

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

Postal address: 162 Burke Road, Glen Iris, Victoria, 3146 Australia
Phone: (03) 9885 9710 E-mail: catherine @valtorta.org.au Website: http://www.valtorta.org.au

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The theme for this Supplement is Motherhood from the writings of Maria Valtorta as May, the Month of Mary and Mother's Day took place around this time.

Maria Valtorta and her Mother, Iside Fioravanti

'I was not looked after by Mother. [...] My wet nurse (Teresa) was a hireling. [...] My mother was always home. [...] A teacher before getting married, she had remained *the teacher* with all the discipline, authoritarianism and pedantry. [...] She was and is duty. I feel she feels diminished by loving and being indulgent. [...] I always seemed to be on the point of plunging into the abyss, and I trembled and trembled and trembled. Woe betides if you made a mistake! But even if I did not err, there was always "woe". Had I dropped a toy? Woe! Had I made a noise moving a chair? Woe! Did I utter a little shriek as a jest? Woe! Did I want to go down to the garden to stretch my legs? Woe! Had I asked mother for a kiss? Woe! Would I have preferred to get into Mother's lap like all children and not remain in front of her like a pupil being punished? Woe! Did I beg not to be given the milk that made me ill? Woe! Always woe! [...] In spite of her fearful "woes", I loved and love my mother intensely and have always been a beggar at the door of her heart awaiting caresses. [...] I had been very ill. I noted that when I was sick, Mother would kiss me, remain close to me, utterly different in her behaviour from the way she acted when I was well. She was then the mother, just as I conceived her and my heart would like her to be. Then the thought of – getting sick. Taking advantage of a fortunate fall, which had badly bruised and grazed my right elbow to the point that it required medicine and bandages, even after it had been healed, by night and by day. I would scratch and scratch, irritating the wound so it would never heal and the joy of being caressed and dressed by Mother would thus last. But one fine day, the trick was discovered, Mother was notified, and I, punished. I erred out of thirst for Mother's kisses.'

(*Autobiography pp. 16, 22-27, 42*)

'I had gone to this Fair with Mother...We passed by the scores of stands, and at one, I noticed a little brass doll cradle. [...] I so desired a cradle for my favourite doll "Rosina". I felt that if I had been my mother, and my mother had been me, I would immediately have grasped what she wished for...but my mother had no spirit of observation at all...I was *not supposed* to ask for anything ever, for children must never ask, and much less when things of value were concerned. Now that cradle was gold for me. So I did not ask and begged my angel to tell Mother I wanted it. [...] Mother stood still for a minute and then clasped my hand drawing me away. We strolled and strolled and strolled – and she did not grasp that *every* time we returned to *that* stand, I remained caught in that trap of desire. She offered me other toys, but I, with an increasingly heavy heart and tears in my throat, always replied "No, thank you." [...] Mother decided to go back home.
I am still waiting for the cradle.

Being a mother does not only consist of imposing one's will on one's children and representing *power*. Above all, it means being the first confidante, the first friend of one's children, the person who, with both uprightness and compassion, observes, guides, consoles, and makes the tender creatures feel her love in such a way that her children's hearts open to the kiss of that love, like flowers under the kiss of the sun.' (*Autobiography pp. 35-36*)

Mary speaks to Maria Valtorta about Mothers

A mother never renounces her creature unless she is forced to. Whether her heart is asked to renounce her creature by her country or by the love of a spouse or even by God Himself, she will resent and struggle against the separation. It is natural. A son grows in our womb and the tie that links him to us can never be completely broken. Even if the umbilical cord is cut, there is a nerve that always remains: it departs from the mother's heart and is grafted into the son's heart: it is a spiritual nerve, more lively and sensitive than a physical one. And a mother feels it stretching even to exceedingly severe pangs if the love of God or of a creature or the need of the country take her son away from her. And it breaks, tearing her heart, if death snatches her son from her. And I renounced My Son from the very moment I had Him. I gave Him to God. I gave Him to you. I deprived Myself of the Fruit of My womb to make amends for Eve's theft of God's fruit.
(*The Poem Vol. 1 p.143; The Gospel Vol. 1 p. 179*)

Mary and Her Mother Anne

Along with Joachim, they enter the happy mother's room and give [Anne] her baby.
Anne smiles at one of her thoughts: « She is the Star » she says.
« Her sign is in Heaven. Mary, arch of peace! Mary, my Star! Mary, pure moon! Mary, our pearl! »
« Are you calling Her Mary? »
« Yes. Mary, star and pearl and light and peace... »
« But it means also bitterness...Are you not afraid of bringing Her misfortune? »
« God is with Her. She belongs to Him before She existed. He will lead Her along His ways and all bitterness will turn into heavenly honey. Now be of Your mummy... for a little longer, before being all of God... »
And the vision ends on the first sleep of Anne, a mother, and Mary, an infant. (*The Poem Vol 1 p.25; The Gospel Vol. 1 p. 33*)

[Mary is presented in the Temple] I see Mary between her father and mother walking in the streets in Jerusalem.
Passers-by stop to look at the beautiful girl all dressed in white and wearing a very light mantle. The mantle seems to be the same one that Anne was wearing on the day of her Purification.

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The only difference is that while it reached down to Anne's waist, in the case of Mary, who is only a little girl, it reaches down to her ankles and envelops her. [...] The veil is held on Her forehead by a very pale blue ribbon, on which small lilies are embroidered with silver threads, certainly the work of Her mother. Anne, instead, is wearing a mantle which also covers her head. She is holding it lowered below her eyes. Two poor eyes of a mother, red with tears, that do not wish to weep and, above all, do not wish to be seen crying, but can but shed tears. [...] They are both endeavouring to conceal their tears. But if they are successful with many people, they are not with Mary, who, because of her height, sees them from below, and lifting Her head looks at her father and mother alternately. They make an effort to smile at her with their trembling mouths and they hold her tiny hand tighter every time their little daughter looks at them and smiles. They must be thinking: « There. A smile to be seen one time less. »

They proceed slowly. Very slowly. They seem to be wishing to protract their journey for as long as possible. Everything serves as a pretext to stop... But a journey must come to an end! And this one is about to end. Up there, at the top of this last stretch of the road, there are the Temple walls. Anne utters a groan and holds Mary's hand tighter.

« You must not think that I am repenting or I am giving my treasure to the Lord unwillingly » explains Anne crying, « but it's my heart... Oh! How my heart aches, my old heart that is returning to its childless solitude! If you could only feel... »

« I know, my dear Anne... But you are good and God will console you in your solitude. Mary will pray for the peace of her mother. Won't you, Mary? » says Elizabeth.

Mary caresses her mother's hands and kisses them. She presses them to her face to be caressed and Anne holds Her little face tightly in her hands and kisses it repeatedly. She is never tired of kissing her.

Anne has taken heart again. « I am consecrating [the veil] to the Lord with Her. I am old, my dear cousin. I have never felt it so much as I do now in my great pain. I have given the last ounce of strength in my life to this flower, to bear her and to nourish her, and now the pain of losing her is drawing my last strength away and dispersing it. »

But before going out, Mary kneels down on the threshold with Her arms stretched out: a little imploring cherub. « Father! Mother! Your blessing, please. »

Her parents bless Her and kiss Her: once, twice, ten times, they are never satisfied...

Mary looks whiter than snow in so much sunshine. She is now at the foot of the steps, between Her father and Her mother.

The High Priest beckons to Mary. And She departs from Her mother and father. Mary enters and is swallowed up by the darkness. [...] She can no longer be seen.

(The Poem Vol 1 pp. 42-47; The Gospel Vol. 1 pp. 53-58)

Judas Iscariot and his Mother, Mary

[Our Blessed Mother Mary speaks] « Why are you weeping, my poor friend? Why? Tell Me. I am happy in My maternity, but I can understand also those mothers who are not happy... »

« Yes. Not happy! And I am one of them. Your Son is Your joy... Mine is my grief. At least he has been so. Now, since he has been with Your Son, I am not so worried. Oh! Of all those who pray for Your holy Son, for His welfare and triumph, there is no one, after You, Blessed Woman, who prays so much as this unhappy mother who is speaking to You... Tell me the truth: what do You think of my son? We are two mothers, one facing the other, between us there is God. And we are speaking of our sons. It can be but easy for You to speak of Yours. I... I have to strive against myself to speak of mine. And yet, how much good, or how much grief, can come to me from this conversation! And even if it is grief, it will always be a relief to speak about it... That woman of Bethzur became almost insane when her sons died, did she not? But I swear it to You, sometimes I have thought and

still think, looking at my Judas who is handsome, healthy, intelligent, but he is not good, not virtuous, not righteous in his soul, not sound in his feelings. I often think that I would prefer to mourn him dead rather than know that he is disliked by God. But tell me, what do You think of my son? Be frank. This question has been tormenting my heart for over a year. But whom could I ask? The citizens? They did not yet know that the Messiah existed and that Judas wanted to go with Him. I knew. He told me when he came here after Passover, elated, violent, as usual, when he has a sudden fancy, and as usual, scornful of his mother's advice. His friends in Jerusalem? A holy prudence and a pious hope prevented me. I did not want to say: "Judas is following the Messiah" to those whom I cannot love because they are everything but saints. And I hoped that his fancy notion would vanish, like many others, like all of them, even at the cost of tears and desolation, as it happened in the case of more than one girl whom he fascinated here and elsewhere, but never married. Do you know that there are places where he will no longer go because he may receive a fair punishment? Also his being of the Temple was a whim. He does not know what he wants. Never. His father, may God forgive him, spoiled him. I never had any authority with the two men in my house. I could but weep and make amends with all kinds of humiliation... When Johanna died - and although no one told me, I know that she died of a broken heart when Judas told her that he did not want to get married, after she had been waiting for all her youth, whereas everybody knew that in Jerusalem he had sent friends to a very rich woman who owned stores as far as Cyprus to enquire about her daughter - I had to shed many bitter tears, because of the reproaches of the dead girl's mother, as if I were an accomplice of my son. No. I am not. I have no authority over him. Last year, when the Master came here, I realised that He had understood... and I was about to speak. But it is painful, very painful for a mother to have to say: "Be careful of my son. He is greedy, hard-hearted, vicious, proud and inconstant". And that is what he is. I am praying that Your Son, who works so many miracles, may work one for my Judas... But tell me, please tell me, what do You think of him? »

Mary, who has been silent all the time, with an expression of pitiful sorrow while listening to that maternal lament of which Her righteous soul cannot disapprove, says in a low voice: « Poor mother!... What do I think? Yes, your son is not the limpid soul of John, nor the meek Andrew, not the firm Matthew who wanted to change and did change... He is... inconstant, yes, he is. But we shall pray so hard for him, both you and I. Do not weep. Perhaps your motherly love, which would like to be proud of your son, makes you see him more perverted than he is... »

« No! No! I see right and I am so afraid. » The room is full of the weeping of Judas' mother and in the half-light Mary's white face has become even paler because of the maternal confession that sharpens all the suspicions of the Lord's Mother. But She controls Herself. She draws the unhappy mother to herself and caresses her while she, abandoning all reservedness, painfully and confusedly informs Mary of all the harshness, pretensions and violence of Judas and concludes: « I blush for him when I see I am the object of the loving attention of Your Son! I have not asked Him, but I am sure that besides doing it out of kindness, He wants to say to Judas by means of His loving attention: "Remember that this is how a mother is to be treated." Now, for the time being he appears to be good... Oh! If it were only true! Help me, help me with Your prayers, You who are holy, so that my son may not be unworthy of the grace that God granted him! If he does not want to love me, if he cannot be grateful to me, who gave birth to him and brought him up, it does not matter. But let him really love Jesus; let him serve Him loyally and gratefully. But if that cannot be then... then may God take his life. I would rather have him in a sepulchre... at last I would have him because since he reached the age of reason, he was hardly ever mine. Better dead than a bad apostle. Can I pray for that? What do You say? »

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« Pray the Lord that He may do what is best. Do not weep any more. Hope, Mary, hope. The grief of mothers saves their sons, do you not know that? »

And everything ends on that pitiful question.

(The Poem Vol. 2 pp.406-7; The Gospel Vol. 3 pp. 420-1)

Mary of Alphaeus and her five sons

James... says to his mother: « Jesus has promised me to climb up there with me alone and to tell me something. »

« What does He want to tell you, son? Will you tell me, afterwards? »

« Mother, if it is a secret, I cannot tell you » replies James smiling ...

« There are no secrets for a mother. »

« In fact I have none. But if Jesus wants me up there, all alone to speak to me, it means that He does not want anyone to know what He is going to tell me. And you, mother, are my dear mother, whom I love so much, but Jesus is above you, as His will is. But, when the time comes, I will ask Him whether I may repeat His words to you. Are you happy? »

« You will forget to ask Him... »

« No, mother. I never forget you, not even when you are far from me. Every time I see or hear something beautiful, I always say: "I wish my mother were here!" »

« My dear! Give me a kiss, son. » Mary of Alphaeus is moved. But emotion does not kill curiosity. After being quiet for a few moments, she makes a fresh assault: « You said: His will. So you know that He wants to tell what His Will is. Come on, you can tell me at least that. He told you that in the presence of everybody. »

« In actual fact I was alone with Him, ahead of the others » says James smiling.

« But the others could hear you. »

« He did not tell me very much, mother. He reminded me of the words and the prayer of Elijah on Mount Carmel: "Of all the prophets of the Lord, I alone am left". "Hear me, that this people may acknowledge that You are the Lord God". »

« And what did He mean? »

« How many things you want to know, mother! Go to Jesus, then, and He will tell you » replies James, to parry her embarrassing questions.

« H'm! ... Come on, dear James! Tell your mother. »

« Curiosity is a fault, mother; it is useless, dangerous, at times it is sorrowful. Make a nice act of mortification... »

« Alas! Did He mean that your brother will be put in prison, and killed perhaps?! » asks Mary of Alphaeus, who is thoroughly upset.

« Judas [Thaddeus] is not "all the prophets", mother, even if, as far as your love is concerned, each son of yours is the whole world... »

« I am thinking also of the others... because you will certainly be among the future prophets. So if you are the only one left, it means that the others, that my Judas... Oh!... » Mary of Alphaeus leaves James and Susanna, and she runs back fast, as if she were a young girl.

She arrives in Jesus' group like one who has been chased. « My Jesus... I was speaking to my son... about what You told him... of Mount Carmel... of Elijah... of the prophets... You said... that James will be the only one left... And what will happen to Judas (Thaddeus)? He is my son, You know? » she says panting because of her anguish and her racing.

« I know, Mary. And I also know that you are happy that he is My disciple. You see that you have all the rights of a mother, and I have them as Master and Lord. »

« That is true... it is true... but Judas is my boy! » and Mary, foreseeing the future, burst into tears.

« Oh! How badly shed your tears are! But the heart of a mother is forgiven everything. Come here, Mary. Do not weep. I comforted you once before. Also on that occasion, I promised you that your grief would obtain great graces from God, for you,

for your Alphaeus, for your sons ... Your present grief will get your hesitant Simon and your stubborn Joseph. »

« Yes, but... What will You do to Judas, to my Judas? »

« I will love him even more than I love him now. »

« No, no. There is a threat in those words. Oh! Jesus! Oh! Jesus!... » Mary of Alphaeus moans: « Will You tell Him, no, no, not death for my Judas... »

Our Lady, who is deadly pale, says to her: « And can I ask that on your behalf, when I do not ask salvation from death for My own Son? Mary, say with Me: "Your will be done, Father, in Heaven, on the Earth and in the hearts of mothers". To do the will of God through the destiny of our sons is the redeeming martyrdom of us mothers... in any case. No one said that Judas is to be killed, or killed before you die. How burdensome your present prayer, that he may live to the most longeval age, would be for you, when in the Kingdom of Truth and Love, you will see everything in the light of God and in your spiritualised maternity. I am sure that you then, both as a blessed soul and a mother, would like your Judas to be like My Jesus in His destiny of Redeemer, and you would long to have him soon with you again, forever. Because it is a mother's torture to be separated from her children, so great a torture, that I think it will last, as anxious love, also in Heaven, where we shall be received. »

Mary's crying, so loud in the silence of early dawn, has caused everybody to come back, to learn what has happened, and they thus hear the words of the Blessed Virgin and everybody is moved.

[...] « That is true. Our mother, James, will love us thus. Can you imagine how perfect her love will be? » says John to his brother and he is the only one to smile brightly, so deeply moved he is at the thought that his mother will be able to love perfectly.

« I am sorry I caused so much sorrow » apologises James. « But she apprehended more than I said... Believe me, Jesus. »

« I know, I know. But Mary is working on herself by herself, and that was a particularly hard stroke of the chisel. But it will relieve her of so much dead weight » says Jesus.

« Come on, mother, stop weeping. I am sorry that you should suffer like a poor little woman who is unaware of the certainties of the Kingdom of God. You are in no way like the mother of the Maccabean brothers » says Thaddeus reproaching her severely, but he embraces her at the same time and kisses her grey-haired head. « You are like a little girl who is afraid of shadows and of the tales they tell her to frighten her. And yet you know where to find me: in Jesus. What a mother! You ought to weep if you had been told that, in future, I was to become a traitor to Jesus, or one who would abandon Him, or would be a damned soul. In that case, I agree. You ought to weep tears of blood. But, with the help of God, I will never give you such deep sorrow, mother. I want to be with you forever and ever... »

The reproach first, and the subsequent caresses stop the tears of Mary of Alphaeus, who is now rather ashamed of her weakness.' *(The Poem Vol. 2 pp.618-20; The Gospel Vol. 4 pp.187-8)*

Mary and Matthias and Johanna of Chuza.

Jesus comes out of Peter's house, holding by the hands Matthias and Mary whom Porphirea has tidied up with motherly care ...Jesus watches them and smiles frankly standing between the two children who eat up their bread.

« Quick! » shouts Peter and he embraces the two children together to take them to the boat without getting their bare feet wet. »

The little girl becomes silent and bursts into tears. This golden lake reminded me of... my mummy! »

Matthias also is weeping and everyone pities them.

But Jesus' sweet voice rises above the murmur of the various voices and the moans of the little orphans: « Do not weep. Your mother brought you to Me, and she is here now with us, while I am taking you to a mother who has no children. She will be happy to have two good children in place of her own baby, who

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is now where your mummy is. Because she wept, too, you know? Her baby died as your mother did... »

« Oh! So we are now going to her and her baby will go to our mother! » says Mary.

« That is right. And you will all be happy. »

« What is this woman like? What is she? A peasant? Has she a good master? » The little ones are anxious to know.

« She is not a peasant, but she has a garden full of roses and she is as good as an angel. »

« Do You think so, Master? » asks Matthew who is somewhat incredulous.

« I am certain. And you will be convinced... »

The children are dreaming of their new mother and are not afraid.

Jesus goes away alone. [...] I can see Jesus proceeding slowly beside Chuzha who shows how happy he is to have the Master as his guest: « My Johanna will be delighted. And I am, too. She is feeling better and better. She told me about the journey. What a triumph, my Lord! »

« Did you mind? »

« Johanna is happy. And I am happy to see her thus. I might have lost her months ago, my Lord. »

[...] They quicken their steps towards Johanna who is running along the avenue to meet them.

« My Master! I did not hope to see You so soon. Which kindness of Yours has brought You to Your disciple? »

« A favour, Johanna. »

« A favour? Which? Tell us and if we can, we will help You » they both reply together.

« Yesterday evening on a desert road I found two poor children, a little girl and a little boy... they were barefooted, ragged, starving, all alone... and I saw them being driven away, as if they were wolves, by a hard-hearted man. They were dying of starvation... Do you want to receive My blessing? I am stretching My hand out to you, a Beggar of love, for those orphans who have no home, no clothes, no food, no love. Will you help Me? »

« But, Master, why ask? Tell me what You want, how much You want; tell us everything! » says Chuzha impulsively.

Johanna does not speak, but with her hands pressed on her heart, tears on her long eyelashes, a smile of desire on her red lips, she waits and her silence is more eloquent than words.

Jesus looks at her and smiles: « I would like those to have a mother, a father, a home; and the mother's name to be Johanna... » He has no time to finish because Johanna's cry is like that of one freed from prison, while she prostrates herself to kiss the feet of her Lord.

« And what do you say, Chuzha? Will you receive in My name My beloved ones, who are much dearer to My heart than jewels? »

« Master, where are they? Take me to them and upon my honour I swear to You that from the moment I lay my hand on their innocent heads, I will love them in Your name as if I were their real father. »

« Come, then. I knew that I was not coming for nothing. Come. They are coarse and frightened, but good. »

Johanna does not listen any more. She runs away, seized by a great desire to caress them. And she does so, falling on her knees to clasp the two little orphans to her heart, kissing their emaciated cheeks, while they are amazed looking at the beautiful lady with garments adorned with jewels. And they look at Chuzha, who caresses them and takes Matthias in his arms. And they look at the beautiful garden and at the servants who gather round them... And they admire the house which opens its halls full of riches to Jesus and His apostles. And they look at Esther who covers them with kisses. The world of dreams is open to the little waifs... Jesus watches and smiles.

(The Poem Vol. 3 pp. 134-8; The Gospel Vol. 5 pp. 32-7)

The Son and the Widow of Nain

The funeral comes out to the other side of the walls. It is not possible to see what there is on the bier, which is carried

shoulder high by the bearers. One understands that there is a corpse, enveloped in bandages and covered by a sheet, only because of its outline and that it is the body of a fully grown person, because it is as long as the bier.

A veiled woman is walking beside it, weeping, supported by relatives or friends. The only sincere tears in all that farce of mourners. And when a bearer trips on a stone or rise in the ground or stumbles and causes the bier to shake, the mother moans: « Oh! no! Be careful! My boy has suffered so much! » and she raises her trembling hand to caress the edge of the bier. And as she is unable to do anything else, she kisses the veils and the ribbons, which blown by a gentle breeze lightly touch the immobile corpse.

Peter, sympathetic, his good keen eyes welling up with tears whispers: « She is the mother. » But he is not the only one whose eyes are shining with tears at the sight. Also the Zealot, Andrew, John, and even the ever merry Thomas have tears in their eyes. They are all deeply moved. Judas Iscariot whispers: « If it were ! Oh! Poor mother of mine... »

Jesus, the kindness of whose eyes is so deep as to be unbearable, directs His steps towards the bier.

The mother, who is now sobbing louder because the funeral is about to turn towards the open sepulchre, pushes Him aside resolutely when she sees that Jesus wants to touch the bier. I wonder what she is afraid of in her grief. She shouts: « He is mine! » and looks at Jesus with staring eyes.

« I know, mother. He is yours. »

« He is my only son! Why should he die? He was so good and dear, he was my joy, and I am a widow. Why? » The crowd of the hired mourners mourn more loudly, forming a chorus with the mother who continues: « Why he, and not I? It is not just that she who has borne a child, should see her offspring perish. The offspring must live, otherwise why was my womb torn to give birth to a man? » and she strikes her abdomen wildly and desperately.

« Do not do that! Do not weep, mother. » Jesus takes her hands clenching them firmly in His left hand, while with His right one He touches the bier saying to the bearers: « Stop and put the bier down. »

The bearers obey and lower the little bed, which rests on its four legs. Jesus takes the sheet covering the dead boy and pulls it back uncovering the corpse.

The mother shouts her grief and the name of her son, I think: « Daniel! »

Jesus, still clenching the mother's hands in His, stands up, His eyes imposingly bright, the power of miracle shining majestically on His face, lowering His right hand, orders in the full strength of His voice: « Young man! I tell you: get up! »

The dead boy, enveloped in bandages as he is, sits up on the little bed and calls: « Mother! » He calls her with the stammering frightened voice of a terrified child.

« He is yours, woman. I give him to you in the name of God. Help him to get rid of the sudarium. And be happy. »

And Jesus makes the gesture of withdrawing. Impossible! The crowds rivet Him to the bier, on which the mother has thrown herself groping for the bandages, endeavouring to be quick, while the imploring childish moaning repeats: « Mother! Mother! » The sudarium and bandages are undone and mother and son can embrace each other, and they do so without bothering about the sticky balms, which the mother removes from his dear face and hands, making use of the same bandages. As she has not clothes to put on him, she takes off her mantle and envelops him in it, caressing him all the time...

Jesus looks at her... he looks at the loving group, close together on the edge of the little bed, no longer a bier, and He weeps.

Judas Iscariot sees His tears and asks: « Why are You weeping, my Lord? »

Jesus turns His face towards him and says: « I am thinking of My Mother... »

(The Poem Vol. 2 pp.252-4; The Gospel Vol. 3 pp.231-3)