

## **Love Feast (Agape) in Bethania And in the House Of the Last Supper. The Destruction Of the Holy Places By the Jews**



I saw the Apostles in Bethania, whither they were followed by about three hundred of the

Faithful, among them fifty women. They had given over their goods to the Community. The Blessed Virgin also had come from Jerusalem to Bethania, and was stopping in Martha and Magdalen's house. There was a great Love Feast of bread-breaking and passing round of the cup held in the open hall of Lazarus' court.

Peter afterward gave an instruction before a great multitude. There were some spies among the listeners. When Peter announced that they should leave all and join the Community, and that he would give them what they needed, the spies laughed derisively. He had nothing himself, they said, He was only a poor fisherman, a vagrant, who could hardly support his wife at home. Peter still continued to teach, more on the command of Jesus than from any interior, quickening sentiment which the Apostles received only with the Holy Ghost. He now spoke in the assemblies, excepting when the crowd was very great, for then he ordered some of the others to teach on various points. Since his reception of the mantle from Jesus and the meal of fish (which indeed was not a natural fish), at which he had received special power, he had become quite another being. All recognized him as the head, the mouth, the hand of the Community. At Jesus' prediction on the seashore respecting Peter's death and John's future, at the command, "Feed My lambs!" I felt that Peter, in his successors, was forever to provide for the guiding and feeding of the flocks, while John should stand ever at the source of the water that was to refresh and irrigate the meadow and quicken the sheep. It seemed to me that Peter's influence belonged more to time, more to the exterior condition, and therefore was it divided among his successors; but that John's was more interior, that it consisted more in inspiration, in the sending abroad of inspired messengers. Peter was more like the rock, the

edifice; John more like a wind, a cloud, a thunderstorm, a son of thunder, a voice sender. Peter was more like the frame, the cords, and the tone of a harp; John was the sighing of the breeze through its strings, I am unable to express in more significant words what I inwardly perceived.

About fifty soldiers, the same that seized the Lord on Mount Olivet, came from Jerusalem to Bethania. They were guards belonging to the Temple and the High Priests. Some deputies also of the Sanhedrim made their appearance at the Council House in Bethania, and summoned the Apostles before them. Peter, John, and Thomas presented themselves and replied boldly and openly to the charge that they convened assemblies and occasioned disturbance among the people. Soldiers were placed at Lazarus'. The deputies from Jerusalem interrogated the Apostles publicly before the Council House. The magistrates of Bethania opposed them, saying that if they knew anything against those men, they ought to take them into custody, but that they must not disturb the peace of the place by the presence of soldiers. Peter, in order to avoid giving offense, dismissed one hundred and twenty-three of the assembled Faithful. Those from the greatest distance were directed to remain at the dwellings in the neighborhood, for they already had all things in common. The fifty women also withdrew and lived together in separate abodes. Peter gave orders for all to return to Bethania before the day of Christ's Ascension.

The Apostles, on leaving Bethania, went to the house of the Last Supper near Jerusalem, where they prayed under the lamp before the Holy of Holies. There were about seven disciples with them. They could no longer reach the house of the Last Supper through the city, for the road on that side had been partly destroyed by the Jews. They had to go to the left of the Temple, and strike into the road taken by Peter and John on Maundy Thursday. There were numerous inns for the accommodation of strangers on this road, and the people living around these parts were not of pure Jewish origin. The Jews had expelled from their society and from public offices all that declared themselves for Jesus and that fraternized with the disciples. The places upon which Jesus fell during His sorrowful journey to Calvary, or at which something noteworthy had happened, they cut through with ditches. The ways leading to the sections chiefly inhabited or frequented by the followers of Jesus, they walled up. It appeared to me very strange to see a person caught in such a street as in a blind alley, and have to turn round and come out again. Sometimes the friends of Jesus again opened the ways to Calvary by night. All places around Jerusalem especially consecrated by the presence or the sufferings of Jesus, and on that account held in particular veneration by His followers, were maliciously laid waste by the Jews. The charming sites

upon which Jesus had taught and tarried were rendered impassable and closed in with hedges. In some places they actually dug pitfalls into which the pious pilgrim might fall, but I saw some of those vicious Jews plunging into them themselves. Mount Calvary was rendered unapproachable by hedges and beams. Its summit was dug up and the earth scattered like manure over the paths, also over the five grassy, heart-shaped plots that were formed by the pathways running up to the place of crucifixion. When they had taken away the mound that encircled the place of crucifixion, there remained a white stone. In it was a four-cornered hole about an ell deep, in which the cross had been planted. I saw the workmen toiling with crowbars, trying to upturn that stone, but the more they tried, the deeper it sank, so they buried it at last under some rubbish. The Holy Sepulcher alone was left unmolested, for that was Nicodemus' property. Christ's head, while in the tomb, lay toward the east. If a person on leaving the cave went around toward the south, he would have the sun directly above him, and the west on his right. I was interiorly instructed that all demolishers of representations of the Holy Way of the Cross, of Crucifixes, chapels or churches, of ancient devotions, of holy exercises and practices, and in general of all objects that draw us into closer relation with the history of Redemption, whether in building, picture, and writing, or by custom, festival, and prayer, will be judged with the enemies of Jesus' bloody footsteps and as belonging to them.