

FEAST OF THE KINGSHIP OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

(John 18: 33-7)

(*Poem*, Vol. 5, pp. 560, 569-70; *Gospel* Vol. 10, pp. 61-2, 73-4;
Notebooks 1945-50, pp. 553-4; *Notebooks 1943*, pp. 163-4)

(Jesus has been arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, paraded before and abused in front of the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas, and then taken and presented to Pilate. A debate begins between Jesus' captors and Pilate, as to what crime He has committed. One of His accusers says:)

'We have found out that He was causing disturbances in our country, and was preventing people from paying the tribute to Caesar, saying that He is the Christ, the king of the Jews.' Pilate goes back to Jesus, Who is in the middle of the hall, left there by the soldiers. He is tied but without escort, so obvious is His meekness. And Pilate asks Him: 'Are You the king of the Jews?'

Jesus replies: 'Are you asking this of your own accord, or through the insinuation of other people?'

Pilate says: 'And what do You expect me to care for: Your kingdom? Am I a Jew? Your country and its leaders have handed You over to me, that I may judge You. What have You done? I know that You are loyal. Speak. Is it true that You desire to rule?'

But Jesus says: 'My Kingdom does not come from this world. If it were a kingdom of this world, My ministers and my soldiers would have fought to prevent the Jews from arresting Me. But My Kingdom is not of the Earth. And you know that I do not seek power.'

'That is true. I know. I have been told. But You do not deny that You are a king?'

'You declare it. I am a King. That is why I came into the world: to bear witness to the Truth. Those who are on the side of the Truth listen to My voice.'

(Jesus comments to Maria Valtorta on Pilate's attitude:)

'...He had already heard people speak of Me. Among his centurions there were some who repeated My Name with grateful love - with tears in their eyes and smiles in their hearts - and who spoke of Me as of a benefactor. In their reports... they were questioned about this Prophet, Who attracted the crowds to Himself and preached a new doctrine, which mentioned a strange kingdom, inconceivable to a heathen mind. They had always replied that I was a meek, kind man who did not seek the honours of the Earth, and that I inculcated and practised respect and obedience to those who are the authorities. More sincere than the Israelities, they saw and witnessed the truth. The previous Sunday, when his attention was attracted by the shouts of the crowd, he had leaned out of the window and he had seen a disarmed man pass by, riding a little donkey, blessing the people, and surrounded by children and women. He had realised that this man could certainly not be a danger to Rome.

So he wants to know whether I am a king. In his ironic pagan scepticism he wanted to have a little laugh at that royalty: that rides a donkey, and has bare-footed children, smiling women and common men as courtiers; that for three years has preached that it has no interest in riches and power; and that speaks of no conquests but those of the spirit and the soul.

What is the soul for a heathen? Not even his gods have souls. And can man have one?

This king with no crown, with no palace, with no court, with no soldiers, repeats to him that His kingdom is not of this world. So much so that no minister and no army rises to defend their king and free Him from His enemies.

Pilate, sitting on his seat, scrutinises Me, because I am an enigma to him. If he cleared his soul of human cares, of the pride of his office, of the error of heathenism, he would understand at once Who I am. But how can light enter, where too many things obstruct the openings which prevent it from entering? It is always like that, My children. Even now. Can God and His light enter where there is no more room for them, and where doors and windows are closed and defended: by pride, by humanity, by vice, by usury, and by so many guards at the service of Satan against God? Pilate cannot understand what My kingdom is. And what is more painful, he does not ask Me to explain it to him...'

(Maria Valtorta comments on passages in Scripture which echo Jesus' statement to Pilate...)

'My Kingdom is not of this world,' the Incarnate Truth, on different occasions, told his chosen ones - friends, and faithful - as well as those who rejected and hated Him...

'My Kingdom is not of this world,' Christ testified, when, realizing they wanted to make Him king, He fled to the mountain, alone.

'My Kingdom is not of this world,' Christ replied to Pilate, who was questioning Him.

'My Kingdom is not of this world,' He said once more - the last time to his Apostles - before ascending...

Christ always bore witness to the Kingdom, this twofold Kingdom, which, moreover, is one single Kingdom: that of Christ-God in us, and that of us in God and with God. This will become the Perfect Kingdom (immutable, and no longer subject to snares and corruption), when "He, the King of Kings, comes on the clouds, and every eye will see Him. He will take possession of his Kingdom, triumph over his enemies, judge and give to each what each has deserved, and carry the chosen ones into: the new world; the new heaven and the new earth; and the new Jerusalem - where there is no corruption, weeping, or death...

(Jesus speaks more, about the understanding - for us - of the Kingdom of God...)

'The Kingdom of God is in you. Man has never understood this truth.

While I was alive, he believed my kingdom was a reign of temporal power and dominion - to the point of excess. This made many stick close to Me, hoping to receive future gain.

But I did not lie. I did not deceive. My Word was clear. I promised a kingdom, but also pointed out the way to possess it. This way is not, and was not, the one usually traveled upon by those climbing towards a power. Rather, it was the opposite way. And precisely because it was opposite, it was generously traveled over by only a few.

My kingdom is not of this world. The world in which you pause for a while is the cable by which you can climb up onto my mystical ship. But to climb up a cable is not an easy matter. One must be nimble, light, and healthy - and not suffer from the dizziness affecting those who exaggerate in pleasures. Vice impedes the ascent; illnesses, too; and also excessive attachment to earthly things and to the indolence of the spirit.

Be healthy in soul. And since to be completely healthy is virtually impossible for man, at least try to combat your spiritual illnesses...

Be diligent. Do not say, 'I have already worked so much that I will rest now'. No, sons and daughters that I wait for in glory. My kingdom is such a joy that no exertion is too long or too burdensome to conquer it.

When you act according to my Law, my Kingdom is already in you. And you feel it by the peace flowing into you like an inexhaustible wave. This peace is not poor human peace, cunningly attacked by so many things and by persons who are enemies. It is true Peace. It is my Peace.

In the book of John it is stated, 'These are the ones who have come from the great tribulation'. This is the greatest help to conquer my eternal Kingdom of Peace. I have opened its gates for you with my great tribulation. But you - faithful disciples whom I call to the Kingdom - are not more than the Master. And you must make use of the same weapon, to rise to Me. The cross is a stairway; the cross is a wing; pain is medicine; pain is purification...'