

Jesus in Gophna

Gur, where Jesus prayed alone in the inn, lay not very far from a city, Mageddo, and a field of the same name. I have clearly seen that, toward the end of the world, there will be fought in that field a battle with Antichrist. Jesus arose with the dawn, rolled up His couch, laid a coin on it, girded Himself, and went forth. His way led Him around many towns and villages, but He met no one, put up at no inn. He passed Mount Garizim near Samaria, which lay to the left, as He journeyed southward. Occasionally He ate a few berries and some other fruit, and in the hollow of His hand or with a concave leaf scooped up some water to quench His thirst.



Toward evening, Jesus entered Gophna, a city on Mount Ephraim. It was built upon very jagged foundations, some high, some low, numerous gardens and pleasure grounds scattered between the houses. Some relatives of Joachim dwelt here, but they had not maintained intimate communications with the Holy Family. Jesus put up at an inn where they washed His feet and gave Him some little refreshment. But soon there came to the inn some of His relatives accompanied by a couple of Pharisees of the better sort, and escorted Him to their own home, one of the handsomest houses in the city. The city itself was of some importance, and possessed at this time jurisdiction over a portion of the country around. Jesus' relative was an official, and was much employed in writing. I think the city belonged to Samaria. Jesus was received with respect. There were several guests at His relative's house and all, standing or walking, took refreshments in a pleasure garden. Jesus slept here overnight. It was a day's journey from Gophna to Jerusalem. There was a little river in this region. During the loss of the Boy Jesus in the Temple, the Holy Family went to Gophna in search of Him; for when they missed Him at Machmas, they thought He might perhaps have gone to His relatives there. Mary feared that He had fallen into the little river.

Jesus, having gone to the synagogue, asked for the writings of one of the Prophets, and taught of baptism and the Messiah. He proved to His hearers from the Prophets, that the time must have arrived for His appearance. He cited events which were to precede His coming, and which had actually been

accomplished, alluding especially to one that had happened three years before. I do not now remember whether that particular event was a war, or whether it was that the scepter had passed from Juda. And so He went on enumerating proofs of accomplished signs which were to precede the coming of the Messiah. He mentioned also the multiplication of sects and the irreligious nature of so many of their ceremonies. He told them that the Messiah would be in their midst, and they would not know Him. He alluded, in words something like the following, to the connection existing between Himself and John: "There will be one who will point Him out (the Messiah), but ye will not acknowledge Him. Ye wish to see a conqueror, an illustrious personage, a man surrounded by magnificence and eminently learned companions. Ye will not recognize as the Messiah one that comes among you destitute of wealth and authority, unattended by the pomp of worldly splendor and magnificence, one whose companions are unlettered peasants and laborers, whose followers are made up of beggars, cripples, lepers, and sinners."

In this way Jesus spoke at length, interpreting the Prophecies, and putting forth clearly the connection between Himself and John. Still, He never once said, , but spoke of Himself in the third person. His instruction occupied the greater part of the day. His relatives concluded that He must be an envoy, a forerunner of the expected Messiah. On His return to their house, they referred to a book in His presence wherein they had recorded all that had happened in the Temple to Jesus, the Son of Mary, in His twelfth year. They were struck by the similarity between what He had then said and His teaching of today, and on perusal of that record they were still more astonished.

The father of the house was an aged widower. His two daughters, both widows, lived with him. I heard the two daughters talking together of the marriage of Joseph and Mary in Jerusalem, at which they had been present. They recalled the magnificence of that wedding, how well-off Anne had been, but how changed the circumstances of the family had become. They spoke just as people of the world are accustomed to do, a vein of blame and reproach running through their words, as if they of whom they were speaking had greatly degenerated. While thus conversing and, womanlike, recounting the particulars of the wedding and Mary's bridal dress, I saw a circumstantial vision of the whole ceremony and especially of the Blessed Virgin's ornaments. Meanwhile the men were hunting up what had been written years before about Jesus and His teaching as a Boy in the Temple. The parents of Jesus had anxiously sought Him here, and it was thus that the news of where and how He was found had reached them. The affair had

attracted much attention, especially as He was a relative of theirs. While His relatives were still expressing surprise at the connection between His former and His present teaching, by which they were even more prejudiced in His favor, Jesus informed them that He must take leave and, in spite of their remonstrances, set out accompanied by several of the men. They had to cross a little river over a bridge of masonry on which trees were growing. They journeyed some hours to a plain covered with meadows. It was here the Patriarch Joseph was when Jacob sent him to his brethren in Sichem. The regions from which Jesus had lately come had also been much frequented by Jacob. Late in the evening Jesus entered a shepherd village this side of a small river, and His companions left Him. The village lay on both sides of the river, the part on the opposite bank being the larger. The synagogue was on this side. The Lord went to an inn where were assembled two sets of candidates for baptism. They were on their way through the desert to the appointed place. They had spread the news here of Jesus' coming. He conversed with them that evening, and they departed next morning. The servants washed the Lord's feet. He partook of a light repast, and then retired for prayer and rest.