrows quarrelling over a large crumb of bread, which someone has dropped near the well.

But the sparrows fly away when a woman arrives near the well. With her left hand she is holding an empty amphora by one of its handles, whilst her right hand with a gesture of surprise pushes aside her veil to see who the man is who is sitting there. Jesus smiles at the thirty-five/forty year old woman. She is tall, with a beautiful strongly marked figure. A Spanish type, we would say: a pale olive complexion, rather thick bright-red lips, dark eyes which are even exceedingly large, very dark eyebrows and hair, visible through her transparent veil. Also her rather plump features are typically oriental and slightly soft, as is customary with Arab women. Her dress is a multicoloured striped robe, which is held very tight round her waist and her plump sides and breast, and then falls to the ground in a kind of wavy fringe. She is wearing several rings on her rather plump dark fingers and bracelets on her wrists, which appear under her linen sleeves. Round her neck she wears a heavy necklace from which some medals are hanging; I should call them amulets because they are of all shapes. Heavy ear-rings hang down as far as her neck and shine under her veil.

« Peace be with you, woman. Will you give Me some water to drink? I have walked a long way and I am thirsty. »

« Are You not a Judaeon? And You ask me, a Samaritan woman, to give You a drink? What has happened? Have we been rehabilitated, or have you been routed? A great event must have taken place, if a Judaeon speaks kindly to a Samaritan woman. But I should say to You: "I will not give You anything, to punish in You all the insults the Jews have been heaping on us for centuries". »

« You are right. A great event has taken place. And because of it many things have changed and many more will change. God has granted a great gift to the world and through it many things have changed. If you knew the gift of God and Who is saying to you:

"Give Me a drink", perhaps you would have asked Him to give you a drink and He would have given you living water. »

« Living water is in the veins of the earth. It is in this well. But it is ours. »
The woman's tone is derisory and arrogant.

« Water comes from God. As bounty comes from God. As life comes from God. Everything belongs to the One Only God, woman. And all men come from God: Samaritans and Judaeans. Is this not Jacob's well? And is not Jacob the head of our race? If later on an error divided us, that does not change our origin. »

« Of course, it was our error, was it not? » the woman asks aggressively.

« Neither ours nor yours. It was the error of one who had lost sight of Charity and Justice. I do not wish to offend you or your race. Why do you wish to strike an offensive attitude? »

« You are the first Judaeon whom I hear speak thus. The others... But reverting to the well, yes, it is Jacob's and its water is so plentiful and clear that we in Sychar prefer it to other fountains. But it is very deep. You have neither amphora nor bucket. How could You, therefore, draw living water for me? Are You greater than our holy Patriarch Jacob, who found this abundant vein for himself, his sons and his cattle and left it to us as his souvenir and gift? »

« You are right. But whoever drinks this water, will be thirsty again. I instead have a water and whoever drinks it will not be thirsty again. But it

is only Mine. And I will give it to whoever asks Me for it. And I solemnly tell you that whoever has the water I give him, will always be satisfied and will never be thirsty again, because My water will be an unfailing eternal spring. »

« What? I do not understand. Are You a magician? How can a man become a well? A camel drinks and lays a supply of water in his big stomach. But he then consumes it and it does not last all his life. And You say that Your water lasts a whole lifetime? »

« Even longer: it will last until eternal life. In those who drink it, it will gush until eternal life and will give germs of eternal life, because it is a spring of health. »

« Give me some of that water, if You really have it. I get tired coming here. If I have it, I will not be thirsty any more and I will never be ill or become old. »

« Is that the only thing of which you get tired? Of nothing else? And you feel only the need of drawing water to drink and satisfy Your poor body? Think about it. There is something more important than your body. Your soul. Jacob did not procure only the water of the earth for himself and his sons. He was anxious to be holy and to bestow holiness, the water of God. »

« You call us heathens... If what You say is true, we cannot be holy... »
The woman's tone is no longer insolent and ironical and she is submissive and somewhat confused.

« Also a heathen can be virtuous. And God, Who is just, will reward him for the good he has done. It will not be a complete reward, but I can tell you that between a guilty believer and an innocent heathen, God looks at

the latter with less severity. And if you know you are such, why do you not come to the True God? What is your name? »

« Photinai. »

« Well, tell me, Photinai, are you sorry that you cannot aspire to holiness because you are a heathen, as you say, or because you are in the haze of an old error, as I say? »

« Yes, I am sorry. »

« Well, then, why do you not live at least as a virtuous heathen? »

« Lord!... »

« Yes, can you deny it? Go and call your husband and come back here with him. »

« I have no husband. » The embarrassment of the woman increases.

« You have spoken the truth. You have no husband. But you have had five men and you have one with you now who is not your husband. Was that necessary? Also your religion condemns lewdness. You have the Decalogue, too. Why, then, Photinai, do you live thus? Are you not tired of the exertion of being flesh for everybody, instead of being the honest wife of one man only? Are you not afraid of the evening of your life, when you will be all alone with your memories and regrets? And with your fears? Yes, all those. Fear of God and of ghosts. Where are your children? »

The woman lowers her head completely and does not reply.

« You have none in this world. But their little souls, whom you prevented from seeing the day of their birth, are reproaching you. And they always will. Jewels... beautiful dresses... a splendid house... a bountiful table...

But emptiness, and tears, and interior misery. You are forlorn, Photinai. And only through sincere repentance, through God's forgiveness and consequently through your children's forgiveness, you can become rich again. »

« Lord, I see that You are a prophet. And I am ashamed... »

« And when you were doing evil things, were you not ashamed of yourself before the Father Who is in Heaven? Do not weep out of dejection before the Man... Come here, Photinai. Come near Me. I will speak to you of God. Perhaps you did not know Him well. And that is why you have been so faulty. If you had known the True God well, you would not have degraded yourself so much. He would have spoken to you and supported you... »

« Lord, our ancestors have worshipped on this mountain. You say that one must worship only in Jerusalem. But You said that there is only One God. Help me to see what I must do and where... »

« Woman, believe Me. Before long the Father will be worshipped neither on the mountain in Samaria nor in Jerusalem. You worship Him Whom you do not know. We worship Him Whom we know, because salvation comes from the Judaeans. I remind you of the Prophets. But the time will come, nay, it has already arrived, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, no longer according to the ancient rite, but to the new one, where there will be no sacrifice of animals consumed by fire. There will be the eternal sacrifice of the Immaculate Victim consumed by the Fire of Charity. It will be a spiritual cult in a spiritual Kingdom. And it will be understood by those who are able to worship in spirit and truth. God is Spirit. Those who worship Him must do so spiritually. »

« You speak holy words. I know, because we also know something, that the Messiah is about to come: the Messiah, He Who is called also "Christ". When He comes, He will teach us everything. Not far from here there is also one who is said to be His Precursor. And many go and listen to him. But he is so severe!... You are kind... and the souls of poor people are not afraid of You. I think that Christ will be good. They say that He is the King of Peace. Will it be long before He comes? »

« I have told you that His hour has already come. »

« How do You know? Are You perhaps one of His disciples? The Precursor has many disciples. Also Christ will have them. »

« I, Who am speaking to you, am Jesus Christ. »

« You!... Oh!... » The woman, who had sat down near Jesus, stands up and is about to run away.

« Woman, why are you running away? »

« Because I am struck with terror at being near You. You are holy. »

« I am the Saviour. I came here, although it was not necessary, because I knew that your soul was tired of wandering. You are disgusted with your food... I have come to give you a new food, which will remove your nausea and tiredness... Here are My disciples coming back with My food. But I have already been fed by giving you the first crumbs of your redemption. »

The disciples glance at the woman out of the corners of their eyes, more or less prudently, but no one speaks. She goes away forgetting about her amphora and the water.

« Here, Master » says Peter. « The people have treated us very well. Here is some cheese, fresh bread, olives and apples. Take what You want. It's a

good job that woman left her amphora. We shall draw water with it quicker than with our small flasks. We shall have a drink and then we shall fill them. And we shall not have to ask the Samaritans for anything else. Neither shall we have to go near their fountains. Are You not eating? I wanted to get some fish for You, but there was none. Perhaps You would have preferred it. You look tired and pale. »

« I have a food which is unknown to you. I will have some of it and it will restore Me considerably. »

The disciples look at one another inquisitively.

Jesus replies to their silent questions: « My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish the work which He wants Me to complete. When a sower sows the seed, can he say that he has done everything and thus state that he can reap the harvest? Most certainly not. How much more there is still to be done before he may say: "My work is accomplished". And he cannot rest until that moment. Look at these little fields in the bright midday sunshine. Only a month ago, even less than a month ago, the soil was bare and dark because it was wet with rain. Look now. It looks as if it were covered by a light whitish veil, because of the many very pale-green corn stems, which have just come up and look even lighter because of the bright sunshine. That is the future crop and seeing it you say: "It will be harvest time in four months. The sowers will employ reapers, because if one man is quite sufficient to sow his field, many men are required to reap the harvest. And they are all happy. Both the man who sowed a small sack of corn and now must prepare his granaries to store the crop, and those who in a few days earn enough to live on for a few months". Also in the spiritual field those who reap what I have sown will rejoice with Me and like Me, because I will give them the wages and crops

due to them. I will give them what to live on in My eternal Kingdom. You have but to reap. I have done the hardest work. And yet I say to you: "Come. Reap the harvest in My field. I am glad that you burden yourselves with the sheaves of My corn. When you have harvested all the corn that I, without ever tiring, have sown everywhere, then the will of God will be fulfilled and I will sit at the banquet in the Celestial Jerusalem". Here the Samaritans are coming with Photinai. Be kind to them. They are souls coming to God. »

144. With the People of Sychar.

23rd April 1945.

A group of Samaritan dignitaries are coming towards Jesus, led by Photinai. « God be with You, Rabbi. This woman has told us that You are a prophet and that You do not disdain speaking to us. We beg You to stay with us and not to refuse to speak to us, because if it is true that we are cut off from Judah, that does not mean that only Judah is holy and that all the error is in Samaria. Also amongst us there are some just people. »

« I told her exactly the same. I will not impose Myself, neither will I reject those who seek Me. »

« You are just. The woman told us that You are Christ. Is that true? Reply to us in the name of God. »

« I am. The Messianic epoch has come. Israel is united by her King. And not only Israel. »

« But You will be the Messiah for those who... are not in error, as we are » remarks an imposing elderly man.

« Man, I see that you are their leader and I also see that you are honestly seeking the Truth. Now, listen to Me since you are learned in the holy scriptures. I was told what the Spirit said to Ezekiel, entrusting him with the prophetic mission: "Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels, who have rebelled against Me... They are impudent and stubborn children... They may listen to you and then not keep your words, which are My words, because they are a rebellious house, but at least they will know that there is a prophet among them. Therefore, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, because they are unbelieving and rebellious... And you shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear you. Do what I tell you, hear what I say to you, be not rebellious like them. Eat, therefore, whatever food I give you". And I came. I do not flatter Myself and I do not expect to be received as a triumphant victor. But since the will of God is My honey, here I am to fulfil it, and if you wish I will tell you the words which the Spirit said to Me. »

« How can the Eternal Father have thought of us? »

« Because He is love, My children. »

« Not all the Rabbis in Judah say so. »

« But that is what the Messiah of the Lord tells you. »

« It is written that the Messiah is to be born of a virgin in Judah. Of whom and where were You born? »

« In Bethlehem Ephrata, of Mary of the House of David, by means of a spiritual conception. I ask you to believe Me. » Jesus' beautiful voice is a declaration of triumphant joy in proclaiming His Mother's virginity.

« Your face is shining with a bright light. No, it is not possible for You to lie. The faces of the children of darkness are gloomy and their eyes are grim. You are bright; Your eyes are as bright as the morning star and Your words are true. Please come to Sychar and teach the children of this people. Then You will go away... and we will remember the Star that appeared in our sky... »

« Why would you not follow it? »

« How can we? » They are talking while walking towards the town. « We are cut off. At least that is what they say. But we were born in this faith and we do not know whether it is right to abandon it. Further... well, I feel I can tell You. After all we have eyes to see and minds to think. When we pass through your country, on journeys or on business, not everything we see is so holy as to persuade us that God is with you Judaeans or with you Galileans. »

« I solemnly tell you that the remainder of Israel will be charged with not persuading and leading you back to God by means of good examples and charity, instead of offending and anathematising you. »

« How much wisdom there is in You. Have you all heard Him? »

They all nod assent whispering their admiration.

They have in the meantime reached the town and many people draw near while they walk towards a house.

« Listen, Rabbi. Since You are wise and good, please resolve a doubt of ours. A great deal of our future depends on it. As You are the Messiah and thus the Restorer of David's Kingdom, You must be happy to rejoin this severed limb to the body of the state. Are You not? »

« I am taking care not so much to reunite the severed parts of what is perishable and transient, as to lead back to God all the souls, and I am happy when I restore the Truth to a heart. But express your doubt. »

« Our fathers sinned. Since then the souls of Samaritans have been disliked by God. What benefit will we receive if we follow Good? We will always be like lepers in the eyes of God. »

« Your regret is the eternal dissatisfaction of all schismatics. Once again I will reply to you with Ezekiel: "All souls are Mine" says the Lord. "The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son. Only the soul that sins shall die. If a man is righteous, if he is not an idolator, if he does not fornicate, or steal or lend at an interest, if he has mercy both on the body and on the soul of his neighbour, he is righteous in My eyes and shall live a true life". And further on. "If a just man has a rebellious son, shall that son live because his father was a just man? He shall not live". And also: "If the son of a sinner is a righteous man, will he die like his father, because he is his son? No, he shall live eternal life because he was just". It would not be fair if one had to suffer for the iniquity of another. The soul that has sinned shall die. The soul that has not sinned shall not die. And if he who has sinned is repentant and comes to the Justice, behold, he shall have true life, too. The Lord God, the One and Only Lord, says: "I do not want the death of the sinner, but I want him to repent and live". That is why He sent Me, o wandering children: that you may have true life. I am the Life. Who believes in Me and in Him Who sent Me will have eternal life, even if up to the present moment he was a sinner. »

« Here we are at my house, Master. Do You not detest entering it? »

« I detest only sin. »

« Come in, then, and stay. We shall break our bread together and then, if it is not a burden to You, You will explain the word of God to us. That word has a different flavour when it is explained by You... and we are tortured by a doubt: we do not feel sure that we are right... »

« Everything would be appeased if you dared to come openly to the Truth. May God speak to your hearts. It is getting dark. Tomorrow, at the third hour I will speak to you at some length, if you wish so. Go now with the Mercy which is close to you. »

145. Evangelization at Sychar.

24th April 1945.

Jesus is speaking to a large crowd in the centre of a square. He has climbed on a stone bench near the fountain. The crowds are around Him. Also the Twelve are around Him... their faces are dismayed, or annoyed, or they clearly show disgust at certain contacts. Bartholomew and the Iscariot in particular clearly show their embarrassment and to be as far as possible from the Samaritans, the Iscariot is sitting astride the branch of a tree as if he wanted to dominate the scene, while Bartholomew is leaning against a door in a corner of the square. The prejudice is evident and clearly visible in all of them.

Jesus, on the contrary, has not changed His usual attitude in the least. Nay, I would say that He is endeavouring to prevent His majesty from frightening the people and at the same time He tries to let it shine to remove all doubts. He caresses two or three little ones and asks them their names, He takes an interest in an old man to whom He gives alms Himself, He replies to two or three questions, which are put to Him on private matters, not on general problems.

The first one is the request of a father whose daughter had eloped and is now begging to be forgiven.

« Forgive her at once. »

« But I suffered because of her, Master. And I still suffer. In less than a year I have grown ten years older. »

« Forgiveness will relieve you. »

« It is not possible. The wound is still there. »

« That is true. But in the wound there are two parts that hurt. One is the undeniable affront you received from your daughter. The other is the effort to cease loving her. Remove at least the latter. Forgiveness, which is the highest form of love, will remove it. You must consider, poor father, that your daughter was born of you and is always entitled to your love. If you knew that she was suffering from a physical disease and that she would die, unless you cured her yourself, would you let her die? Most certainly not. Consider then that you, with your forgiveness can put an end to her trouble and bring her back to her wholesome instinct. Because you must realise that she was overwhelmed by the basest material instinct. »

« So You would advise me to forgive her? »

« You must. »

« How will I be able to see her move about the house, and not curse her for what she has done? »

« In that case you would not forgive her. Your forgiveness must not consist in opening once again the door of your house to her, but in reopening your heart. Be good, man. What? Shall we not have for our own child the patience we have for a restless steer? »

A woman, instead, asks Jesus whether she ought to marry her brother-in-law to give a father to her little orphans.

« Do you think he will be a real father to them? »

« Yes, Master, I do. They are three boys. It takes a man to guide them. »

« Marry him, then, and be a faithful wife to him, as you were to your first husband. »

The third man asks Him whether he will be doing the right thing or not by accepting an invitation to go to Antioch.

« Man, why do you want to go there? »

« Because I have not enough means here for myself and my large family. I met a Gentile who would employ me because he saw how skilful I am in my work and he would take on also my sons. But I would not like... the scruple of a Samaritan may seem strange to You, but there it is. I would not like to lose our faith. That man, You know, is a heathen! »

« So? Nothing contaminates unless one wants to be contaminated. Go to Antioch and be of the True God. He will guide you and you will be the benefactor of your master, who will acquire the knowledge of God through your honesty. »

He then begins speaking to the crowd.

« I have heard many of you and I have -perceived that each of your hearts is rent by a secret sorrow, a grief, of which you are not even aware. Your sorrow has been accumulating for centuries and neither the reasons expressed by you nor the insults hurled at you can dissolve it. On the contrary it becomes deeper and deeper and weighs like snow that becomes ice.

I am not one of you, neither am I one of those who accuse you. I am Justice and Wisdom. And once again I will quote Ezekiel to solve your case. He speaks of Samaria and Jerusalem in a prophetic style, and he says that they are daughters of one mother and calls them Oholah and Oholibah. The first to fall into idolatry was the former, whose name is Oholah, because she was already deprived of the spiritual help from union with the Father of Heaven. Union with God is always salvation. She changed true wealth, true power, true wisdom with the poor wealth, power and wisdom of one who was inferior to God, who was even lower than she was, and she was seduced to such an extent as to become the slave of the way of living of her seducer. She wanted to be strong, and instead became weak. She wanted to be superior, and became inferior. She became insane because she was imprudent. It is not easy for one to get rid of an infection, when one has imprudently become infected by it. You may say: "Inferior? No. We were great". Yes, you were great, but how? At what cost? You know. How many people, also amongst women, become rich at the dreadful cost of their honour! They achieve something that may come to an end. They lose something that never ends: their reputation.

When Oholibah saw that Oholah's folly had brought her wealth, she wanted to imitate her and became more deranged than her sister, and was twice as guilty, because she had the True God with her and she should never have trodden on the strength that she received from that union. And a terrible severe punishment was inflicted on the twice crazy fornicatrix Oholibah, and a more severe punishment will be imposed. God will turn His back on her. He is already doing so, in order to go to those who do not belong to Judah. Neither can God be accused of being unfair, because He does not impose Himself. He opens His arms to everybody, He invites everybody, but if one says to Him: "Go away", He goes away. He goes to

seek love elsewhere, to invite other people, until He finds someone who says to Him: "I will come". I therefore say to you that you can find relief from your torture, you must find it, by meditating on what I told you. Oholah, recover your consciousness. God is calling you.

The wisdom of man consists in acknowledging his faults, the wisdom of the spirit lies in loving the True God and His Truth. Do not look at Oholibah, or Phoenicia, or Egypt, or Greece. Look at God. That is the Fatherland of every righteous soul: Heaven. There are not many laws, but one only: God's. Through the law one achieves Life. Do not say: "We sinned", but say: "We do not want to sin any more". You have the proof that God still loves you and that He has sent His Word to say to you: "Come". I say to you: "Come". Have you been offended and proscribed? By whom? By Your own fellow creatures. But God is above them and He says to You: "Come". The day will come when you will rejoice because You were not in the Temple... Your hearts will rejoice at that. But souls will rejoice even more because God's forgiveness will already have descended upon the righteous hearts scattered throughout Samaria. Prepare His coming. Come to the universal Saviour, o children of God, who have lost your way. »

« Some of us at least would come. But those on the other side do not want us. »

« And once again with the priest and prophet I say to you: "I am about to take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel associated with him and I will join it to the stick of Judah and make them one stick... " Do not go to the Temple. Come to Me. I do not reject anyone. I am called the King dominating over everybody. I am the King of kings. I will purify all peoples if they wish to be purified. I will gather you

together, o herds without shepherds or with idol-shepherds, because I am the Good Shepherd. I will give you one tabernacle only and I will place it in the midst of My believers. That tabernacle will be the source of life, the bread of life, it will be light, salvation, protection, wisdom. It will be everything, because it will be the Living One given as food to the dead to make them live, it will be God Whose holiness will overflow to sanctify. That is what I am and will be. The days of hatred, of incomprehension, of fear have come to an end. Come! People of Israel! People separated! People afflicted! People remote! You are a dear people, infinitely dear, because you are ill and weak, because you have been wounded by an arrow that has opened the veins of your souls and has let the vital union with your God escape. Come! Come to the bosom where you were born, come to the breast from which you received life. Kindness and warmth are still here for you. Come! Come to Life and to Salvation. »

146. Goodbye to the People of Sychar.

25th April 1945.

Jesus says to the Samaritans of Sychar: « Before leaving you, as I have other children to evangelize, I want to show you the shining paths of hope, and set you on them saying to you: you may go safely as the goal is certain. Today I will not quote the great Ezekiel; I will quote Jeremiah's favourite disciple, a most great Prophet.

Baruch speaks for you. Oh! He really takes your souls and speaks on behalf of them all to the Sublime God Who is in Heaven. Your souls. I do not mean only the souls of the Samaritans, but all your souls, o families of the chosen people who have fallen into manifold sins; and He takes also your souls, o Gentile peoples, who feel there is an unknown God among the many gods you worship, a God Whom your souls perceive to be the

Only True God and Whom your dullness prevents you from seeking and knowing, as your souls would wish. At least a moral law was given to you, o Gentiles and idolaters, because you are men, and man has in himself an essence that comes from God, and its name is spirit, which always speaks of and suggests nobility and urges to holy things in life. And you have compelled it to become the slave of your vicious flesh, infringing the human moral law that you had, thus becoming sinners, also from a human point of view and you lowered the concept of your faith and yourselves to a level of brutality that makes you inferior to animals. And yet listen. You all listen. The deeper your knowledge of the moral supernatural Law given to you by the True God, the more you will understand and, consequently, act accordingly.

He prays - and this is the prayer that is to be said by your hearts humiliated by a noble humility, which is not degradation or pusillanimity, but an exact knowledge of one's miserable conditions, as well as a holy desire to find means of improving them spiritually - Baruch thus prays: "Look down, Lord, from Your holy dwelling place, take heed of us and listen. Look at us, Lord and consider; the dead down in Sheol, whose breath has been taken from their bodies, are not the ones to give glory and due observance to the Lord; the person overcome with affliction, who goes his way bowed down and frail, with failing eyes and hungering soul, he is the one to give You glory, Lord, and due observance". And Baruch weeps humbly and every just soul should weep with him, seeing and calling by their true names the misfortunes that have turned a strong people into a sad, divided and subdued one: "We did not listen to Your voice and so You carried out what You had promised through Your servants the prophets... and behold the bones of our kings and of our ancestors have been dragged from their resting places and have been tossed out to the

heat of the day and the frost of the night and people died in dreadful agony, from famine, sword and plague. And so because of the wickedness of the House of Israel and the House of Judah, You have reduced this Temple, where Your Name was invoked, to what it is today".

Oh! Children of the Father, do not say: "Both our Temple and yours have been rebuilt and are beautiful". No. A tree split by a thunderbolt from its top down to the roots will not survive. It may just vegetate in a miserable manner through an effort to live by means of the shoots coming from the roots, which are reluctant to die, but it will be barren brushwood, it will no longer be a healthy tree, laden with wholesome sweet fruit. The ruin that started with the separation, grows worse and worse, although the material structure does not appear to be damaged, on the contrary it looks beautiful and new. It crushes down the consciences that live in it. And then the hour will come when every supernatural flame will be extinguished and the Temple will be deprived of its very life, the Temple, an altar of precious metal, which can subsist only if it is continuously smelted by the warmth of its ministers' faith and charity; and icy, dull, soiled, full of dead bodies, it will become putrefaction upon which foreign crows and the avalanche of divine punishment will rush to ruin it completely.

Pray, children of Israel, weeping with Me, your Saviour. May My voice support yours and reach up to the throne of God, as it is able to. Who prays with Christ, the Son of the Father, is heard by God, the Father of the Son. Let us say the old just prayer of Baruch: "And now, Almighty Lord, God of Israel, every soul in anguish, every troubled heart cries to You. Listen and have pity, o Lord. You are a Merciful God, have mercy on us for we have sinned in Your sight. You sit enthroned for ever, and shall we perish continually? Almighty Lord, God of Israel, hear the prayer of the dead of Israel and of their sons, who have sinned against You. They did

not listen to the voice of the Lord their God, hence the disasters that have befallen us. Do not call to mind the misdeeds of our ancestors, but remember instead Your power and Your Name... Because we invoke Your Name and we turn from the wickedness of our ancestors, have mercy on us".

Pray thus and be truly converted, by returning to true wisdom, which is the wisdom of God. It can be found in the Book of God's commandments and in the Law that lasts for ever, and that I, the Messiah of God, have now come to bring to the poor of the world in its simple unchangeable form, announcing them the Gospel of the time of Redemption, of Forgiveness, of Love, of Peace. Who believes in that Word will reach eternal life.

I leave you, citizens of Sychar, who have been good to the Messiah of God. I leave you with My peace. »

« Stay a little longer. »

« Come back again. »

« No one will ever speak to us as You did. »

« May You be blessed, good Master. »

« Bless my little one. »

« Pray for me, since You are a Saint. »

« Allow me to keep one of Your fringes, as a blessing. »

« Remember Abel. »

« And me, Timothy. »

« And me, Jorai. »

« I will remember you all. Peace be with you. »

They go with Him for a few hundred yards out of town, and then they slowly go back...

147. Instruction to the Apostles and the Miracle of the Woman of Sychar.

26th April 1945.

Jesus is walking ahead of the apostles, alone, close to a hedge of prickly cactus, the leaves of which are shining in the sun and seem to be deriding all the other bare plants. One can see on them a few surviving fruits which age has coloured brick-red and an odd early flower pleasantly bright in its yellow-cinnebar hue.

Behind Him, the apostles are whispering to one another, and I get the impression that they are not really speaking in praise of the Master. All of a sudden Jesus turns round and says: « Keep watching the wind and you will never sow, stare at the clouds and you will never reap. It is an old proverb and I follow it. And you can see that where you were afraid of ill winds and did not want to stop, I found a fertile soil and the possibility of sowing. And notwithstanding "your" clouds, which, may I tell you, you ought not to display where Mercy wants to show His sunshine, I am sure I have already harvested. »

« However, no one asked You for a miracle. Their faith in You is very odd! »

« And do you think, Thomas, that faith is evidenced only by requesting miracles? You are wrong. It is the very opposite. If a man wants a miracle to be able to believe, it means that without the tangible proof of the

miracle, he would not believe. Who instead says: "I believe" in somebody else's word, shows the greatest faith. »

« So the Samaritans are better than we are! »

« I am not saying that. But in their state of spiritual disability they have shown a much greater capacity for understanding God than the believers in Palestine. You will find that very often in your lifetime, and I would ask you to remember this instance, so that you will know how to behave with the souls who turn to the faith in Christ. »

« But, Jesus, forgive me for telling You, I think that with all the hatred against You, it does You no good to give rise to new accusations. If the members of the Sanhedrin knew that You have... »

« You may very well say: "loved", because that is what I have done and I do, James. And since you are My cousin, you can understand that I can but love. I have shown to you that I always love also those who were against Me amongst My kinsfolk and countrymen. And should I not love those people who respected Me, although they did not know Me? The members of the Sanhedrin can do all the harm they like. But it will not be the thought of such future evil that will stop the effusion of My omnipresent and omnieffective love. In any case... even if I did... I would not prevent the Sanhedrin from finding accusations in their hatred. »

« But, Master, You are wasting Your time in an idolatrous country, whilst so many places in Israel are expecting You. You say that every hour is to be consecrated to the Lord. Are the hours spent here not lost? »

« The day spent in gathering the lost sheep is not lost. It is not lost, Philip. It is said: "A man multiplies offerings by keeping the Law... but by having mercy he offers a sacrifice". It is said: "Give the Most High as He has given to you, generously as your means can afford". I do that, My

friend. And the time devoted to sacrifice is not wasted. I show mercy and I make use of the means I received by offering My work to God. Therefore be calm. In any case... Who wanted a request for a miracle to be convinced that the people in Sychar believe in Me, is now satisfied. That man is certainly following us for some reason. Let us stop. »

A man in fact is coming towards them. He seems to be bent under a large bundle that he is carrying on his shoulders. When he sees the group stop, he stops, too.

« He wants to harm us. He stopped because he saw that we noticed him. Oh! They are Samaritans! »

« Are you sure, Peter? »

« Of course I am! »

« Well, then. You all stay here. I will go and meet him. »

« Never, my Lord. If You go, I will come, too. »

« Come, then. »

Jesus walks towards the man. Peter jogs along beside Him, curious and hostile at the same time. When they are a few yards from the man, Jesus says: « What do you want, man? Whom are you looking for? »

« For You. »

« Why did you not look for Me when I was in town? »

« I did not dare... If You had rejected me in the presence of everybody, I would have suffered too much and would have been ashamed. »

« You could have called Me as soon as I was alone with My disciples. »

« I was hoping to reach You when You were alone, as Photinai did. I also have a grave reason for being alone with You... »

« What do you want? What are you carrying on your shoulders so heavily? »

« My wife. A spirit has taken possession of her and has turned her into a dead body and a dull intelligence. I have to feed her, dress her and carry her like a baby. It happened all of a sudden, without any disease... They call her the "possessed woman". It causes me much pain. And work. And expenses. Look. » The man lays on the ground his bundle containing an inert body enveloped in a mantle, as if it were a sack, and he uncovers the face of a woman, who is still young. If she did not breathe, one would say that she was dead. Her eyes are closed, her mouth is half open... her face looks as if she had breathed her last.

Jesus bends over the poor woman lying on the ground, looks at her, looks at the man: « Do you think that I can? Why do you believe it? »

« Because You are Christ. »

« But you have not seen anything that proves it. »

« I heard Your word. That is enough. »

« Peter, do you hear him? What do you think I should do now, in the presence of such good faith? »

« Well Master You I As You wish, after all... » Peter is very embarrassed.

« Yes, I will do as I wish. Man, look. » Jesus takes the woman by the hand and says: « Go out of her. I want it. »

The woman, so far motionless, is shaken by a dreadful convulsion: at first she is silent, then she shouts and groans and finally bursts into a loud cry, during which she opens her eyes wide as if she were awaking from a nightmare. She then calms down and somewhat bewildered she looks around, staring first at Jesus, the Unknown Man smiling at her she then

looks at the dust on the road where she is lying, she gazes at a tuft of grass that has grown on the edge of the road and on which the tiny white-red heads of daisies seem pearls about to open out in a halo of rays. She looks at the cactus hedge, at the deep blue sky, and looking round she sees her husband who full of anxiety is watching every movement of hers. She smiles and now, fully free, she jumps to her feet and seeks refuge on the chest of her husband, who caresses and embraces her, weeping.

« What is it? How am I here? Why? Who is that man? »

« He is Jesus, the Messiah. You were ill and He has cured you. Tell Him that you love Him. »

« Oh! Yes. Thank You... But what was the matter with me? My children... Simon... I do not remember the past, but I remember I have some children... »

Jesus says: « You need not remember the past. Always remember the present day. And be good. Goodbye. Be good and God will be with you. » And Jesus withdraws quickly, followed by the blessings of both of them.

When He reaches the others who remained behind, close to the hedge, He does not speak to them. But He addresses Peter: « So? You were sure that that man wanted to hurt Me, what are you going to say now? Simon, Simon! How much you still lack to be perfect! How much you all lack! With the exception of their well known idolatry, you have all the sins of those people and arrogance in judging over and above. Let us have our meal now. We cannot reach before night the place I wanted to. We shall sleep in some barn, if we do not find anything better. »

The Twelve, with a sense of reproach in their hearts, sit down without speaking and take their food. It is a peaceful day and the sun shines on the country which slopes towards a plain in mild undulations.

After their meal they stop for a little while, until Jesus stands up and says: « Simon and Andrew, come with Me. I am going to see whether that house is a friendly one or not. » And He goes away while the others stay and are silent, until James of Alphaeus says to Judas Iscariot: « Is that woman coming here not the woman of Sychar? »

« Yes, she is. I know her by her dress. I wonder what she wants. »

« She will be wanting to go her way » replies Peter sulkily.

« No, she is looking in our direction, shielding her eyes with her hand. »

They watch her until she is near them and asks in a low voice: « Where is your Master? »

« He has gone away. Why do you want Him? »

« I need Him. »

« He does not waste His time with women » replies Peter curtly.

« I know. He doesn't with women. But I am the soul of a woman who needs Him. »

« Leave her alone » suggests Judas of Alphaeus. And he replies to Photinai: « Wait. He will soon be back. »

The woman withdraws to a little comer where the road bends and she remains still and silent, while no one pays attention to her. Jesus is soon back and Peter says: « Here is the Master. Tell Him what you want and be quick. »

The woman does not even reply to him, but goes towards Jesus and kneels down at His feet. She is silent.

« Photinai, what do you want from Me? »

« Your help, my Lord. I am so weak. And I do not want to sin any more. I have already told the man. But now that I am no longer a sinner, I know nothing. I do not know what good is. What shall I do? Please tell me. I am mud. But Your feet tread on the road to go towards souls. Trample on my mud, but come to my soul with Your advice. » She is weeping.

« You cannot follow Me, a lonely woman as you are. But if you really do not want to sin any more and you want to learn how not to sin, then go back to your house with a repentant mind and wait. The day will come, when amongst many more women who have also been redeemed, you will be able to be near your Redeemer and learn the science of Goodness. Go. Be not afraid. Persevere in your present will not to sin. Goodbye. »

The woman kisses the ground, stands up, retreats for a few yards, then goes away, towards Sychar...



Maria Valtorta + 1961