

Jesus in Cariathaim and Abram

Jesus went with the disciples around the environs of Saphet and cured many sick who had been brought out of the houses and laid on the road by which He was to pass. Early in the morning He sent one of the nephews of Joseph of Arimathea, along with Seraphia's son, to the neighboring town of Cariathaim, about three hours from Saphet, with a commission to prepare the inn. He and the disciples left Saphet



sometime after. The disciples scattered here and there on the road, while Jesus also went along teaching and healing. He went first westward between Bethan and Elcese, after which the road turned toward the south. Somewhat beyond Elcese—near which was a beautiful mountain—lay a little, oval lake as large as that near the Baths of Bethulia. It was the source of a stream that flowed down into the valley which, southeast of Cariathaim, declined into that of Capharnaum. This valley was narrow in some parts, wide in others, and extended seven hours before reaching Capharnaum.

On the way to Cariathaim, Jesus was met by some demoniacs who entreated Him to help them. They told Him that the disciples had not been able to relieve them, and that they thought He could do better than they. Jesus replied that if the disciples had not relieved them, it was not the fault of the disciples but their own want of faith, and He commanded them to go to Cariathaim and remain fasting until He should deliver them. He let them wait awhile and do penance. Half an hour from Cariathaim, Jesus was received by the Levites of the place, the school teachers accompanied by their children, and many of the good inhabitants who had come out to meet Him. The two disciples who had gone on ahead to prepare the inn were also there. They received Jesus near a bathing garden, which was supplied with water conducted through a canal from that little stream of which I have spoken. The garden was full of beautiful trees, flowers, and covered walks, and enclosed by a rampart and an astonishingly dense hedge. They washed the feet of

Jesus and His disciples and entertained them with the usual refreshments. Jesus here instructed the children for a little while and gave them His blessing. It may have been nearly five o'clock when they started for the city, which lay upon a hill overlooking the valley. The whole way to the synagogue Jesus healed many sick of all kinds whom He met in the streets. In the synagogue He again taught on the Beatitudes, also of the punishment of those Levites that had dared to lay their hands upon the Ark of the Covenant. And yet greater chastisements, He said, would fall upon those that would lay hands on the Son of Man, of whom the Ark was only a symbol. While in Cariathaim, Jesus put up at a hired inn which had been furnished with necessaries out of the common stock of the Community by the two disciples sent on ahead. The food was prepared at a house in the city, where also cooking for the sick was done. The Levites ate with Jesus and the disciples.

Cariathaim was a Levitical city, and in it were no Pharisees. A couple of its families were related to Zachary. Jesus visited them and found them very much troubled on John's account. He recalled to them the wonders that had preceded and accompanied John's birth, and spoke of his mission and wonderful life. He reminded them likewise of many circumstances attendant on the birth of Mary's Son, showed them that John's fate lay in the hands of God, and that he would die when he had fulfilled his mission. Jesus prepared them in this way for John's death.

The possessed whom He had sent to Cariathaim on the preceding day, and many other sick, accosted Him near the synagogue on the subject of their cure. He healed several, but others He sent away to fulfill certain prescriptions of fasting, alms-giving, and prayer. He did this here rather than elsewhere, because the people of this place were earnest in the keeping of the Law. After that He repaired with the disciples to the garden in which He had been received, where He taught and the disciples baptized. Encamped under tents in the neighborhood were pagans awaiting Jesus' coming. They had already been in Capharnaum, whence they had been ordered here. There were in all about a hundred baptized. They stood in the water around a basin. Peter and James the Less baptized, while the others laid their hands on the neophytes.

In the evening Jesus taught in the synagogue, His subject being the Eight Beatitudes. He spoke also of the false consolation of the false prophets who had rejected the menaces of the true whose prophecies had, nevertheless, been fulfilled. He repeated His threats against those who would not receive Him who was sent by God.

Leaving Cariathaim, Jesus went with the disciples toward the south. He was as solemnly escorted on His departure by the Levites and schoolchildren as He had been received on His entrance. The people of Cariathaim were engaged in the transportation of goods and the manufacture of vestments for priests out of the silk that they imported from afar. On the southern declivity of the opposite side of the valley, where lay a place called Naasson, there was a sugar cane plantation whose products formed a staple of trade. Jesus ascended that height, while the disciples scattered among some of the places more to the east of the valley. Jesus taught near Naasson those whom He met coming from Capharnaum, among them some idolaters. On such occasions, Jesus was frequently accompanied a part of His way by crowds. I saw Him curing several, among others two poor cripples who were lying on the roadside. He took them by the hand and commanded them to rise. They immediately wanted to follow Him, but He forbade them to do so. He traversed another valley, arrived at a height situated before the city of Abram in the tribe of Aser, and put up at an inn outside the city, where were found beautiful gardens and pleasure grounds. There were only two disciples with Jesus when He entered the inn, the others not having yet arrived. The country here on the eastern side of the high ridges that run from Libanus down to the valley of Zabulon was rich in meadow land and very charming. Herds of cattle and camels were grazing in the high grass. Westward toward the lake, orchards were more numerous. Abram was situated about three hours south of Cariathaim. But Jesus, not having followed the direct route, was certainly five hours on His journey thither.

In the evening Thomas, John, and Nathanael joined Jesus in the inn. The others were still in the neighboring towns. The mountain upon which Abram was built formed in its length the boundary between Nephtali and Zabulon. The steward of the inn laid before Jesus a dispute, which he begged Him to decide. It had reference to the wells in the vicinity used for watering the

cattle. As the two tribes were so near each other in this place and their pasturage so extensive, altercations on the subject of the wells were frequent. The host thus addressed Jesus: "Lord, we will not let Thee go until Thou dost decide our quarrel." Jesus' decision was something like this: They should from each side set free an equal number of cattle, and from whichever side the greater number went of their own accord to the wells, that side should have the greater right to the said wells. Jesus drew from this circumstance matter for a profoundly significant instruction on the living water that He Himself would give them, and which would belong to those that most earnestly desired it.

The next day Jesus went into Abram, which was in two sections and on two different roads. It was like two separate villages interspersed with numerous gardens. The teachers of the school came out of the city to meet Jesus, washed His feet, and escorted Him to the synagogue. On the way thither, He cured many sick and crippled whom He found lying on the street, also some old people languishing from weakness; and some demoniacs who, though not actually furious, were running about muttering to themselves like silly, vicious creatures. They came involuntarily to where Jesus was, again and again repeating the words: "Jesus of Nazareth! Jesus! Prophet! Thou Son of God! Jesus of Nazareth!" Jesus delivered them by a blessing. In the synagogue He taught of the Beatitudes and from some passages of the Prophet Malachias.

There were in Abram Sadducees, Pharisees, and Levites, also two synagogues, for each section of the city had its own. The Sadducees had their own special synagogue, but Jesus did not teach in it. The Pharisees conducted themselves very politely toward Jesus. His inn was distant, about a good quarter of an hour from the southern end of the city, and was one of those established by Lazarus for His convenience. The steward was a married Essenian, a descendant of the family of that Zacharias who was murdered between the Temple and the altar. His wife was the granddaughter of one of Anne's sisters. They had grown children, and possessed herds and meadows near that field in which Joachim had tarried before Mary's Conception. Having little occupation at home, they had come hither to take charge of the inn; later on they were relieved by others. Like all the others, this inn was supplied with all kinds of necessaries, though not with superfluities. It had

also its garden, its field, and its well. There were no pagans in Abram, but down the mountain were some groups of houses inhabited by them.

The Apostles and disciples whom Jesus had left near Cariathaim came back again to the inn, as did also Andrew and Matthew. Thomas and James the Less went instead of them to Achzib in the tribe of Aser, between ten and twelve hours westward. Twenty men accompanied Andrew; some were strangers, and some had been cured and wanted to hear Jesus' instructions. The two Apostles related how things had gone with them, how all had prospered with them, namely, healing, exorcising, preaching, and baptizing. Many sick and many seeking advice and consolation came to Jesus' inn. Most of them were cripples with deformed limbs, old, emaciated people, demoniacs and infirm females, the latter of whom were in a chamber apart. The paralytics whom Jesus had healed the day before wanted to render assistance near the other sick. But He refused their help, saying that He was come to serve and not to be served.

Jesus taught and healed the whole morning, and had besides to settle a dispute concerning the wells. As the confines of Aser, Nephtali, and Zabulon here met, and the people carried on cattle raising, there arose frequent discussions on the subject of the wells. One man complained that another made use of the well that his ancestors had dug. He submitted the case to Jesus, saying that he would abide by His decision, though he did not wish to sacrifice lightly the rights of his children. Jesus decided that he should bore for a well in another field, which He pointed out to him. There he would find better and more abundant water. Between twenty and thirty Jews were baptized, among them those that had come hither with Andrew and Matthew. As there was here no brook in which they could stand, the neophytes knelt in a circle, and were baptized out of a basin with the hand. After that Jesus went into the city.

They whom Jesus cured in the city were for the most part affected with maladies similar to those already described. Their sufferings must have had some connection with the elevated situation of the city and the occupations in which they were engaged. Jesus took much notice of the children, who were standing in rows on the street corners and public squares, waiting for

Him. He questioned them, instructed them, and gave them His blessing. The mothers brought to Him their sick little ones, and He healed them. Numbers of people from the country around had here assembled.

The Pharisees behaved most courteously to Jesus in the synagogue. They resigned the first place to Him, and gave the disciples seats around their Master, before whom they laid the rolls of Scripture. Jesus taught first on one of the Eight Beatitudes, then on the great persecutions that were to come upon Himself and His followers, and lastly, of the heavy chastisement, the destruction that was to befall Jerusalem and the whole country. The Pharisees, according to their custom, interrupted Him at times to ask for an explanation upon this or that point.

The people of Abram were very industrious. They prepared and sold cotton, of which wide strips moderately fine were made; they also wove something like flax. The thick stalk, after being split into fine strips, was passed over a sharp bone, or wooden instrument in order to detach the fine, long fibers. They were yellowish and shining, and were spun into the tunics worn when walking. It was neither flax nor hemp such as we have. They were engaged also in the manufacture of covers for tents and light screens of wood and matting.

Jesus and the Apostles spent the whole of the following morning and a part of the afternoon among some of the houses in the southern quarter of the city, teaching, consoling, reconciling enemies and exhorting them to union, charity, and peace. When a family counted many members, Jesus taught them alone; but, as a general thing, the neighbors were called in. All disputes were adjusted, all differences arranged. These visits of Jesus were mostly made to those houses in which were old, bedridden people who could not be present at the instructions in the synagogue. Some very old men received Baptism in their beds. Two of them could sit upright only with support, and they were baptized out of a basin.

On the first day of His entrance into Abram, Jesus had instructed a couple for matrimony, and assisted at the nuptials. In another house there were three other couples in expectation of the same. When the parents, the nearest relatives, and some of the Pharisees were assembled for the ceremony, Jesus

instructed them upon marriage. He spoke of the wife's submission in obedience to the Law, which followed the first sin as its consequence, though the husband should honor in his wife the Promise: "The seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent." But now that the time of fulfillment was drawing near, grace took the place of the Law. The wife should now obey through reverence and humility, and the husband command with love and moderation. In this instruction Jesus said that the question as to how sin had entered the world was an unnecessary one. It had come from disobedience, but salvation was to spring from faith and obedience. He alluded also to divorce which, He said, could never take place, since husband and wife are one in the flesh. If, however, their living together was the occasion of great sins, then indeed they might separate, though without the liberty of marrying again. The Law had been made when the human race was in its infancy and in its early rude state; but now that they were no longer children and that the fullness of time had arrived, the remarrying of divorced spouses was a violation of the eternal law of nature. The privilege of separating was a concession granted when there was danger of offending God and only after a period of serious trial. Jesus delivered this instruction in the beautiful family mansion belonging to the parents of one of the bridal couples. All the young affianced were present, the brides separated from the grooms by a curtain, at one end of which Jesus stood. The parents also stood in order, the fathers on one side, the mothers on the other, while some of the disciples and Pharisees were grouped around Jesus.

This instruction on marriage gave rise to the first occasion for the Pharisees of this place to oppose Jesus. Nevertheless they did not begin their dispute at once, but waited till evening when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue upon the oppression of the Children of Israel in Egypt, and developing some passages from Isaiah. Here they attacked His doctrine on marriage. With regard to the wife's submission, they found Him too mild, and in respect to the divorce question, too severe. They had, they affirmed, previously consulted numerous writings on that subject, and in spite of His repeated explanations, they could not accept His teaching. Although the dispute was warmly maintained, yet were the limits of decorum never overstepped. Next day Jesus assisted with two of the disciples at the marriage ceremony of the young couples. He even acted as witness. They were married facing the chest that contained the Law and under the open heavens, for they had

opened the cupola of the synagogue. I saw that both parties allowed some drops of blood from the ring finger to fall into a glass of wine, which they then drank. They exchanged rings and went through other ceremonies. After the religious rites came the celebration of the nuptials beginning with dance and banquet and merry-making, to all of which Jesus and the disciples were invited. The festivities took place in the beautiful public hall, which was supported by a colonnade. The bridal couples were not all from the city, but from the neighboring localities. They celebrated their nuptials here together, according to an agreement they had made to that effect when the news of Jesus' coming was announced. Some of them, indeed, had been present with their parents at His instructions in Capharnaum. The people of this region were particularly good-natured and sociable. The weddings of the poorer were now celebrated with those of the rich, greatly to the advantage of the former.

I remarked that the guests brought certain presents, and that Jesus, in His own name and that of the disciples, made the young couples a gift in money. They, in their turn, sent back the money to His inn, and over and above as a present some baskets of nice wedding bread, all which Jesus caused to be distributed to the poor.

The feast began by a bridal dance in slow and measured step. The brides were veiled. The couples stood facing one another, and each bridegroom danced once with each bride. They never touched one another, but grasped the ends of the scarf that they held in their hands. The dance lasted one hour, because each groom danced once with all the brides separately, and then all danced together. Besides this, the step was very slow. Then followed the banquet, at which the men and women were, as usual, separated. The musicians were children, little boys and girls, with crowns of wool on their heads and wreaths of the same on their arms. They played on flutes, little twisted horns, and other instruments. The banqueting tables were so placed that the guests could hear without seeing one another. Jesus went to that of the brides and related a parable, something in the style of that of the ten wise and the ten foolish virgins. He explained it in quite a homely way adapted to the occasion, though at the same time His words were full of spiritual signification. He told each how she should acquit herself of the duties of her new, domestic position and what provisions she should lay up for that. His instructions contained a spiritual sense, and were suited to the

particular character and shortcomings of the one to whom they were addressed.

The banquet over, then came the game of riddles. The enigmas written on slips of paper were thrown on a board that was full of holes, through which they fell into bags. Everyone had to solve the particular enigma that had fallen into his or her bag, or else pay a forfeit. The unsolved riddles were again and again thrown on the board, and the one that was so fortunate as to solve them at last, could claim all that had been previously lost on their account. Jesus looked on during the game, making happy and instructive applications of all that took place.

At the close of the festivities, Jesus and the disciples returned to their inn outside the city, whither they were conducted with lighted torches. After Jesus had again taught in the synagogue, He visited the school of the boys and youths, whom He questioned and instructed, and then took leave of several people. After the repast, at the time generally spent in promenading on the Sabbath, Jesus with two of His disciples visited a girls' school. It was, besides, a kind of embroidering establishment. The little girls were between the ages of six and fourteen. There were a great many of them, and today they were in their fine clothes. Two Doctors of the Law were present, and they too were in holiday attire, wearing broad girdles around their waists and long maniples on their sleeves. Every day they explained to the children some part of the Law. About ten widows superintended the affairs of the school. Besides instruction in reading the Law, in writing and reckoning, the girls worked at embroidery intended for sale. Through a series of halls were extended long strips of different materials, some an ell in width, some narrower, of the breadth of a broad girdle. The finished end was always rolled up. The pattern from which the young embroiderers worked lay before them painted on a piece of stuff. It was made up of flowers and leaves and little branches and serpentine lines, all forming large figures. The material upon which they worked was woven of very fine wool, something like the light mantles worn by the three Holy Kings, only it was rather stronger in texture and of different colors. The children worked with fine, colored wool, also with silk, yellow being one of the principal colors. They did not use needles, but little hooks. Some also worked on white strips that were narrower than the rest. Others were engaged on girdles, upon which they embroidered certain

letters. The little girls stood at their work, one next the other. Their occupation was assigned them according to their age and talent. I saw some of the little ones preparing the threads, others smoothing the wool, and others spinning. All that the embroiderers needed, such as thread and instruments, was handed them by the younger ones. On this day they were not working. While the children were showing their work to Jesus as He passed through the halls with the superintendents, the whole business of the institution was shown me in a tableau. I saw also that some of the girls embroidered figures, large and small, upon separate pieces of stuff which were private orders intended for sale, and these they showed to Jesus. The heathens exchanged all kinds of things for them.

Some of the girls lived in the house, of which two stories were given up to the business, and others came from the city. There was also a hall for instructions, and there Jesus taught and catechized the children, who held little rolls in their hands. The smallest stood in front, their mistresses behind them. The children advanced, one row at a time, to Jesus' chair. When He had blessed them and instructed them in familiar similitudes drawn from their work, He left the house, though not until they had presented Him with some strips of stuff and girdles, which they sent to His inn for Him. He afterward gave them to the different synagogues. Jesus then closed the exercises of the Sabbath in the synagogue. The whole country around had poured into the city, which was consequently crowded with people. Several of the disciples were still going around today among the houses outside the city. Jesus took leave of all present in the synagogue and made a brief recapitulation of what He had already taught them. All were very much touched and wanted Him to remain with them.

Before Jesus left Abram for Dothain, He dispatched two disciples with a message to Capharnaum, and two others to Cydessa. Andrew and Matthias alone remained with their Master, the others having scattered to different places.

Dothain was built on the same mountain ridge as Abram, and may have been distant from it southward something like five hours. There was here a private inn established for Jesus and His disciples, and there He met Lazarus, who had come thither with two disciples from Jerusalem. The holy women also had journeyed with Lazarus to this inn from Jerusalem.