

The God-spark and Saul's conversion

Book 22

Max Seltmann

Recommended chronological reading list:

(with regard to Jesus' life in flesh and Spirit, up to the time of the book of Revelation. All books are written by **Max Seltmann**, unless otherwise indicated. The book marked with **bold**, is the book currently opened.)

1. Childhood years of Jesus (Jakob Lorber)
2. Book 1 – John the Baptist
3. Book 2 – John the Apostle in his youth with Jesus (Love overcomes Part 1)
4. Book 3 – Jesus' Life
5. Book 4 – Jesus' Life
6. Book 5 – Jesus' Life
7. Book 6 – Jesus' Life
8. Book 7 – Jesus' Life
9. Book 8 – Jesus' Life
10. Book 9 – Jesus prepares for His ministry Part 1
11. Book 10 – Jesus prepares for His ministry Part 2
12. Great Gospel of John, Volumes 1 – 10 (Jakob Lorber)
13. Great Gospel of John, Volume 11 (Leopoldt Engel)
14. Book 11 - Good Friday
15. Book 12 - Judas Iscariot in the beyond
16. Book 13 - On the road to Emmaus
17. Book 14 - The Risen One!
18. Book 15 - The New Life in man
19. Book 16 – At Bethany – story of Theophilus
20. Book 17 - Ascension
21. Book 18 - Pentecost!
22. Book 19 - Among the first Christians
23. Book 20 - Divine guidance of the first Christians
24. Book 21 - The chamberlain from the Orient
- 25. Book 22 - The God-spark and Saul's conversion**
26. Book 23 - Awakening the Divine life
27. Book 24 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 1
28. Book 25 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 2
29. Book 26 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 3
30. Book 27 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 4
31. Book 28 - Naeme
32. Book 29 - John the Apostle as a guide (Love overcomes Part 2)
33. Book 30 - John the Apostle as a guide (Love overcomes Part 3)

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1. Why is God silent about all the abominations of evil people?

Weeks had passed, in Bethany all were glad and diligent, and also the latest arrivals thanked Lazarus from the heart for the reception. Also Jonah showed himself friendly and helpful towards all, but some felt nevertheless that he fought inwardly and wanted to suppress something, which robbed him of cheerful peace.

One morning, when Lazarus wanted to go to the oil mill, he asked Jonah to come along, since this business was still unknown to him; and on the way there, Lazarus asked: "Jonah, you seem so depressed, you are inwardly unfree, but this condition is not pleasant and dear to the Lord, for it reveals a lack of trust in Him. Do you regret having come to Bethany? You know our agreement: you are free as soon as you want to go. I ask you as a brother, be open, and consider me as the one who wants to help you with all means at my disposal."

Both had stopped. Jonah lowered his eyes and said timidly: "Dear Lazarus, you have noticed correctly, but you are unable to help me, since it concerns here a question between me and my God. If you could look into my heart and see all the sorrow that rises up in me again and again, when I have to think of all the many abominations that are committed daily by the Templars against those who confess their Savior Jesus - I have to ask: Why does the Lord remain mute to all the pleading prayers of His faithful? Why does God not help them? Has He lost His power and glory, so that we now have to turn to the Romans for help against these criminal acts of the temple!?"

See, I cannot erase the sight of the unfortunates in the cellar of the old Jew, among whom I found Theophilus. Again and again this gruesome image presents itself before my soul. I see the despairing eyes of the prisoners in their bitter distress directed accusingly at me. I have wrestled with the Lord during many nights for clarity, but He gives me no answer! But what I have just described comes back more and more clearly, for which, of course, I must also blame myself. If you had not asked me about my sorrow, I would also have kept silent before you."

"Jonah!" - replied Lazarus earnestly - "neither I nor the Lord can help you here, for what is happening in you, is self-torment. If frightening impressions constantly worry you, that is proof enough that they still live in your inner world and completely dominate you, and that your trust in the wise Divine guidance of all human souls, is not yet firmly rooted in your mind.

These images, which you cannot forget, lie burned into your soul. They bind the Spirit-spark from God in you and prevent it from its free activity to raise your thoughts to a higher point of view.

It is certainly a huge task to suddenly recognize innate, learned and for years firmly believed concepts of the work of God as false and to get rid of them from your own world of thoughts. But it is possible through the light of the flaming spark of God!

However, it is entirely up to our free will whether we grant the spark that dwells in us the privilege of dominating our dark thought-images. And you can experience how the unearthly clarity of his light illuminates all old ideas of the Divine and transforms them into completely new concepts, which give you what every human being needs for his peace of soul. If, however, your soul does not come to full freedom from external impressions, then

it is not far from all kinds of secondaries; and at such a moment, the enemy of all harmonious inner life, has taken his dominion over you!

Dear Jonah, people could say to me: Lazarus, you are running after a shadow, because your Jesus is long dead! What still lives in you of this Jesus - is only imagination! The hard reality shows you that so many are cruelly sacrificed for their ideas which they had made of their Jesus, who is no longer alive, otherwise He would reveal Himself just once! Behold, I would answer them: Jesus - lives! But He has infinite patience and His wise reasons to hide Himself from us still, so as not to become a judgment for His children's tormentors!"

As if reflecting, Lazarus continued to speak after a while: "See, I say to you, Jonah, now out of my spirit-life: But still today - Jesus will reveal Himself as the living Lord - before one of His greatest adversaries, and all the world shall experience this miracle of His love! Then praise and thanksgiving will fill us, His children, mightily, because we see by it: Jesus - lives!"

Jonah could not answer anything - so they went on in silence up to the oil mill, where Lazarus had to discuss some things with his people. Afterwards they went to the old Tobiah, who already came to meet them and called joyfully: "Praised be Jesus Christ" - "Until eternity!" Tobiah said: "That you find the way into my world once, gives me particular joy, because you have long postponed, brother Lazarus!"

"Without intention, my brother! I know the cattle are in good hands and know that you, my faithful Tobiah, keep good watch. But I also know that the Master will not let you be lonely, and therefore I prefer to be where I am more needed! If you want to have a little talk with our brother Jonah, I would like to go to the stables for a while."

When Jonah was alone with the old man, he asked him: "How long have you been in Bethany?"

"Dear friend, I must have been born here," Tobiah answered, "because for very many years now I have lived in this beautiful corner, and I have also experienced the most glorious thing there can ever be - here I have met Jesus! As often as the Master stayed in Bethany, I was taken because my heart loved Him so much.

Behold, He was indeed a man like us and also rejoiced in our work as in the beauties of nature. But His words! How deeply they penetrated my soul and awakened completely new concepts about God and His Divinely wise work in the world! And these new concepts are now growing in me and make me so happy inwardly all the time."

Jonah asked with emotion: "Dear old Tobias, I carry a secret sorrow inside me and I am looking for this great Master to come to terms with it. If you have known Him so intimately, tell me, do you miss Him now? Or is the consciousness enough for you: In spirit, He is after all always with me!"

Tobiah instructed him: "Friend Jonah, you still have a wrong idea of our Master and would like to know Him humanly around you. This would make you happy for the moment, but you would not grow in your inner life. See, in the course of our conversations, I once asked Him: Lord, how is it that You are so exceedingly good with us sinful people, and yet You avoid the temple?

Then the Lord said: In a few years, when I will have returned home to My eternal kingdom, you will learn this truth, only in that your spirit will receive the testimony about it from My

Spirit. For this love of Mine - so incomprehensible to you now - is precisely My Father-Spirit from God dwelling in Me! Think back often to this hour, where I put Myself completely on your level, and tell you: You also carry a spark of purest God-love in you and are thereby worthy to develop into a child of God."

Behold, my friend, this word of His is sufficient for me for time and eternity. By it I have grown, and holy peace is my portion.

There comes Lazarus - ask him, he will testify to you that in my old age I still live only according to my soul in this world of earth, but in my inner world, I have long been completely one with Jesus, who has now become a Father to me. Oh you poor world, how you think you are great and cannot even cast a shadow on the world of God that has become in me! And so I must confess to you: Jesus lives! Jesus remains the Victor over all the world!"

Lazarus had joined and still heard the last words. "Do you want still a greater testimony?" - he asked Jonah - "this one is ready to sacrifice his life for Him, and it would not mean pain to him, but joy, because he receives everything from the hands of God!"

The parting from this venerable old man was cordial. Both walked side by side in silence for a long time, then Lazarus said: "Brother, I feel it, I am expected at home and I want to hurry; you have leisure and can take time to look at your surroundings with the eyes of love."

Jonah replied: "I would rather accompany you, dear Lazarus, so as not to cause the little light growing in me to go out again through my own brooding. Have patience with me, I am struggling to become free."

In the meantime, there was great joy in Bethany, because Demetrius and Ursus arrived with many companions. Immediately the accommodation of the animals and wagons was ordered by Ursus, while the old Enos talked with his friend Demetrius; then also already Lazarus came with Jonah and all greeted each other warmly.

When the Romans learned that Theophilus was almost a victim of the Templars, the old rigid concept of Roman justice welled up in Ursus, but Enos said calmly: "Brother, what comes to us as hard and difficult, is also hard to bear. But I knew in advance: The Lord will direct everything for the best - and I have not been disappointed by His eternal love. Yes, we have been able to save many faithful souls with him! Behold, if my Theophilus had not needed this hard test of his faithfulness, this fate would certainly not have happened to him. Theophilus will testify it to you himself, for he has become changed."

Until late at night, the friends stayed together, only Jonah soon withdrew. And when Pura asked him: "Why are you still sad inside, when everything around us is joy and laughing life?" - he answered confidently - "My dear Pura, believe me, soon I too will be released from the torment of the gloomy images with which I have wrestled during so many sleepless nights. How I have pleaded for clarity - but today, finally, through Lazarus and old Tobiah, these inner processes have been shown to me in a completely different light. If I could really talk to Jesus just once, oh how that would make me free and happy."

"My dear Jonah, you are mistaken" - exclaimed Pura, moved - "an encounter with the Savior does not change your inner life either! But the Savior's life in us is the redeeming thing, and is so much more important than seeing Him or talking to Him. For where His life is lived, His Spirit must be present!"

Why do you still look for salvation through the outer world? On everything outside, no matter how good it is, there is always a little shadow. Shadow, however, is always the proof that something has placed itself in [front of] the light that does not want to let itself be penetrated by the light. The person of Jesus can also be our undoing if we remain attached to His outer form and do not pay attention to our inner life.

What I always admire about Lazarus and the sisters is: that Jesus has ceased to be a person to them, but has become only Father-Spirit."

Early in the morning, David had again offered a delightful psalm with his harp as a song of praise to the Lord, and everyone was in a festive mood as a result. Jonah also felt freer than he had in a long time and did not resist letting this joyfulness enter his soul. When Ursus began to tell of the secret impulses which he experienced as awakening forces within him, and of the blessings which the Spirit thereby released through him, Jonah listened with eagerness and was deeply moved, for here he found energy united with heroism.

So he asked Ursus if he could speak to him alone for once. "Yes gladly" - Ursus answered - "but perhaps it is no longer necessary, dear brother, because in the evening the sun illuminates everything differently than in the morning! But now I want to go to Jerusalem, you can accompany me there with Theophilus, but not with a timid heart, but with the consciousness of victory: Jesus lives! - and we through Him!"

Soon Ursus was seated in his chariot with the two of them and a black servant; he himself steered the fiery horses, and quickly they set out for Jerusalem.

In the meantime, the rich merchant Demetrius had a serious conversation with Enos and Lazarus; he solicited Ruth, the young daughter of Enos for his foster son Ursus, so that she would follow him as a wife, with father and mother - to Rome.

Long silence followed - until Lazarus said: "Dear Enos, why so solemnly silent? If Ruth is willing, and feels true inclination of heart to Ursus, I would consider it a happiness!"

Then Enos said: "My dear Demetrius! If our children agree on it, I joyfully give my blessing to it. I will speak to my wife and to Ruth about it - but I will stay here in Bethany."

"Enos is right" - said Lazarus - "he should first speak with his own; we will gladly wait until the answer is ripe.

At the same time, however, dear Enos, I would like to prepare you for the fact that your Theophilus will also soon be brought to his greater destiny. In the new communities with Achibald and Bernhart, the awakened life of God needs special instruction, and Theophilus will be the right servant of God for them. I have already spoken with him. He is happy to go, and is just waiting for the special call."

Enos spoke slowly: "I know - the daughters go with the man of their choice, and there they establish their new home. The sons also look for their profession. I, however, am firmly rooted near the City of God and have found my home here."

Meanwhile, Ursus directed his vehicle to the home of Mary, who was there alone with her maid. The disciples rarely stayed at home, for their love urged them to give further spiritual nourishment to the hungry souls.

Ursus asked: "Dear Mother, come with me to Bethany, so that as long as we are still here, we no longer need to separate. Come with me, I am expecting a special joy today, you must experience it with me!"

"Ursus, I will gladly come with you, but first visit your friends here. Theophilus and Jonah will stay with me in the meantime, because we also have some important things to discuss."

This was not quite as he wished, but Ursus regarded this suggestion as a call from God, so he said: "Yes, Mother, it is right. I will hurry, though, for there is still much to do today."

Mary offered them both a little refreshment, then she said: "Your eye looks so dim, Brother Jonah, do you want more proofs of Divine love and mercy? Or have you forgotten what glorious service you have been permitted to render to your brother Theophilus by the grace of God? Behold, he who was chosen once to serve God and his brothers, is chosen forever. God in His love knows everything, He also knows your sorrow. Therefore, only look at God's pure love, and His great mercy with all erring ones will be revealed to you more and more!"

Jonah said: "Dear Mother Mary, no-one longs for peace and quiet of heart more than I do. That God is truly God is beyond all doubt; but that God, as Father of His children, can witness the great suffering and tribulation of His faithful, where He only needs to will, and all enemies would be destroyed, behold, this makes me a suffering man. Since the love for the human brother has become so powerful in me, I am heavily weighed down by the suffering inflicted on them. I want to help out of my love, but I am too weak, and God - Who possesses the power - why does He keep Himself hidden?"

Mary said: "My son, what you say has, taken humanly, many things in its favor. You are still human, and according to your simple and beautiful concepts, you do not want to see anyone unhappy, and you ask yourself: Where is the Divine help? I could answer you: God sees and knows everything and could stop all suffering and pain at this moment; but He does not do it - and does not want it!

Man asks in amazement: Why not? And to this I must explain to you: Because the preservation of all human souls is the most glorious trait of His infinite love! Tell me, is it only to preserve those who profess Him? Or is His preservation meant for all created things? If God wanted to preserve only those who profess Him - and would use His omnipotence to beat the tormentors, say, my son, where would you be today?

Just as you yourself could still be saved, could not others be won and become His co-workers? What the Lord has decided in the counsel of His plan of salvation, will certainly remain an eternal mystery to all human understanding. But a man imbued with His great, merciful love, can yet know many things of it through Divine revelation."

Mary was silent for a while - then she continued: "See, you have already received the promise through Lazarus yesterday, that the Lord, in order to satisfy the many requests of His children, will reveal Himself - and will show His holy face to their greatest tormentor - as a sign that He is the Lord! And I may tell you: this has happened today! Of course, it is still uncertain whether it will turn out to be a blessing or a curse for him, because every human being's free will must be preserved in the most exact way. As long as you cloud the idea of this eternally clear love of God in you through various misunderstood processes, many things in the outside world will also appear cloudy to you. The most glorious truths and promises will look dark and hopeless in your state. And if God Himself would confront you, you would still remain the same in yourself, because this evil of yours

did not come from outside, but they are still remains of your old, confused concepts of God and faith."

Take Theophilus as an example. He did not grumble in prison. In faithful perseverance he waited for the Lord, and his trust was gloriously rewarded, of which you yourself are the proof. Go now into your own heart's silence, and you will know the holy love which - through me - is wooing you!"

Jonah was deeply shaken, for the last words had touched the spark of God in him.

Only after a while, he quietly confessed: "Dear Mother, like hammer blows your words have penetrated my soul - it becomes light in me! Oh I, blind fool! Like a veil it falls from my eyes; everywhere I see love now - His love! Oh, You my God! How differently I look at You now! How much more glorious are Your high intentions with us humans than I ever dared to think. Oh Mother, forgive me my stubborn heart!"

"Come into my arms, my son:" - Mary replied - "since you have come to clarity. Whoever has grasped this love in his innermost being, also wants to be a free and willing servant to it. And whoever feels the holy life of this love pulsating within him, is already a citizen of the heavens. He who still seeks love for his bliss, may well strive for the heavenly realms. But he who can give love, because the spark of God awakened in him, must send forth radiant life - has become His true child and can and will only rejoice in all that His holy Father wills!"

Theophilus had listened quietly and very attentively. Jonah wept at Mary's breast, then said softly: "Mother! Never again shall you have cause to look upon me with a depressed heart."

Mary said: "Now that the abyss in you has been removed, let us become quite still in heart - and give thanks, so that our gaze may widen for our own inner world, and our soul may be filled with all the beauties which the glorious Father bestows on His expectant children. You still need a lot of practice before you learn to see your inner world in truth. But united willing, united asking and thanking, will also roll away from the door of your heart the stone which an old but wrong conception of God has deposited in front of it.

So it became quiet in the room with Mary, and Jonah and Theophilus experienced glorious things of Jesus' ever more living love.

Then Ursus came back, and Mary said: "Dear Ursus, today is such a beautiful day, as it does not often turn out! We want to experience it quite gratefully, because joy is becoming so rare in this time."

Ursus, however, had to confess: "Mother - for me, these hours were less beautiful, yes, I still cannot quite get over the fact that our Roman court had to acquit the false priest Abia, who captured Theophilus, and all the Templars involved, went free. Captain Benno was also very upset about this, and I had to try hard to calm him down just somewhat. Now even the captain should still apologize, because he stood helpfully by Lazarus and you, Jonah!"

"I understand nothing of your Roman law" - said Mary - "and think that to me, this sentence remains only a reprieve! The Templars will soon be taught something different, for everything with them is lies and deceit. But the Lord lives! And no-one can rise above Him! Know that soon a new fighter for the Lord will arise, yes, you, dear Ursus, will get to

know him here in this house and you will be amazed at his transformation, which was only possible due to the great grace of God."

"Mother" - Jonah objected - "you speak of it as definitely as if it were already a fact, yet it should only be a reassuring promise to us."

"No, my Jonah" - Mary answered him - "what the Spirit from God showed me, has not become prediction, but already a certainty! But only for your sake I have received this message, because I do not need such things for my faith, since I have complete sufficiency in the grace, love and mercy of the Eternal.

I live only 6 parts for myself, 60 parts for my many children, and 600 parts already in the kingdom of my Lord and eternal Father. Therefore there can be no doubt for me, if I receive a message from the pure world of God! Certainly, I am still a human being according to the flesh, but my body is sustained by the powers of God. I do not know illness. I never feel lonely anymore! But what delights and bliss I enjoy - no man can imagine. However, angels often stand around me and are blessed in my sphere.

What I felt years ago as the deepest pain at the violent death of my beloved Son, is today the source of a whole new life in me, which is now fused with His holy Redeemer's Will. The Spirit of all truth reveals to my spirit exceedingly glorious things; and what still presses your soul down to the ground, what causes you pain or much sorrow, is already a firm certainty for me.

The Lord and most loving Father of all human children already keeps new ways of grace open, because He always has the welfare of all in mind! Of course, burning pain often pierces His heart, if He has to allow things which people have conjured up themselves in their blind delusion!

If you, Jonah, could bear those great things which I see in the great workshop of God's merciful love, I would let you see them! But as you as a human being cannot long look into the shining sun, so you cannot yet behold these wonders of His love in the light of God. You would become weak in spirit and unfit for the great work of the Lord. But when your spirit dwelling in you will have burst the constricting fetters of the soul, then your Spirit-spark will also reveal to you many things that still seem quite impossible to you today.

But both of you, you, Ursus: love - out of power, and you, Theophilus: power - out of love, are without worry, your way is paved. Yes, your silent wishes are already blessed by the love of God. But in your happiness, in your happy work, do not forget others. For only there will God give with full hands, where He has guarantee that everything is administered in His holy sense.

Rejoice now, as I rejoice! Love yourselves, love your brothers and sisters, as I love you and all others! Then His Father's blessing will be truly manifested through you to all His children - and the place you inhabit, will become a nurturing place of God's holy blessing!"

"Dear Mother Mary" - exclaimed Ursus enthusiastically - "since you have revealed to us today so many things from your heart's love, which must make us happy to the very core, I dare to ask you whether you may approve of my silent heart's desire? Or do I deceive your heart by saying that I may still think so much of my own happiness?"

"My dear Ursus, mother-love remained as good as foreign to you, so it is to be understood that you come to me full of confidence to lean on dear people in your longing love. Usually

it is the mother, and I will gladly replace the compassionate mother's heart for you! My love for you shall fertilize your heart's desire like a holy mother's blessing, so that for you and your descendants, this blessing of mine shall be felt! Is this answer enough for you, my son Ursus?"

Ursus suddenly felt overjoyed. This was far more than he had expected, and so he cried out exultantly: "Oh Mother! How often have I longed in anxious nights for such dear word. But since the holy Father fills my heart and gives me always new suggestions of love, this longing is almost extinguished.

But in this hour, when you called me so full of love 'my son Ursus', there is no greater happiness for me. Now that I can communicate with my eternal Father in the simplest and most natural way, I am also given a mother! Oh You my God and Father! Make my heart even stronger so that it can bear this fullness of happiness and bliss. And so You remain the first and the last in me!

But you now my mother, have thanks for your love and for your blessing! Everything I can think of that is good and beautiful, shall surround you - and every day I want to make you happy with a thought that shall please you like the first ray of the rising sun.

But now this room is getting too small for me! Let us go back to Bethany!" When the maid reported that the carriage was in front of the house, Mary said to her: "Child, take good care of the house. Keep the meal ready for the brothers and tell them: Bethany awaits them!"

Many curious people looked at the vehicle and the black servant, also Templars stood by and recognized Theophilus and Jonah. They wanted to shout something to them, but Ursus shouted loudly: "Bethany is our home, and our temple is our heart, which longs for love and gladly gives love! Jesus Christ be with you!" And quickly he departed.

On the way, Ursus asked: "Dear Jonah, do you want to know anything more of me, or has my presentiment also been fulfilled with you?"

"Oh Ursus" - cried Jonah - "the Lord has smoothed all doubts in me, by His grace! But why do you think there had to be this unrest, these doubts in the first place? Could we not serve the truth and all that is good at once? Why all this inner struggle in the first place?"

"Dear Jonah" - Ursus replied seriously - "these questions must definitely be clarified in order not to fall back into old doubts. If the glow of God's spark within, were placed in our hearts like a sweet fruit, we would never experience the blessings of battle! You would never become an independent and self-confident man, and we would never be able to consider this spark of God's highest good, the true filiation of God, as the most precious thing and try to preserve it!

Without struggle, you would become the plaything of foreign influences, you would be neither cold nor warm inwardly, and you would stand without interest before all the wise guides of human souls through this earthly life. Only he who has lived through the night and its horrors, sin and its consequences and his own powerlessness against it, knows how to appreciate the light and the redemption from the wrong and perverse and the peace of heart thereafter. And he will no longer shy away from any struggle, no matter how bitter, in order to win for himself the highest and most valuable thing. Or do you, brother Theophilus, disagree?"

"Oh Brother Ursus, only go on describing the new life that has grown in you!" - exclaimed Theophilus briskly. "It is a joy to me to hear of it!"

And Ursus continued: "Certainly, it requires much effort; but as soon as the height is climbed and the connection with the Father-Spirit is established, the struggle with all doubts ceases. All forces are now strained to realize the great, glorious goal: to become fully a child, His child!

As we live along in everyday life, surrounded by caring love, we do not yet suspect what a treasure of strong will-forces lies within us. If there were no restlessness, no doubt, no struggle in us, we would never be able to produce evidence of the powers of God that lie within us. And man could also not develop higher in the spiritual.

Where there is no struggle, there can be no victory! Where there is no victory, there can be no prize! But our glorious Jesus deserves all thanks, all praise! He has won the battle with the world, with sin and with death! His victory also belongs to me, therefore my life - shall belong entirely to Him! Amen!"

2. Ursus and Ruth

Old Enos had talked with his wife and Ruth about Ursus' plans, and when asked his daughter if she loved Ursus enough to leave her father and mother, Ruth replied:

"Father and mother! Without even a word being spoken between us that we love each other - I know that Ursus loves me, and Ursus knows that I love him. If he now desires me as his wife, I am ready to follow him. A separation from you would certainly hurt me very much, but the power of this love in my heart surpasses even the pain of our separation. I have never thought that the rich Roman would desire me, but now that it becomes reality, I also want to ask you: Come with me! - and we do not need to separate!"

Enos said: "My Ruth! The past two years have brought us only true happiness, therefore we prefer to stay here in Bethany. You, however, go gladly with the man of your choice. Ursus will make your life rich in content. See, in foreign lands I and your mother can no longer take root, while here I find full satisfaction in being completely active in the spirit of the holy Father. So, in the name of the Lord, go wherever your love and destiny lead you."

Ruth still asked: "What do you think, dear mother? Will you also gladly let me go?"

"My child! With pain I gave you birth, but your life was everlasting sunshine to me. With pain I let you go, but I will bless you everywhere, for your happiness is our happiness! Therefore, in the name of the Lord, go to meet your new duties and fill the place where true, pure Love has placed you. Jesus is always close to us and replaces what is still missing. Never forget this, then your life-heaven will not dim, but will become daily more beautiful, the more you will give in love and faithfulness."

In the courtyard it became lively. Ursus had arrived with Mary and the brothers, and there was a particularly warm welcome, because everyone was so full of inner joy. Ursus was so completely filled with the most blissful joy that he shouted to everyone: "My heart is so glad today - I could embrace the whole world!"

Lazarus wisely tried to calm him: "Keep calm, my Ursus, happiness must be cultivated, otherwise it will soon disappear.

But Ursus answered him, beaming: "Today your warning is not appropriate, dear Lazarus! All strings sound and buzz in me! My happiness is a gift from the heavens, and what comes from my Jesus, remains for time and eternity! Therefore, my heart wants to rejoice more and more, until you all understand my joy and want to rejoice with me."

And Lazarus smiled: "Ursus, today I once again do not know you! You, the serious and sometimes so hard Roman, resemble a carefree child who elates everyone in his sunny joy."

In the meantime, Mother Mary greeted the wife of Jonah: "To you, my dear Pura, a special gift is yet to come, for from today on, you have a different Jonah, whose heart has turned from night to light, from doubts to firm trust in God."

"Oh Mother! Thanks be to the Lord! He alone could help!"

Mary replied: "Child, life often loves strange detours, but one must never despair! After all, the holy God and Father knows about all struggles, and if you have pleaded for days, think

reassuredly: 'Now the limit has been reached - where the adversary no longer possesses his full power.'

Later still John, Peter and Jacob arrived, and Lazarus perceived this meeting as a hint from the Lord to speak to them about Theophilus' mission to the new settlements with Achibald.

John replied: "You know Theophilus, you will have tested him, and the last school he had to go through will not have missed its purpose. Therefore do not delay any longer in doing so, for I know there is already a danger in the new congregations that they will want to give place to various false concepts about the personality of Jesus, because they lack unified leadership from a called minister of God."

Said Lazarus: "Yes, you will be right, John! And see, thereby a new plan arises in me, which however requires a sacrifice from you, my dear Ursus. I know that your present visit is mainly for your future life; you desire Ruth as your wife, and for this I congratulate you most heartily. We know you are worthy to have this young and pure girl as your wife, just as Ruth is worthy to have you as her husband! I am ready to judge your marriage, since her father Enos has given his considerable fortune to me for administration. I would like to suggest that this outward ceremony now be performed as soon as possible, for inwardly your hearts are already united.

Then you, dear Ursus, could take our brother Theophilus to his new destination with your married wife and give Ruth great joy, for I know she loves her brother very much. Some families from here would also like to settle there and would be taken along right away."

Ursus interrupted him: "Oh dear Lazarus, you cannot give me a greater happiness! I will prepare a caravan, worthy of our Jesus! And every day shall be blessed, where I may serve love completely."

Lazarus looked at Demetrius and asked: "Brother, is it also according to your mind, or have you willed it otherwise?"

Demetrius smiled and said: "My brothers, I am surprised by this beautiful solution. I am pleased with this plan, but what will Enos and Miriam say? For now we have really decided without them and especially without Ruth. After all, Enos has not yet given us an answer."

Replied Lazarus: "I know, even without having spoken to them, they think as we do. Because in these two people lives only the will to make all happy. If then after 4-5 weeks Ursus and Ruth come back again, the separation will be endlessly much easier, than if you travel immediately from here back to Rome. But it is only my suggestion, the realization is completely left to Eternal Love."

Said Demetrius: "I will talk with Enos, then all uncertainty is cleared! In silence we want to carry out our plans and rejoice to be allowed to help young human children."

When evening came, Lazarus gave the signal to assemble in the large dining room, arranging for Ursus to sit next to Ruth, and Theophilus next to Salome, so that they might be given an opportunity to talk more closely.

David stood beside his harp and waited until Enos had said the evening blessing. When he then took hold of the strings, the tones of the instrument rose ever more splendidly, and now he sang with his soulful voice: 'What no eye has seen or ear has heard what is

prepared for those who wait on the Lord! But to those who give out of the abundance of their lives, even greater things will be granted! Because angels bow deeply, testify their great joy and in gratitude now carry this testimony home into their world: That they have been with people, who cultivate Divine beings for happiness and salvation for all the world. What no angel has ever seen and no prince of heaven has ever seen, is revealed to the child of God: that the Father dwells with His earthly children, who are already citizens of heaven here! Hallelujah - Amen!"

All listened with emotion, and thus the hearts were prepared for a message from the spiritual life.

John rose, blessed those present and said: "Sisters and brothers! With a joyful heart I give ear to the urging of the Spirit within me and tell you: This evening is marked by holy brotherly love. I feel how in this hour our God and all-Father, our Jesus, also wants to become a brother to us, so that we learn to love our neighbors as ourselves. Oh you pure, you glorious Jesus-life in us! You want to be seized with an open heart, in order to make all our brothers happy with it in turn. But not everyone can love, and this brotherly love must be cultivated in us! For it is a flaming heavenly good, born of the spark of God in us. That is why we want to pray: Holy Father! You primordial foundation of all love and all life out of it, open our hearts, that rich love may be awakened in us for the salvation and blessing of all our fellow humans! Amen.

Then the spark of God planted in us will be able to free itself from all our soul's weaknesses and inhibitions, and with a flaming heart, we may declare: We have become the property of our holy Father and feel closely united with each other as brothers. Amen."

Later, Demetrius stood up and confessed to everyone: "Dear brothers! My heart urges me to thank you for all the love shown to us here today. How happy it makes me to have found the Holy Father! But can such happiness already be perfection, when I know that the earth is full of suffering and sorrow, full of blindness and confusion? Oh my brothers, out of this distress and confusion I experience the Holy Father's exhortation: I need you to continue the work of My redemption."

And Lazarus concluded: "Keep these words deep in your heart for discipleship, and let us all give thanks to our faithful Lord and Master!"

Then all went quietly to rest; on going out, Lazarus still asked: "Now, my Ursus, have you spoken with Ruth about your future?"

"Dear Lazarus, what her mouth still concealed, her radiant look told me, I know it - we are one!" And Lazarus still said: "I rejoice with you! Now bring with your bride and her parents everything else in just order, so that we can promote the plans of our Master effectively" - and seriously, Lazarus still added: "oh Ursus, be always aware, to whom much is given, from him also much is demanded!"

"The times are serious, exceedingly serious. Only true children seek the Father's eye, only faithful hearts are powerful in this time of struggle, when the spirit of all destruction wants to destroy the germinating, growing life of God in the hearts of believers! We in Bethany have forgotten to think of our own happiness. The constant care for all the afflicted fills our hearts, and with it, we dry many a tear of our Savior. But now, once again this night, conscientiously examine your heart, and the Lord bless your beginning!"

Early in the morning, Demetrius went to Ruth's parents to get a definite answer, but Ursus stayed away from them all and wanted to wait for the answer.

Enos greeted him: "Dear Demetrius, I know you want to hear certain news from us. Ruth is ready to answer you - I will call her."

In a few minutes, Ruth was with her loved-ones and extended her hand in greeting to Demetrius. The latter said: "Dear Ruth, you know why I wish to speak to you at this early hour of the day?"

And Ruth answered: "I know, that's why I want to spare you the question. If you want to take me to your heart as your daughter, I am ready. The love that my parents received from childhood until today, shall also become yours! For I will love Ursus and be a true companion to him, and to you, Demetrius, a loving, grateful daughter!"

"Dear Ruth, you have made my mission easy! Come to my heart, and your promise I will seal with a solemn kiss."

Ruth looked up at Demetrius with teary eyes as he opened his arms, and he gave her a kiss on the forehead saying: "Now you are my daughter! And I have given you in the sight of God and your dear parents all the rights of a child with this holy kiss."

Then he turned to the parents: "Dear father Enos and dear mother Miriam, your child has decided! Now I will call my Ursus, so that we old people can bless our children together."

Demetrius brought Ursus, and they both invited Mother Mary to witness this sacred act, and she said: "I have awaited your invitation to witness your vows, for I love you as my children." Miriam still had tears in her eyes when the three entered the room. Mary took Ursus' hand, led him to Ruth, and solemnly said: "Dear ones! As the second mother of my son Ursus, I bring to you, my Ruth, your spouse chosen out of your own heart's love! Here, in the presence of the living God and His faithful host of angels, and in the presence of your dear parents, I ask you for your mutual vows! Faithfulness for faithfulness! Love for love! May it always be the sacred bond that embraces your souls. Then your marriage will be a fruitful example, and all your blessings will be enjoyed by generations to come."

"My Ruth" - said Ursus, grasping both her hands - "in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus, I pledge to you and yours unbreakable fidelity and love, which shall never cease! And I ask the Holy Father for the right strength to do so. You shall never regret having left your parents and your fatherland, for my love wants to replace everything for you and make your life only sunny!"

Ruth stood up and answered: "I am yours Ursus! Yours in joy and sorrow! Let your house be mine, and your will be mine! For this I ask strength from our faithful Jesus, our eternal God and Lord!"

Now Enos approached the two who knelt before him and said: "Upon such a vow we want to bless you out of the love and power of our holy Father and Savior, so that your vow never loses its effect in good times as well as in hard times, and you truly prove before God and all the world: To be blessed by the Lord!"

Prepare yourselves to enter the marriage state in already a short time, and consider that a true marriage, concluded on earth, should also still have validity in eternity. So be blessed as a bride and groom in the Spirit of Jesus so that you can fulfill your mission in His Spirit for your own and many others' salvation! Amen."

Now Demetrius came and laid his hands on their heads and said: "You, my dear two children! You know now that you belong to each other for time and eternity; and so I also

bless your covenant in fatherly love. But do not neglect the duties of your days, and then the holy blessing of our great God and Father will always remain with you and your home! Amen!"

All were silent, never to forget the holy seriousness of this hour. Then Demetrius continued speaking: "And now listen, dear Enos, what we already planned yesterday, driven by our care, with the brothers.

If the wedding could already take place in a few days, then the young couple will take your son Theophilus to his new destination, so that Ruth could gain a picture of her brother's spiritual work there.

After that, both of them will come back to Bethany before we start the great journey to Rome. There I want to withdraw completely from business, and Ursus is to take over everything, so that the wandering life will come to an end for him. I hope you will come with us to the great and beautiful Rome and need not worry about anything."

To this, Enos said: "My brother, I agree to everything except with leaving Bethany. We will stay here! But the children may fulfill their duties where the wise guidance of the ever-loving Father places them."

Demetrius already knew this decision, and so he said: "Now, dear Ruth, tell your sisters about your happiness, while we arrange everything else with Lazarus; for there will still be a lot to do, if in a few days the caravan is to be ready for your beautiful bridal procession."

3. The wedding

Demetrius had managed it that already after a few days in the temple in Jerusalem, the marriage of the two children could be closed publicly. The Roman merchants and the military leaders in Jerusalem invited their close friends as guests and witnesses of this temple celebration, which was performed by a high priest in the usual ceremony.

After the wedding ceremony was over, the young couple and all the guests left for Bethany in carriages at the ready, accompanied by mounted Roman soldiers, and many a priest might have thought: these enemies of ours are acting as if we were their friends! They really have courage!

When the border of Bethany was reached, the long procession stopped, for Lazarus, Enos, Theophilus, and the male inhabitants had lined up there to greet the wedding procession. And so all went on foot to the master's house, while the chariots and soldiers turned back to join them at Bethany's inn for a joyful feast.

The women and many helpers had decorated the large hall festively, and in general joy, a rich feast was taken.

Before the guests dispersed in the beautiful plantations in pleasant conversation, Lazarus, as the host, still explained to them that after the supper, still a second part of this wedding would be celebrated. "The first part was for the external life, which we as Christians also take into account, and are even ready to make sacrifices for it. And it was only for this reason that this wedding was also performed in the temple, in order to stand justified before all the world. But we cannot think of a proper celebration like today's without the second part for the inner spiritual life, in union with our Master Jesus Christ. If one or the other of you, dear friends, does not want to celebrate this part, we do not mind if you prefer to go back to Jerusalem; cars are ready at any moment. Here only free will counts, and I respect every decision as the right one."

The merchants, who knew Bethany only for business, became curious, and none wanted to leave; for where such hospitality and harmony reigned among the inhabitants, they would surely experience still something beautiful.

After dinner, an expectant consecration lay over the large dining room. Candlesticks burned on all the tables; According to Enos' instructions, a small altar had been erected in the front, in front of which the young couple had been seated. The guests were seated in the center of the hall, and those belonging to Bethany, surrounded the entire wedding congregation in a semicircle. David asked Lazarus if he could play quietly during the speech at his discretion, because he did not like to sing for the sake of the many Romans.

John, who was the only disciple present, went to the altar and began: "Dear friends, brothers and sisters! We stand here in the holy place, because Love has called us! Love, which is the cornerstone of all harmonious coexistence.

So, to you, Ursus, and to you, Ruth, I address my words today especially, not to give you lessons, but to express the joy that lives in my heart and the joy of all those who participate in your feast today. Be aware that love is a gift from the heavens and must be carefully kept free from all the dust of the world! Then fruits of heavenly kind will arise from it. Every thought, whether it is born from love or from hatred, is like a seed, and must bear fruit according to the eternal primordial law - according to it's kind.

Dear friends and brothers! The life of all of us, carefully protected and guarded by the eternal Father-Love, is nevertheless often a difficult struggle, a fight, and afterwards certainly only rest. In rest we are united with all our loved ones, but in struggle, each one stands mostly alone! But true life has the trait to reveal itself perpetually. And the more intimate and heartfelt our inner life is, the more glorious it's revelations! And so it is a heavenly bliss for everyone, if his heart-life can reveal itself in the highest fullness. Therefore we remain aware that where genuine love dwells, the Lord also gladly enters."

The harp suddenly fell silent - the lights gave only dim light - a strange silence fell - but around John, a great glow shone. All eyes looked expectantly - suddenly Jesus - as a glorious light-figure - became visible to all!

In blessing, the Lord spread His hands over the congregation - then John continued: "In the name of the eternal Father-love, the Lord now speaks to you through me: 'My friends, brothers and little children! Carried by the spirit of eternal love, which is My life, I bless you, and proclaim to you My peace and My grace! It is a great joy for Me to dwell among those who love Me and observe My will! But since I, as the Lord, cannot remove Myself from My primal center, the call also goes out to all of you: Do not remove yourselves from your heart, but pay attention to everything that is going on in it, and whether it is prepared for Him who can offer you everlasting bliss, or for him who promises you only earthly advantages?

Oh little children! Believe your almighty Father: Even if I wanted to prevent your struggle, your suffering and your often difficult struggle, this would still be without benefit for your development! For it is precisely through the hard struggle with the earthly, that your soul becomes freer and self-acting, whereby the spiritual spark from Me, which is still dormant in you, awakens and can regain it's former glorious form of light!

Whoever wants to ascend the steps of My glorious kingdom, must be able to cast off all the still restraining fetters that lie in the desires of your flesh and in your still earthly-minded soul. But whoever has become an inhabitant of My spiritual kingdom, although he still wears flesh and blood, has won the victory over all enemies of the inner life.

Even if the world around you seems to be so gloomy, even if the rage of the enemies is worse than ever, be sure of this: I am with you and carry you in My love! And it is only My mercy, if I do not yet judge the world and it's friends. For My all-loving Father's eyes already see the time when they, too, will bend their knees and make up for what they have harmed in blindness!

If your spiritual eye could already see all the beings who want to be your helpers, you would fight with joy for My eternal kingdom, of which you are already inhabitants! But not in sight, but in the consciousness of what is fought for, let this highest become your property!

"Little children! The world needs you, since I must veil Myself! For the sake of your becoming fully free, you are the ones who have to put a stop to evil in My stead and put a stop to all corrupters. Let My Spirit-spark in you be the leader! Let My life in you be the sustaining principle for all, and let your faith in Me be the power that creates salvation. I gladly grant My angels to strengthen you, to support you in this fight for My kingdom. But I have entrusted you with the work I have started in full confidence in your love for Me. For My true children must succeed."

The Lord approaches Ursus and Ruth, lays His hands on their heads and continues speaking through John: "Blessed are you in My power and love, who have pledged loyalty

to Me and to each other! As you see Me now, I will always be and remain with you when you seek to accomplish what My love asks of you! So remain in Me, that I may remain in you. Amen!"

The Lord now goes back to the altar - John then continues: "But you, little children, brothers and friends, do not forget Me! For I, as Father of all, remember in love also those who want My destruction. So blessed be your pure will and love, blessed be your selfless doing and creating for My work, blessed be your willingness and your devotion and the humility in your hearts! May My blessing always be a glorious proof to you! May My peace be your joy and happiness! My love give you life and strength and My grace be your eternal share in My kingdom! Amen!"

The Lord became invisible to all - and only after a long silence, John continued speaking: "The miraculous has happened - we all were allowed to see the Lord in His unearthly light-form, and you were allowed to hear what He, the supremely good One, let say to you through my mouth! Believe these words, they are bread for the inner life, and rich blessings will come to us from them. Amen!"

The candlesticks burned now again as brightly as before, David rejoiced in his way and even forgot that strangers were present. Lazarus again had wine and fruit served, and the Romans still asked many questions to John and Lazarus. Mary was also in high demand when it became known that she was the mother of Jesus.

Meanwhile, Theophilus spoke with Salome and told her that he, too, would soon depart from Bethany to serve the Lord in the churches at Lake Merom. He asked her, "Salome, would you not also like to be as happy as my sister Ruth?"

"Oh brother! A girl like me, as the daughter of a traveling singer, must have no such desires! Remember, my father needs me; it would be unloving if I would think only of myself!"

Theophilus asked: "Oh Salome, listen to me, Lazarus has help and succor ready for all people, shall we not go with your father to Lazarus and ask his advice? For I am not one for many words. Say. Would you like to be my wife and follow me wherever the call leads me?"

"Theophilus, I sure would, but my duty is irrevocable: I belong to my father! Since my earliest youth, we have wandered together, since I lost my mother at a very early age. He cannot help himself without me, and this duty has placed me at my father's side."

Theophilus asked again: "Oh Salome, let us reveal our wishes to Lazarus; he will help if it is within his power."

The guests continued to converse animatedly until dawn and then departed for Jerusalem.

When the last ones had said goodbye, Lazarus said to Enos and Demetrius: "This day brought us rich blessings, and I wish that still all learn to recognize this grace! Go now also you to the rest, I will still go to the stables, the animals also need my morning blessing."

"Then I'll come with you" - said Theophilus - "for I couldn't sleep after all."

"Come along, I have to talk to you anyway."

"Dear Lazarus" - Theophilus began - "you have acted as a father to me, you have raised me up again who was almost lost, and you have given us all a home. But what I want to ask you today, you do not suspect."

"But, my Theophilus, I know you love Salome and wish to take her as your wife. But Salome refuses, I suppose, although she loves you too?"

"Yes, Lazarus, so it is! She claims that her filial duty places her at the side of her old father, who could not serve the Lord so well without her."

"I must commend her on that" - Lazarus affirmed - "Truly, such filial love must be rewarded! I will speak with them and put everything in order. But now I want to inform you that nothing stands in the way of your departure for Lake Merom, and in a few days, Ursus will have already prepared the caravan; in the meantime, you have time to prepare yourself for it. Do you agree with this instruction?"

"Oh Lazarus, your word is as good to me as God's word! I could wish for nothing better than what you advise me to do."

"Then it is well - and I will talk to David this very day!"

It happened; Lazarus had a conversation with David and Salome that satisfied both parties.

"You both stay in Bethany until the right hour comes! And you, dear Salome, take the place Ruth has had until now with my sisters and with Mother Miriam. Consider yourself bound to Theophilus so that he may enter his new ministry full of hope. The Lord knows everything and will also arrange your affairs for everyone's good. Let us always trust His guidance."

Theophilus was also very pleased with this decision and was able to experience much joy during these days, for Salome had a rich inner life and a boundless love for the Savior and for all her fellow men.

On the last evening before departure, a solemn devotion was held to bid farewell to Theophilus; and since no disciple was present, old Tobiah, Bethany's eldest brother, undertook the farewell address and blessing. With words springing from the heart, he illuminated the serious tasks of a true servant of God, who has to administer the highest: The Word and the promises of the Holy Father.

"You are not leaving us, because in spirit we follow you, in spirit you also often stay with us, and in this union, we work together by the grace of the Lord on our spiritual progress. Go in peace, the Lord go before you! Amen!"

And then Tobias blessed the 25 brothers and sisters who were to receive a new home with Achibald.

Early in the morning, all were united once again at the morning meal, and then Ursus gave the signal for departure. He knew that Mother Miriam was burdened by this farewell, for she loved her children as seldom a mother does. But Theophilus took Salome by the hand: "Here, mother - your new daughter! She will replace Ruth and me, for she loves you dearly! In one year, I will take Salome as my wife. Love you also her, you will experience only joy!"

Lazarus went along until the border of his possession, then he stopped and blessed the long procession until he could see nothing more. And slowly walking, he returned to his home.

"My Jesus! it is hard to see all the dear ones depart, and yet, my Father, it must be! Your holy will be done! I know You already have new tasks in readiness, let me not tire of embodying You in love and in patience for the sake of Your great work! Amen!"

4. Saul

After that, it had become quite quiet in Bethany. The harvest feast was over, and Lazarus was often busy outside, so Demetrius was often with Enos. One day, when Lazarus had not yet returned from Jerusalem in the late evening, his sisters became anxious and spoke to Demetrius about it.

He reassured them: "Have you forgotten that the Lord is watching over him? I admit that something special must have happened, but I feel it is nothing distressing, therefore have confidence, knowing that even the slightest doubt about God's care strengthens the power of the enemy in us! Lazarus will not come home during the night because of the spiteful Templars. Tomorrow morning, however, I will go to Jerusalem myself for that reason."

But rest did not come that night in Bethany, for Pura, the wife of Jonah, was in child labor. Mother Miriam was with her, but even Jonah, who was a doctor, could not help.

At daybreak, Demetrius and two servants were already preparing to leave, when the tired Jonah came and asked with fearful eyes: "Dear Demetrius, the Lord has afflicted us, I can not help my wife. Please, through one of your servants, send me a midwife; I am in great distress."

"Dear Jonah, in an hour you shall see your request fulfilled."

Demetrius was in a hurry, but where to? - he asked himself. Mother Mary will give me the best indication.

When the carriage stopped in front of her house early in the morning, Mary was already standing in the doorway, ready to go, waiting for him, saying: "Already an hour ago the Lord indicated to me Pura's need, and I am ready to come with you. But have no concern for Lazarus; he is safe and sound here in the house with the brothers."

"With this my visit is accomplished" - exclaimed Demetrius joyfully - and immediately went back with the mother Mary to bring joy and help.

Pura lay in a light slumber on her resting bed. As Mary entered, Mother Miriam wept softly and said: "How powerless man is, one wants so much to help - and can do nothing!"

"Yes, of course we humans cannot help, therefore the Lord and Master must be asked to replace what we lack. But we must first fulfill the conditions for it, and these are in this case: great, firm trust!"

Pura was awakened by the softly spoken words, and when she noticed the Mother Mary, she sobbed and her whole body shook.

"But why weep, dear Pura" - Mary spoke gently - "when the Lord wants to make you so infinitely happy! All the heavens are full of blissful expectation, waiting for the moment when, according to their understanding, the greatest miracle will take place. My child, look at me firmly - our God and Father, our Creator and Sustainer, our Savior and Redeemer - He helps you! He complete His work in you by His love and mercy!"

Mary gently pushed out Jonah, who was entering, and asked: "Leave us alone! But you, with the others, experience the holiness of this hour!" Then she laid her hand on the head of Pura and after a few moments - the little child was born.

When Miriam then placed the child in the mother's arms, Mary said with emotion: "So, my dear Pura, now look with gratitude to your environment - and then into your inner world and experience all the joy that the Lord wants you to experience. We leave you alone for a while, so that you can entrust all your wishes for your child to Him in the most intimate union with your Savior and Father. Remember also: such holy moments will never return, only in your memory can you live on them. We want to bring the joyful knowledge now to the anxiously waiting ones, soon we will come to you again."

In the antechamber, Jonah prayed. Mary said to him: "The Lord has made His word true. You, Jonah, have now received a new proof of His never-ending love; your wife has given you a son! But both still need to be alone with the all-good Father for a short time. Gather yourself and experience the consecration that comes from those who want to be alone with God. But we go to the others full of joy."

"Rejoice, children! Salvation has come to us all" - said Mary - "all fear has been released into joy and all sorrow into gratitude. Pura has given birth to a son, and we may bestow our full love on an emerging citizen of heaven."

And now listen further, another joy I can tell you: Yesterday some brothers returned from Syria, bringing in their midst the Savior Jesus' greatest opponent, Saul of Tarshish! It must have been like a triumphal procession when Saul confessed his renunciation of the temple before the high council and made clear his profession of faith in Jesus Christ, the living Son of God. The high priest was so affected, that he let Saul go with those accompanying him without words. Soon you too will be able to greet him and experience with him this great glory of God's love revealed to him. Because of this, it became quite late for us in Jerusalem yesterday, and so Lazarus remained in our midst. Your fear for him was completely unfounded and was born out of your love for your brother. But if you had been united in heart with Him who is all - in all, truly, in your inner being the reflection of joy could have been reflected, as we experienced it yesterday."

And Mary continued: "We have never had so much traffic as yesterday. I suppose that also today and in the next days many will stop at ours; and it is a joy to see so much enthusiasm, because it comes from the heart."

Said Martha: "Then I will send some more maids to your house, for we still wish to keep you here."

Demetrius now said: "Then I want to go to the brothers, and I can take the maids with me right away. But first I will go to our sick woman and greet her and her little child."

Now everyone wanted to go to Pura, but Mary asked: "Wait, Jonah is now with his wife, but then you can also express your joy."

Jonah, who had remained alone in the antechamber, thanked God on his knees for His help and invoked His blessing on the child. Suddenly he saw a bright, tall figure bowing down before the mother and the child, holding his hands over both of them in blessing. He heard the words: "Blessed be your entry into this earth, you human child, so that you can fulfill the mission you have asked for. But you, my God and my Lord, let me, your servant, fulfill my mission as a guardian-spirit for this child entirely! Amen."

The figure disappeared before Jonah - he hurried to the bed of his loved ones, and full of thanksgiving and joy, he knelt down once again, absorbed in deep devotion.

Then Demetrius and Enos came and blessed mother and child.

Before Demetrius left, two maidservants had already taken their seats, Jonah came and asked to be allowed to go with him, since he was drawn to Jerusalem. So Demetrius went again to the city and talked with Jonah about the miracle he had just experienced with Pura. Jonah was of the opinion that it was given to Mary to heal the sick, and only Mary was to be thanked for it, because she was the blessed one!

Demetrius said: "Brother, I do not share this opinion, I know that the gift of healing the sick could be given to everyone. But we do not fulfill the conditions, which presuppose this blessing. I know from Ursus that, without talking much, he already experienced miraculous healings through the grace of Jesus."

"You may be right about the conditions" - Jonah said - "for how I wrestled with God that night, but it didn't help, because I probably didn't have the necessary strength of faith. Mary, after all, prays, but then lays her hands on her in full awareness of His grace, and the miracle happens."

"That's right, Jonah! God alone knows why the birth of this child had to take place in this miraculous way. But I do not think much about it, I am just happy that we were able to experience this solution. I do not brood over things for which I still have no explanation, but I know: at the right time and hour for me, I will also receive the right clarity. I often go into my heart and have a dialogue with the God-spark living in me. If I receive an answer, I rejoice, but if it remains silent in me, I am also calm, then it is just not yet time for me."

"You will go through life more easily, my dear Demetrius! I will not rest until I have proof and everything has been completely cleared up."

"Jonah, do not let the desire for proofs become an obstacle to you on the way of the heart to the Lord. Is not a childlike leaning and clinging to our Savior enough? Once I have experienced these delights and that holy moment is burned into my soul, when I was allowed to experience His love as the greatest and most glorious! Now let come what may, I know: He is my Savior and my eternal God - my good Father! He is the rock on which all hostile forces will suffer defeat. And so I only try to always recognize the leading and guiding intention of the Lord behind all events."

"So you do not fear any trials or temptations that might yet make you weak or discouraged?"

"Oh brother Jonah, if in the past, as a blind man, I feared no-one, fearlessly faced every danger, even death, what should I fear now? I feel strong, not because I own anything, but because Jesus Christ owns me! He owns me! Only He owns my life and my wealth. I feel myself in His service only as a trustee, and in this sense, Ursus will also take over the business. Certainly I have to use all my skill to achieve something. But I regard obstacles and difficulties only as necessities which must be overcome precisely so that I can stand before my own judge in my breast."

They approached Jerusalem, so the conversation ceased. Demetrius went to the inn of Bethany, gave the horses and chariot to the tenant, and then the four went to Mary's house, where the maids were joyfully received as help. The brothers were in eager conversation about Saul, and when Demetrius and Jonah entered, both realized that the latter's sudden conversion was causing dissension among them after all. John was the only one who had openly and wholeheartedly drawn Saul of Tarsus to his bosom yesterday, and with a brotherly kiss tried, to bridge everything that had been before, by giving him a new name.

But the others feared a new trap of the Templars. Demetrius informed Lazarus of Pura's miracle, and that Mary would stay a few days in Bethany. John thanked the Lord in his heart for this news, since Mary did not need to be a witness to these disagreements between the disciples.

After an hour, Saul himself arrived, accompanied by Barnabas, with whom he was lodged. Jonah, who already knew Saul, immediately greeted him and expressed his joy that he too had broken away from the temple. Demetrius was surprised to meet the notorious Saul in the young man with dark blond hair and lighter, small beard, who made such a good impression on him. The other disciples, however, remained quite reserved, for they knew of the terrible services he had rendered to the Templars.

Lazarus now asked Saul for a detailed report of his experiences and asked why Ananias from Damascus had not come here with him. Saul, who showed a rare inner joy, began to tell with great eagerness: "Dear men, it is certainly justified if you still have doubts about my coming to you and my sudden willingness to serve the Son of God, Christ Jesus. Believe me, however, that I used to live under the delusion that I was doing a great service to our God Jehovah with my zeal against Jews of other faiths, and therefore I delivered such men and women to the prisons. The most secret gatherings were brought to my attention, and I often inflicted the most severe suffering on these congregations. I also knew that many Christians had left our country and fled to neighboring countries.

But the temple, which has the right of disposal over all Jews, gave me the power to punish also those living outside of the Jewish country, as unfaithful to the temple, and to return them to their old faith by force. So I ruthlessly, with a stony heart, had the followers of the Son of God Jesus put into the prisons with willing tools of the temple.

Then, one midday, we were riding through Syria, our destination was Damascus, we were overcome with wantonness. I sang mocking verses to the crucified and to the Nazarenes who were suffering so patiently. Suddenly a bolt of lightning struck the ground in front of my horse. My horse reared up, threw me off, and stood there, trembling. My five companions could almost not hold their horses, so they also trembled in all their limbs.

Then a completely unearthly figure became visible before me, brighter than the sun, and a loud voice rang out: 'Saul! - Saul! - why do you persecute me?'

I straightened up a bit and asked with trembling: 'Lord! - Who are you?' Then the very bright figure said: 'I am Jesus! - Whom you persecute! But it will be difficult for you to get rid of the sting!' (Acts 9:5)

Then suddenly it became dark around me. I got up from the ground, looked for my companions, but saw no-one around me. I called to them, and they held out their hands to me and asked in amazement: 'What happened here? We heard a voice, then you speaking, and yet we saw no-one.' I had to confess: 'I met the crucified Jesus, the One who was believed to be dead! I clearly saw His serious eyes fixed on me, as if they wanted to pierce me, then I heard His voice, and like thunder it rumbled inside me. And all thinking was extinguished when His mouth cried out: 'I am Jesus, whom you persecute!'

Then it became night around me - and it is also still night! Oh come and lead me to the nearby city, I am shaken to the core. The companions led me silently to our inn. The innkeeper tried to help me, but in me and around me, everything remained dark. I could not sleep, I could not eat, and I wanted to be alone, for distorted figures surrounded me, I felt quite miserable. 'Saul! Saul! - Why do you persecute me?' - was written in fiery letters

in front of me, when I wanted to scare away these distorted images by force. And the look of His all-pervading eyes, made me shiver again and again.

When I thought I had some peace, I was startled again, and ugly figures, burning with red fire, wanted to embrace me, so that I cried out loudly! They laughed at me, danced around my bed, and this torment lasted an eternity for me. I would have liked to end my life, but I had no way to do so. Then I prayed to our God and begged for salvation, but the ugly creatures became more and more; they poked at me laughing mockingly with their poles and glowing spikes, so that I had to stop praying. I chased around the room (although I was blind to material things), and with hands raised defiantly to the ceiling I wanted to force God to reveal Himself to me as Savior.

Then, in my greatest anguish of heart, I cried out: 'Lord Jesus! - If there is a possibility - help me! I know that I have sinned gravely against You and Your own.'

Suddenly a being of light stood before me and said kindly: 'Saul! Jesus, the Lord, has heard your request. He has seen your repentance and commissioned me to show you your past life with all its wrongdoings and their grave consequences. Do you recognize me?'

I looked more closely at this figure and said, startled: 'Yes, I recognize you! You are Stephen, in whose agony and death I felt so much pleasure.'

Then Stephen said: 'Blessed are you that you recognize me and yourself! Now it will be easier for me to lead you into another world, provided that you want to go with me. I silently gave my consent, then I asked: 'Stephen, can you forgive me? I am greatly distressed by my guilt. And he answered: 'I have forgiven all, and have asked the Lord and holy God and Father of all not to impute guilt against me to anyone. Therefore, you can calmly entrust yourself to my guidance. I also wish for your salvation, so that you too may become a useful and faithful servant of the Lord.'

'I thank you' - I answered - 'your wish is the first benefit for me in my long, dark night of repentance. Therefore, you continue to do with me as you see fit, I will gladly follow you.'

'So come and give me your hand' - said Stephen - 'and at that moment, everything became bright around me and we floated in a beautiful landscape. Beautiful people in white garments were walking through blooming gardens; lovely songs reached my ears, it must be a holy holiday, because such a wonderful, consecrated mood lay over everything. But my guide Stephen pulled me further, past flowery temples, to a free place where many people were sitting.

There was an altar in the back, and Jesus, the Lord, was sitting next to it and had probably spoken to those present, because everyone's eyes were shining. We, however, stood a little apart. As if from many harps, sweet music and tender singing sounded, and then, led by lovely beings, two figures came up the steps to the altar, and one could see that they had experienced terrible things.

I looked closer and realized that they were two people whom I had sent to prison a few days ago. Jesus, the Lord, got up and went to meet them. They sank down at His feet. But Jesus lifted them up and said: 'Little children, you have found your way home to Me, your heavenly Father! Come to My breast, that I may thank you for your faithfulness and perseverance in suffering.'

'How gladly I would have spared you this, but in order not to touch the free will of the enemy of life, I could only strengthen you with My overcoming Spirit!' He embraced both of them, who wept with joy. But I was pierced by a deep pain, because I was the cause of all their sufferings. Stephen squeezed my hand tightly and silently looked at me.

When the two of them had rested for a while at the Lord's breast, He said: 'Little children! Let yourselves now be led to the place which My love has appointed for you. Then the Lord asked others: Bring now bread and wine, so that you may strengthen these two children of Mine, that they may be able to bear the delights and blisses which I prepare for those who prove themselves in the struggle for My life.'

The moment they took bread and wine, their figures were transfigured and instantly changed. The Lord continued: 'Now you have received the wedding garment, and so we will go to the glorious celebration.'

"Stephen drew me away and we floated away from this beautiful world." - And Saul was silent, as if absorbed in remembrance.

Finally he continued: "Then it became evening, even night around us, and Stephen said: 'Saul, what you were allowed to see and experience here until now, was grace, and took place in my inner world, given to me by the Lord. But now I lead you into your world, yes, we are already in the middle of this darkness around us, and what you will experience here are things which you would have to suffer yourself, if God would have taken your flesh-body from you already now. But do not be afraid, hold on to me more firmly, because know that all heavens and their inhabitants only want your and all lost ones' salvation.'

In front of us there seemed to be a city. Fire and smoke lit up the surroundings and gave an eerie, but also very sad picture. We came closer, it was Jerusalem, but like I have not seen it before. People wore devilish masks, their clothes seemed to be on fire, and the smell of burning was almost unbearable. A howling surrounded us, but they did not seem to see us. We arrived at the temple surrounded by flames, and the heat became unbearable. In the middle building, the altars were glowing - but not animals, but people were sacrificed on them. I was dizzy from this scene, but Stephen held my hand tightly, I could not leave. Then an angel came and made the sign of the cross over all the unfortunates, and suddenly everything was gone from our sight.

Stephen led me back - we were again in my inn and he said: 'Saul, you saw the world of the blessed - and now you also see into the world of those who are lost and into their blinded, abominable actions. The grace of the Lord cannot give you more - and now determine your own future fate! According to the measure of your humility, the Lord can help you as strength. But according to the measure of your love He can give you of His love and many proofs of grace. The Lord be with you! Amen!'

Now I was alone again - the ugly pictures had disappeared, but I was in great confusion, for I was blind. So I wrestled in prayer and humbly asked Jesus for help. More and more fervently I pleaded with the great Savior - and finally, after a long time, an unknown man in a white robe appeared to me in spirit, laid his hands on me, and said: 'Brother Saul, the Lord has heard your prayer and has sent me to you. Jesus, who appeared to you on the road to Damascus, wants you to regain your sight and be filled with His Holy Spirit.'

Like scales falling from my eyes, I could suddenly see my surroundings again, and standing next to me, was the same man I had already seen in my spirit. It was Ananias. He continued: 'Behold, dear Saul, all that you have done in your wrongful delusion is now a thing of the past, since you will now find your Savior in Jesus, the only Lord! For only by

His grace you were allowed to see the light world of the redeemed, but you were not allowed to stay there, because you are still human, and your mission has still only begun!

Through me the Lord, your Savior and Redeemer, asks you: Do you want to become a faithful servant, follower and disciple to Me? But completely free, completely without any coercion you shall give Him the answer. And according to your free decisions, as you approach Him, the Lord will come to meet you. And so consider well: Jesus Himself offers you help and assistance, so that you may be completely filled with His holy love.'

I was shocked, prostrated myself before Ananias, embraced his knees and asked: 'Brother, are you a man or an angel? You have not come to judge, for your words sound so promising! Oh of the long night in me! How the remorse burns in me like fire, to have persecuted Him who wanted to bring only good to all people! I felt my sins too heavy, but in the struggle for deliverance from the spiritual beings, who in hellish lust had only joy in destruction, I heard the call: 'Through the blood that flowed on Golgotha - your guilt is also atoned. Make yourself worthy of this grace!''

There it became calmer in me, but I received certainty only when a last inner struggle led me up to Golgotha. There I experienced once again the greatness of my guilt in all the wrong, self-willed thoughts about the Divine and saw the Son of God as the only Redeemer from it. Only now could I pray to Him in full gratitude, and in doing so, the longing to make amends, awoke. 'Oh Jesus, You crucified, You living and risen from the dead - my love and my life belong only to You!'

Then Ananias said: 'Brother Saul, the Lord has accepted your confession, in that you freely want to consecrate your love and your life to Him! So now, according to the will of the Lord, visible to the whole spirit-world, I may baptize and consecrate you. And he took a bowl of water, blessed it and sprinkled it on my head, saying: 'I baptize and consecrate you in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, so that you may be completely filled with His Holy Spirit of love and mercy and become a called bearer of the life of the Son of God, which He has given for the New Life for all who have gone astray. So that you can become the fulfiller of all the tasks that are still hidden in your love. May the peace of the Lord be with you! May the Lord's love be your life, and may the Lord's blessing be a blessing to all those whom you may still serve! Amen.'

"Now I felt wonderfully free - and only now could I take food and drink again."

Saul was silent - and no-one dared to interrupt this silence, for all hearts were under the impression of this quite extraordinary experience of God.

After a deep breath, Saul continued: "Instead of looking for Christians in the synagogues, I preached about Jesus in Damascus and proved to them that He was the Messiah we had been awaited for for so long! But all were astonished, as you were astonished, and much confusion arose among the Jews.

Finally they pursued me, and so I had to flee. Then at night, with the gates closed, brothers let me down in a basket over the city wall, and so I came here.

True to my promise to make good what I have done to the Lord and His faithful, I immediately went to the temple, detached myself from all obligations and will now preach about the great Son of God, the Lord, who could also overcome death, and is now our only salvation against all aberrations!

Herewith you have heard my experiences and my vows; if you do not accept me into your fellowship, I will preach alone. For I want to serve my God, whom I have only now been allowed to recognize in His Divine essence.

With this confession before you, His disciples, I now lay down my old name, and as Paul, as a true servant of God, I will serve you, all believers and all Gentiles. For Jesus Christ has given me of His power, of His will, and of His Holy Spirit."

Hours had passed. The brothers were deeply moved by this powerful grace that had transformed Saul into Paul.

Then Peter had to confess: "Dear John, we have hurt you with our doubts, because our hearts were hard and our thoughts were only concerned about our protection. Forgive us, for now we have again experienced the greatness of power and glory in our Lord as Jesus Christ. Therefore, dear Saul, welcome with us in the love of Jesus as our dear brother Paul, and let this our home be now also your home. Blessed be your service and blessed be your love!"

Now all restraint was gone; a real eagerness became noticeable, and everyone wanted to talk to Paul. But he said: "My brothers, I wish to do much good to those who are still imprisoned, and I will try to bring them freedom again, that I may win the confidence of all!" With that, he took his leave.

Demetrius went back to Bethany with Lazarus and Jonah; and all the inhabitants were delighted when Lazarus described to them in the evening hour this wonderful conversion of Paul.

5. Conversations about the relationship of God to man

When Jonah came to his wife in the evening, he could not praise enough to her the tremendous experience of Saul by the sudden revelation of Jesus Christ as the Lord of heaven and earth, and likewise the wonderful tours of Stephen with Saul through the various spiritual worlds.

"Pura" - he said - "my heart was shaken to the depths when we heard from the mouth of the convert his sudden experience of light from the opened heavens. How could I be so small, and seek the Almighty there, where He is never to be found."

Pura asked: "Oh Jonah, why did you have to learn through others how well and wisely our God guides everything? Have you not already experienced enough supreme things in you and me? Oh my Jonah, is it not enough of all the love we have been allowed to receive here? Let us also think of the passing on and serving of such love, and thus convey our thanks. What tremendous work is still needed to bring this message of Jesus' redeeming love and grace to all the erring ones! There is much misery among the people."

And what Jesus' love worked on me now through Mary, He will also want to work through us, for the blessing of all those in need. I feel it, my Jonah, God is only waiting for us humans, if we want to serve His high intentions voluntarily, to make all suffering people happy again.

Today, as Mother Mary sat beside my bed and placed her hand in mine, she led me into my inner world, and I experienced wonderful things! "Child" - she said - "now let us talk with our God and Father and enter into the mysterious world, which we are allowed to build for ourselves by His grace. So now let deep silence and tranquility enter you, so that the spark of God may reveal itself in you."

So it became calm in me, I believed to float, so detached from earthly heaviness I felt, and already I was in a beautiful garden. In front of a large white house, I saw many children playing; friendly nurses greeted me and showed me around. In bright rooms, school was held - on playgrounds, I saw all kinds of cheerful games, but not to pass the time, but to teach. For example, a child had fallen and hurt himself, and was shown how to help and relieve pain, and this task caused great joy. Furthermore, I saw how older children were educated in charity, because some of them had dressed up as poor beggars, and everything happened under the guiding eyes of the friendly nurses.

When I awoke from this state, I asked Mother Mary if she had experienced the same thing as I had. She answered: "Child, not the same, but similar, because you were in your world and I was in my inner world. My world, however, is the great world of my Son Jesus, whose work I, as His bodily mother, want to continue through the Spirit that animated Him as Son of Man. Now He is one in God and with God and has placed everything at my disposal as His child, and I can now serve completely according to my own love.

That is why I love these hours of silence and contemplation and thus come ever closer to my God and also to your God, our eternal Father. Never forget, oh child, this holy hour, for in it you too will still be able to experience and work great things! You must remember: God, as the Eternal Love for all people, wants so much to give His children that which strengthens them in the spiritual, in order to be able to resist all temptations of the earthly."

Jonah listened with great attention and wanted to try to give himself also more to such inner deepening, to experience a revelation of his inner world. Only after a pause did Pura continue: "Mary told me from her rich inner life that God has instituted wise orders everywhere, for the preservation and perfection of all that exists. But the wise among mankind have built another world around themselves, according to their own ideals, for their own advantage. In doing so, they have completely separated themselves from God's order, and thereby brought much suffering upon mankind.

The Eternal Love of God, however, does not want to simply tear down and destroy these worlds separated from His orders, but people should recognize the great error of their egoism themselves and then long for eternally valid, just order among themselves from their so sorrowful distance from God. Yes, people should tear down these worldly laws themselves, which were built only for their own advantage, because they have to realize that their great hopes for that, can never be fulfilled.

And therefore God must wait and be patient again and again with all the errors of the worldly people and all the suffering resulting from them. If man then - according to his free love and trust in the all-wise God and His laws - wants to build up a new world for himself in humility and patience, he will gladly grant his holy God and Father the full right of disposal of it!"

"I answered: 'But dear Mother, how few people can achieve this goal? The circumstances force most of them to occupy themselves above all with the purely earthly advantages. How many will never realize this sacred truth, as I have just been able to learn through you, and so the misery of the world will probably continue for a long time.'

But Mary taught me: 'Child, the caring love of God knows everything! It likes to reveal itself to us as a secret Helper and Redeemer and has means for this in abundance. Thus, my Pura, I go through my earthly life and yet I already live in the heavens! Suffering and pain do not press me to the ground, but create new forces in me to help, to relieve and to heal. Want this, as I want it, and you experience much bliss. Heavenly forces penetrate your weak body and make you a rock and a light-bearer.'

Jonah was moved by the truth of these words and then said: "Yes, Pura, every day we experience new proofs of love from our God. Mary is right, God is also waiting for us, whether we want to voluntarily remove everything that still separates us from Him? I will talk with Lazarus, in order to look for a sphere of activity, where also I can serve my fellow men truly according to the Divine laws."

Lazarus, however, could not immediately find a right sphere of activity for Jonah, there was still too much of the old teaching living in him, which always demanded proofs.

Suddenly Paul came to Bethany. He was a zealot and had preached about Jesus without shyness in schools and synagogues, which is why the Templars sought his life. Demetrius and Enos could well understand his brand new way of testifying about Jesus, but many others remained somewhat unsatisfied by it.

"Brother Paul, I honor your zeal" - said Demetrius - "I know you wish to extinguish the fires you have kindled in false delusion. But behold, in such zeal you remain but a servant, a servant of your eternal Lord. I have to thank the Lord the most, because only by His grace it was granted to me to see Him as the Risen One. And even if it was only a few words that He spoke to me, they are enough for my whole life. For in those moments, I became aware that this Divine Jesus only wants to be loved by us! How much, would still remain unknown to me, how much, would still have to be fathomed, if my confession would only

be based on faith in Him! But there is no need, because we are embraced by bonds of love. And I dare to say that I am sufficiently equipped by the recognition of His love-Being.

If God only wanted to have good and faithful servants through us, He would not have had to sacrifice Himself for His human children. In the consciousness of His omnipotence, He could have chastised all His adversaries here - and then, among millions of faithful angels, would have returned to the kingdom from where He came to us. But His teaching would have become an eternal law for us.

The holy Father's longing, however, is for free children who not only recognize the great Creator and God in Him, but also want to see the loving Father in Him. Faith in God presupposes reverence and fear of God. But love for the holy, good Father, requires childlike love and complete surrender to His wishes. To prove your faith in Him, many words are necessary. Love for Him, however, joyfully brings many silent sacrifices. Faith requires strength. Love, however, always receives new gifts of grace!"

Paul was struck by this obvious truth and confessed: "From this point of view I have not yet considered God and His nature - and the position of man in relation to God! But I feel it in me, you are a thousand times happier than I."

"Yes, brother Paul" - Demetrius replied delightedly - "that is what matters: whether you are really happy in your faith in God! For only a happy person can make others happy with his testimony of God. And only a child of God, imbued with love for God, can desire that the spark of God may also kindle in others in such love for Him!"

"Dear brother Demetrius, you may be right. But see, you have not brought guilt upon yourself; you have not brought poor believing human children to grief and sorrow and even death. To you, the Lord has come quite differently than to me!"

"Dear Paul, on that day and before, you were still Saul, and the Lord could not reveal Himself to you in any other way than in such a wonderful, yet very serious way. Remember, you were one of His greatest adversaries, but His Father's heart was filled with merciful love. The permission that Stephen was allowed to lead you into the world of the blessed and into the world of the wretched, was only mercy with your false concepts of God. This mercy of His love gave you the possibility to transform yourself and to become a completely new person.

You have now changed. However, this does not mean that you should henceforth be subject to a law and compulsion. Rather, you may work and serve freely and cheerfully, completely according to the urge of your awakened God-spark within you. Can you understand my bond with the Lord? Behold, I too have failed and been a hard man. Righteousness was my highest concept next to truth. But now that I have come to know God as the purest truth and from that also as the highest righteousness, I love Him. For this love, as His holy inner life, He wants to give to us people, and so I would be unwise, if I wanted to respect His holy love-life less than the high qualities dwelling in Him.

I know for sure that even the greatest zeal on my part to become a faithful laborer and servant to Him would fail because of my powerlessness and because of many lower things that still live in me as a human being. Now, however, I have placed my life entirely in the hands and love of the Lord, and so He, the Glorious and most good One, was able to transform me and made a whole new creation out of me. Not I, oh no, only He in me is the motive power of all I do and is the fulfillment and completion in me!"

"You speak like John" - Paul replied thoughtfully - "but I shall have to wrestle much before I have made this view my own. But yet it was my will to be a zealous, faithful labourer and servant to the Lord."

Demetrius said: "Brother, the Lord give you the strength to do this, and I give you my brotherly blessing."

Jonah was astonished how Demetrius, who had the least contact with the young people, could give such a glorious testimony about his intimate relationship with God, and he said to Demetrius: "Brother, I am surprised by your performance towards Paul! You have erased many doubts in me in one fell swoop and given me a more correct view. It is really true: we still want to mix up far too many of the old concepts with the new knowledge, and thereby only cloud the God-spark, Who wants to make everything new in us."

"Yes, Jonah, that is the right word" - Demetrius replied - "The Spirit within us is being clouded! But we must clearly recognize which spirit we are clouding. We are bearers and owners of a Spirit-spark from God - already since our creation - but are also owners of a completely different spirit, which dwells in our soul-will, and this spirit still has the predominance in us. See, Jonah, every fight always requires an opponent. In this case, however, the opponent is unfortunately invisible to us.

To this now my spirit-spark from God comes, if I surrender myself completely to Him, His Spirit of the greatest mercy with us. And this His Spirit, which wants to give the right light to my spirit-spark, we cloud by our still too much predominant driving forces of the intellect in our soul.

Only where complete devotion takes place, the spark of God can reveal its life to us. For this, however, what still lies in the soul as an essence from below, must decrease. The less we take into account the desires of the soul, the richer we become in the powers of God. Behold, this is how I have grasped my inner life through the love and mercy of My glorious Father.

In order to make myself worthy of this love, I had to want to become His child. Ask your wife if she ever wants to be anything else. Her experience is the greatest testimony, but also the best lesson. Ask David, who sings of His love almost every day; he could also sing of God's omnipotence, greatness and glory. But he feels like a child and as a child, he only wants to praise His Father.

And above all, think of Lazarus, of his sisters and of their life's work! Here you see what is possible to real childlike love. Brotherly love is not an empty delusion. Brotherly love can live out only the one Who sees in God - His Father! And all people then become brothers to him."

"Oh brother Demetrius, you have found the right word for me!" - Jonah said delightedly - "Although all the others told me same, you have now completely overcome my concerns! I want to thank you, but I don't know how?"

Demetrius smiled: "Dear Jonah, here a brother does not seek the thanks of the other, but to please him! But if you were willing to enter My service, behold, you would give me great joy in doing so - for I need such men who are steeped in the truth of God's life in man!"

Joyfully surprised, Jonah asked: "Oh Demetrius, you would give me a field of labor in your great possessions? Do you know how I long for a proper activity? Although I already belong to Bethany, I do not find it here; I want to be able to serve my God and my fellow

people even better. Lazarus knows my desire, he too will be pleased if I could enter your service."

"Dear Jonah, we still want to talk about it in the presence of your wife and my son Ursus. But first I want to talk with Lazarus, and I hope we will all be pleased."

6. Is there evidence for the existence of a God-spark in human beings?

At the appointed time, Ursus returned with his young wife from the journey. Both had hurried ahead, in order to already announce the arrival of their large company to their fathers and Lazarus, because Ursus had bought still many new goods on the way. How great was the joy when Ruth, in radiant happiness, appeared with her Ursus before her parents and Demetrius. But when the first wagons soon arrived, Ursus had to give the directions for unloading, and it was not until after supper that he could tell about the journey and about Theophilus' attitude among the brothers.

"My brothers, and all those united by love in Bethany" - he began - "a time of joy and great grace lies behind us. During the first days of our departure, nothing special occurred. We avoided the inns and were content with our tents, which my people have much experience in setting up. We were all well-acquainted with each other and could always end the evening with singing and a devotion in full harmony, which our accompanying teams were already looking forward to.

When on the fourth evening, far from any human settlement, we had arranged everything at the campsite, we sang the psalm: 'I lift up my eyes to the heights from where all help comes! Our help is the Lord, who made heaven and earth, He will not let our foot slip! He who keeps us, neither sleeps nor slumbers. He be our guardian by day and watchman by night! He also keep our soul, that it suffer no harm. The Lord guard our going out and our coming in - for all eternity! Amen.'

Loudly the joyful voices resounded in the silence of the night, and our hearts were prepared for a word from on high. We felt so safe and secure in the Lord's guard, not suspecting that not far from our camp, was another camp of Roman soldiers heading for Judea. Attracted by our singing, two soldiers came to us secretly and also listened to the words of Theophilus, who described with obvious joy the life of those who live in the world of the Savior.

When he had finished, he involuntarily directed his gaze into the distance, saw the two soldiers and now spoke to them: 'Come, friends, the way to truth shall be shown to you also, so that you may experience how the Savior Jesus stretches out his hand to everyone.'

The soldiers came closer, one of them said to me: 'Forgive us, lord, we did not want to disturb, but only to listen to your songs unheeded. But at the words of the preacher, we were spellbound. For although we soldiers are accustomed to strict obedience, we often ask ourselves: is all this what is so simply demanded of us as a duty, really just?'

To get a glimpse into his world and his nature, I let him speak, and so he related: 'Recently we had to accompany a transport of captured people who were supposed to have offended against our laws. In our daily dealings with them, however, we had to realize that those people could not be criminals at all, since their nature was only kindness and patience. The harsh treatment of these unfortunates, however, made me dislike our legislation, and so the desire arose in some of us to learn more about these noble people who called themselves Christians.'

I said: 'Listen, you are here with friends and you can hope to receive clarification from us about the faith of these Christians. But first go back to your leader and get permission,

because your being here is against all camp rules. But do not conceal from your leader why you want to come to us. My name is Ursus, and this camp belongs to the Roman Demetrius.'

Gratefully, they departed. Our people had listened intently. Now they brought new torches, and then the guards reported that many men were approaching our camp. My name was enough for the leader Herminius; he came himself and had allowed his soldiers to come along. He greeted me warmly: 'Ursus! You dear man, of you I have heard many things and many mysteries. We are a troop of Roman soldiers going from Sidon to Judea, but tell me, where are you going?'

'We are on our way to friends at the foot of Lebanon. Here see my wife Ruth, recently married to me, and here Theophilus, her brother, a former priest, but now a convinced herald of the Divine teachings of Jesus. And so we are all joyful confessors of His Divine revelations!'

Herminius listened up, thanked me for my frankness, and after we had encamped, he remarked: 'I confess that I have heard much of this new faith and also of the harsh persecutions by the Templars, but have not yet studied it more closely. And you, Ursus, do you also believe in this God of the Christians? Tell me, could you give me a proof of the existence of this God, so that I could also be convinced of it? For behold, I could not give such proofs of our gods, since they have never yet become perceptible to my senses.'

I explained to him: 'How shall I prove to you the eternal, almighty God, since you live in the midst of all His works, and everything that exists is proof of His Divine creative powers! Is not every coming day and every preceding night with its regular change a testimony of a sublime order? But there is no law without a proclaimer. No thing without a creator.'

Look at all the wonderful things in the plant world, in the animal kingdom! Must you not give credit to all His works, be it earth, sun, moon and stars, because of the wise laws which regulate and condition their existence?'

And I told him how this Almighty and All-Glorious One strives to reveal Himself to us everywhere in word and work.

But how few want to observe and believe this! How few true priests and servants of God there are, who point people to His Divine orders and arrangements, in order to compare the useful purposes of their own orders with it! For God has created mankind with many divine qualities, and each individual should form his own world with the God-spark resting in him according to the Divine model, in order to be happy and to make happy!

But people, ignoring the Divine order, preferred to create and order their environment according to their own ideas. They lost their way and today they hardly suspect what they have lost with it!

Then Herminius asked spiritedly: 'Oh Ursus! Could you prove it to me that something of such Divine qualities still lives in some people?'

I answered earnestly: 'With this you ask God - to reveal Himself to you! Now, if such a proof is given to you, what would you do?'

'I will have to acknowledge this God! But whether I will submit myself to Him, I still reserve for myself, until I will be more initiated into His characteristics!'

I had to answer him: 'Well, it shall happen for you what you have wished! So listen: One of your guards, who has been suffering from a wound in his right shoulder for a long time, is plagued by almost unbearable pain. He has just crept into your tent - he wants to be alone and unobserved - he is praying! He prays to the God of the Christians, Whom he does not know, but of Whom he has heard many things, and hopes for healing through Him. Go to him, take with you some people and a brother of ours, who will lay his hands on the aching wound, and you shall receive the desired proof!'

'Well, my Ursus' - he said, looking at me firmly for a long time - 'I will do according to your words, although I have little faith that this will turn out so. Send the young priest Theophilus with me, or will you go with me yourself?'

'No, Herminius, it is already right as you have chosen. So go with God.'

Herminius took two of his men with him, they saluted with their raised right hand, and disappeared into the starry night.

'Let us now sing a song' - I said to those who remained behind - 'for singing makes hearts more receptive to the gifts of grace from God, our gracious Father. After all, it will be some time before they return.'

After the psalm, my inner vision was opened, and I said aloud for all to hear: 'We may now witness a miracle of the Divine power of love! Herminius has just arrived at his camp and goes towards his tent, which is unguarded. He opens it - and sees a kneeling man inside, who is frightened before him. Herminius asks in amazement: 'Claudius, what is the matter with you? Why are you in my tent and not in yours? And why are you kneeling here on the ground?'

'Forgive me, Herminius' - begged the kneeling man - 'for seeking out your tent in my great pain. I knew no other counsel to be undisturbed, to turn to the great unknown God of the Christians, because our gods failed utterly! See my sick shoulder - I am unable to move my arm, nor can my comrades help me!'

Herminius looked at the wound and asked sympathetically: 'Why did you report nothing to me? I would have left you in Sidon.'

'I must confess the truth, Lord! Oh do not be angry with me' - begged the sick man - 'I secretly hoped to learn something more in Judea of the Nazarene, whom the Jews crucified, but who is said to have risen again from His grave after three days, and has now become a mighty God and Savior of all Christians. To Him I prayed - perhaps not quite correctly - but I know that this God loves to hear prayers.'

Herminius now took Theophilus by the hand and said: 'My friend, I chose you! Does this good comrade give you trouble, and could you help him through the Divine in you?'

'No, Herminius, I cannot help. But Jesus, the Savior, who lives in me, who also once saved me from distress and deep suffering - can help!' - He approached Claudius and said: 'Friend, through me, the great Savior asks you: can you believe that He wants to make you well?'

'I believe! - Otherwise I would not have asked for it on my knees!'

'Now, then, listen' - said Theophilus solemnly - 'the Lord and Master Jesus has looked into your heart, and found you worthy to experience His glory! 'Lord Jesus! - You Savior! You

our Savior from all evil! We ask You, help this Your sick child according to Your will, which You have so gloriously revealed to us, and let me bless him by Your power and grace!

Brother Claudius! The Lord be with you! He awaken in you your God-spirit! And so be well - by His power and grace! Amen.'

A spark of light from the blessing right hand of Theophilus flowed over the sick person - all saw this. Theophilus said: 'Claudius is healed! - See for yourselves, and then let us return to the others.'

Herminius did not know what happened to him. Everything was so natural - and yet so mysterious.

Now Claudius spoke: 'Oh friend, I am free from pain! A fire permeated my body; before my eyes it flashed, and a feeling of delight trembled through me. Herminius, grab my shoulder; it is whole and sound!'

'Yes, Claudius, I see it! And now come to our friend Ursus, that we may tell him this miracle of your God' said Herminius.

But Theophilus explained to him: 'Yes, and another new miracle the great God allows you to experience: See, Ursus was awakened in spirit, he was allowed to experience all this here already and has already reported it to the others.'

Thus we all experienced holy hours. Later, Herminius confessed to me that from now on, he would also try to get to know this great God more closely. I said: 'Oh Herminius, be a true brother to me. For God, the Father of us all, is everywhere around us and also in us. Whoever wants to search for Him deep within himself, will also find Him and be allowed to experience His supernatural glory.'

Herminius, now quite serious, said: 'You call me brother? Oh my Ursus, I thank you! But one thing I ask of you: tell me how you found God, beheld Him, and committed yourself to Him! Then perhaps I can get the best picture of His nature.'

I answered, 'Listen! I searched long for the Nazarene, Whose deeds and teachings were praised almost everywhere' - and I told him about my wonderful experiences with Jesus!

Finally he asked: 'What is the condition that this spark from the life of God, which is resting in us, will ignite into fire?'

Then I said: 'Love the spark of God in your neighbor and help him with all your strength to liberate himself! Then you will serve the Divine intentions, and the spark of God in yourself will be able to reveal itself more and more vividly.'

Your profession, as hard as it may often seem to you, will become a blessing if you fulfill your duties with all your heart. Every love, if it emanates from the heart, is of Divine origin and will touch other hearts. Thus I live from His grace and love, which manifests itself so wonderfully in my inner world. So I may see the wonders of His love in me, may feel the essence of His Holy Spirit in me and may take from my inner world what I can give to others for their salvation and to me and my God and Father - for purest joy. Now go in peace! The gate for Him in you has been opened. Do what your heart tells you to do, and believe what your heart tells you to believe. The peace of the Lord be with you!'

We found it hard to part, but duty demanded.

'We will meet again, brother', were his last words.

7. Our work in the vineyard of the Lord

Life in Bethany continued in the usual way, and in the evenings, Ursus described various scenes from the further course of the journey and of the great joy in the settlements on their arrival.

"The new brothers and sisters whom I brought with me also found the kindest welcome, for there was much work everywhere and scarcely enough hands to do it. Old Eusebius lived up to our visit; with Achibald and Bernhart I made long rides into the country, as far as the mountains, and the great wish rose in us: If only all this uncultivated land could be made fertile for the so badly persecuted brothers in faith in Judea! And now hear how the all-good Father granted us such wishes: One hot noon, three Roman soldiers on horseback came to Bernhart, who is the official in the area, and told us about a suspicious caravan: 'Yesterday, on our patrol rides, we saw them in the distance on the military road to Sidon, but since they did not pass by our permanent military post, we became suspicious and searched for their whereabouts. We were about to turn back in the evening when we heard distant cries for help, and as we rode on in that direction, we saw a campfire quite off the army road.

Under the cover of darkness we crept up and saw a mass transport of captured people encamped. We watched everything until daylight and then had to witness a crude rape. After a short exchange of words with a Jewish priest, some of the captives were led away, stripped of their clothes and cruelly whipped with rods, so that I wanted to jump in.

When these unfortunates were dragged away - I could not believe my eyes - they brought two of our bound Roman comrades before the priest. He seemed to demand something of them, which they refused. Then he roared, clearly audible to me: 'Tomorrow your backs will look like those Nazarenes!' Away! Out of my sight!

The three of us decided to go to the next settlement to get help and ask for your assistance before these criminals move on.

Bernhart said immediately: 'We thank you for the report and will try to help. In the meantime, fortify yourselves and rest until we have prepared everything. He sent a messenger on horseback to Achibald with the message to wait for us at the access road to Sidon in about three hours, with all available men on horseback and armed. It was necessary to strike a great blow against offenders of secular and Divine laws.

We also got ready, met Achibald with his men, and in great haste we went to the campsite, where the three soldiers led us. When it was already dark, we had reached the destination.

Achibald rode boldly with some soldiers into the middle of the camp, and demanded to speak to the leader. The priest, alerted by the loud words, came and asked proudly: 'Who wants to speak to me?'

'I!' - shouted Achibald, showed his document and said sternly: 'You are accused of maltreatment and of holding captive Roman imperial soldiers! I must therefore investigate your caravan!'

The priest laughed derisively: 'I am commissioned by the temple and will never allow anyone to interfere with my rights!' Achibald replied: 'Whether you allow it or not, I will do what my duty requires of me. If I find everything in order, you have the right to complain.'

The priest wanted to rebel. But Achibald reached for the signal whistle. One whistle - and in an instant all our men were in the camp. With a loud voice, he ordered: 'Whoever resists, will be put to death! But first bind this priest here! In a moment, it was done.'

Then Achibald shouted: 'People, come here to me! I am not your enemy, but only a judge for all lawlessness. Nothing will happen to you if you obey my orders.'

Then an old man came forward and said: 'Lord! Command what we should do, we were here only badly paid servants.'

'Release all the prisoners, let them be free!' - Achibald ordered - and the old man shouted to the others: 'Do what the lord commands! A Roman keeps his word!'

In a short time, about two hundred men and women came to thank us. In a voice choked with tears, a bent old man told of the cruel fate of the prisoners and the nefarious harassment by the priest. 'Search in his tent, there is an image representing the Savior. In front of this image, we Nazarenes were supposed to curse the Holy One, but whoever did not, received the whip. Here, see for yourself what my back looks like, it was about two weeks ago that this cruelty happened to me.'

We were horrified by the sight and still asked: 'Were there also those who followed the will of the violent one and denied the Son of God?'

'I hardly think so, because every day we saw that it was the priest's pleasure that some were beaten.'

Bernhart now took over the distribution of the guards. I searched the wagons and found food and precious goods, but also sick people in them. When we finally had a clear picture of this caravan, Achibald said in firm determination: 'Ursus, the cross is certain for this chief priest!'

Early in the morning, after a simple meal, everyone was called together and Achibald explained to them: 'Dear people, a new phase of your life begins with this day. One thing is certain, we want only your best, because we also profess the great Savior Jesus Christ. You are free now! But first we will lead you to our settlements, where you can decide whether you prefer to go back to your homeland or to start a new life with us under Roman protection, where land and work are already waiting for industrious hands.'

But now let us first thank our holy God for all the wonderful guidance that was necessary to free you from this cruel captivity. And so let us pray together: 'Oh Lord! - You our Savior Jesus, Who gave us the right power to make Your adversary harmless! You good, faithful Father of Your children, our hearts thank You sincerely for this salvation! Oh Jesus! We ask You to continue to take our destiny into Your wise Father's hands and lead us to the true goal! Bless us all, oh Lord, and let us become ever more alive in Your Spirit of great love-activity! Amen.'

When it was fully daylight, the long wagon procession started moving, and in the afternoon, we finally reached Bernhart's houses. Mother Elisa immediately took care of the tired women and girls. They were given refreshments and encouragement, and when

water and food for the many animals had been provided, they were able to enjoy the pleasant rest here.

The next morning, they were to look around the area and then had to decide. Many liked to stay here to build a new home in the new land. Others moved with Achibald to his finished settlement to pursue their former occupation. None wanted to return, because of the dreaded Templars. A general thanksgiving service was organized for the evening, and for this, Achibald and Bernhart wanted a 'God-servant' chosen by the Lord, to whom I could immediately introduce to them in Theophilus.

Theophilus was visibly pleased with this task. He had a small altar erected in the large living room, some candlesticks were lit, and the image of Jesus, adorned with ears of fruit, was placed on it for all to see.

When all were festively gathered, Theophilus began: 'Friends, brothers and sisters! It is a holy moment when we come close to our God and Father, Who is already waiting for us with longing and wants to give us new rays of light of His love to recognize His wise work among us.

So let us become silent and pray: Father! You Eternal Love! We bow our faces and, filled with gratitude, open our hearts to You for the great grace that has united us all here so joyfully. But as the best becomes worthless if it is not recognized and not embraced with holy love, so we ask You to make us receptive and worthy to move Your holy Word as a living spark of fire within us. Let the light of Your Spirit awaken the spark from You that is still dormant in us, so that it may guide us in all situations of life.'

Then Theophilus spoke in devotion of all the fates that often seem so incomprehensible to us, which have again revealed themselves so wonderfully in these days in these now liberated brothers and sisters. Yes, we are all often led through deep, painful times of inner darkness, in order to free this spark of Divine dear life in us from its fetters and to kindle it to ever brighter shining in our being, yes, to awaken our whole mind to a new inner life that makes us so happy!

And Theophilus told us of his own guidance, how his spark lay as if buried in him through much acquired false doctrine about the Divine. Only through hard agonies of conscience and bitter imprisonment, he had to bring himself through to the conscious illumination; which light we all still hoped to experience.

He closed the ceremony with a common prayer of thanksgiving for our Divine guidance. Everyone had listened to his words deeply moved, and with this, Theophilus had at the same time proven himself to be the appointed caretaker of Jesus' teaching for all the receptive hearts in both settlements."

Ursus had finished his report. - For his listeners in Bethany, he added: "So we all can observe and experience daily something of this often peculiar guidance of God of the different human souls! We experience how the God-spark in us wants to be freed from our old weaknesses and inhibitions, in order to cooperate in the great vineyard of His Father in our redemption from indifference and error, and in His great clarity of Spirit, seeks to inflame us to joyful energy! Amen."

Live with more joy!

Enter into each new day with a joyful heart,
and conclude it joyfully and thankfully!

Recognize that the wise ways God leads you -
and how He leads people and nations!

He is the Lord, Whom all serve!

Whether seemingly against Him, whether for Him,
He makes everything subservient to His high intentions.

So now go through your days with enthusiasm -
your environment a light that shines in this and that world,
a flame that warms all who join it!

Go upright into your new day,
inwardly happy and free as highborn children of a Divine Father!

Already the bells swing - soon they strike!

The earth trembles - their redeemers approach!

Behind them - the Father, the ring in his hand,
to adorn the son, who now found the way home!

