

Refutation of the Claim that There is Error in Valtorta's Work with Regards to Jesus' Deliberate Display of Emotions and Reaction to Sense Stimuli (and Church Teaching on Passions, Sense Stimuli, and Control of Emotions in Jesus)

By Stephen Austin, May 2017

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Introduction: The Argument of the Critic and its Fundamental Flaw

A good friend wrote to me:

On the First Sunday of Lent at our evening Mass our new and very dear priest, Fr. [x] gave a sermon against *The Poem of the Man-God*. I was not there, but was told about it. So, what I relate to you is second-hand. As I was told, he picked out a few passages where Jesus is portrayed as having to make efforts to overcome his emotion. One of the passages is the episode where Jesus catches Judas stealing money out of a locked chest. Another was the raising of Lazarus from the dead. I think there was at least one more, but I do not remember it.

It was said to me that Fr. [x] explained that Catholic doctrine teaches that the passions of the soul (emotions) in Adam before the Fall were perfectly subject to reason. Therefore, there would be no need of making any effort to control them. Jesus, of course, was the perfect man, par excellence, and was never subject to the effects of original sin; therefore, he would not have had to struggle to control his emotions. With this, Father made it clear that this "revelation" could not be from Heaven. Again, I am relating this second-hand, so I don't know for sure if this is exactly the way Father explained it.

This priest was most likely influenced by an anti-Valtorta write-up that his seminary professor passed around to the seminarians while the former was in seminary. I already refuted the majority of the objections of this aforementioned write-up in my [e-book](#) in the subchapter entitled "An Analysis and Refutation of Other Objections". However, I had not yet perceived the need to address this specific objection that the priest took from the write-up and repeated in his sermon as I considered that the integrity of the professor's analysis was already sufficiently put into question by my refutation of his many other arguments (many of which were surprisingly weak and subjective), and I felt that the illustration of the approval of Valtorta's work by professors and theologians who are far more learned than our critic speaks for itself. However, I consider this incident a providential opportunity to expand and enrich the existing refutation of the professor's write-up and strengthen the defense of Valtorta's work. I quote this objection as it was stated in the original write-up of the seminary professor:

At times she does seem to forget the consequences of the Hypostatic Union – the fact that Our Lord does not have a human "person", but one only divine; and His human nature is perfect (let alone suffering the consequences of original sin that we are familiar with: that other law in our members fighting against the law of our mind (Rom 7:23)). Nothing in Christ is not subject to His will, not even first reactions to sense stimuli as St. Thomas explains [III Q15 a4]. He does not have the virtue of "continence", having no unruly passions to be controlled [III Q7 a2]. How different, and unbecoming, Valtorta's Christ. "... He has a fearful outburst of rage. He raises His arm with its clenched fist as if He wanted to strike the thief (Judas), and His lips begin to utter the word: "Cursed!" or "Curse!". But He controls Himself ... And with an effort of self-control that makes His whole body tremble, He just unclenches His fist..." (p. 223). Similarly pages 228, 232, 234,.... "Jesus with an involuntary movement withdraws His legs upon seeing the very long nail..." (p. 608). Impossible. Not even first reactions to sense stimuli escaped His will, let alone conscious reactions to things seen. "An impulsive shout, that His great prudence does not succeed in preventing." (p. 507) Even more impossible.

Does this critic think that after numerous theologians of tremendous learning who studied Valtorta's work in depth for years and even decades and declared it is free of error in faith and morals, that he would be the first one to find a heresy? Let's find out.

Before we proceed, I'd like to add that I already refuted many other objections and statements in the above seminary professor's write-up. These are viewable in my [e-book](#) in the subchapter entitled "An Analysis and Refutation of Other Objections". I believe that the above chapter not only thoroughly and objectively refutes his objections, but also exposes the lack of scholarly effort, strong bias, subjectivity, and weakness of many of his arguments, thus reinforcing that it is very reasonable to also call into question the credibility of this new objection I'm now addressing and that it is needful to objectively investigate it, not only with St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* (the very source this critic tries to rely on), but also by utilizing what a pre-Vatican II Professor of Dogmatic Theology in Rome (of far greater learning and authority than this critic) wrote about the very passages and citations this critic objected to (a relevant scholarly resource that I suspect this critic most likely failed to consult). The professor of dogmatic theology who specifically addressed the chapters this critic mentioned was a professor of dogmatic and sacramental theology at the Pontifical Marianum Theological Faculty in Rome from 1939 onward, and Secretary of that Faculty from 1950 to 1959. He spent decades studying Valtorta's work, for which he has provided more than 5,675 scholarly footnotes and several appendices, many of which specifically address various difficult passages in the work that have been or could possibly be criticized.

Just as with many of the other arguments of this critic (which have shown to have serious methodological flaws, unsubstantiated presumptions, or subjective erroneous misinterpretations of Valtorta's text), the critic's new argument under examination falls apart because it is based on a faulty premise and the critic commits the fallacy of the false dilemma. Nor does his quoting of two passages from the *Summa Theologica* redeem it. In fact, the *Summa Theologica* will be used to affirm the orthodoxy of what is written in Valtorta.

First, as St. Thomas Aquinas explains in *Summa Theologica* III, Q. 15, Art. 9 ("Whether there was anger in Christ?"), Jesus did experience anger but it was just. The anger Jesus displayed in the scene with Judas would fall into this category. His anger was not a result of disordered passions that need to be controlled. Furthermore, renowned theologians who had great learning, experience, and the grace of state to deal with mystical writings (such as Archbishop Carinci, Fr. Roschini, and Fr. Berti), who have examined Valtorta's work and have declared it is free of theological error, have examined her use of the terms "involuntary movement" and "impulsive shout" and recognized:

1. The "involuntary movement" would belong to the same category of normal human experience as reflexes and St. Thomas Aquinas affirms that "inasmuch as such necessity is repugnant to the will, it is clear that in Christ these defects were not of necessity as regards either the Divine will, or the human will of Christ considered absolutely, as following the deliberation of reason; but only as regards the natural movement of the will, inasmuch as it naturally shrinks from death and bodily hurt" and "it was by the consent of the Divine will that the flesh was allowed to do and suffer what

belonged to it" (*Summa*, III, Q. 14, Art. 2). If someone's hand approached Jesus' face to strike it (as it did in Luke 22:64), you can bet He would "involuntarily" blink according to the "menace response", which is one of the three forms of blink reflex that occurs when the brain is aware of the rapid approach of an object. Such responses belong to normal human nature.

2. Valtorta's descriptions of her visions that the critic objects to does not suggest that Jesus did not have voluntary control over His passions (*propassiones*) or reactions to sense stimuli in these normal human reactions for, as St. Thomas Aquinas explains, "The soul of Christ could have prevented these passions from coming upon it, and especially by the Divine power; yet of His own will He subjected Himself to these corporeal and animal passions" (*Summa Theologica*, III, Q. 15, Art. 4, ad. 1) and "to show the reality of His human nature, He voluntarily assumed fear, even as sorrow." (III, Q. 15, Art. 7; also see: III, Q. 14, Art. 2; III, Q. 18, Art. 5) A distinction needs to be made between sinful passions versus *propassiones* and emotions (that have no positive or negative moral value in themselves). Jesus had normal human emotions to be human, but no sinful passions, and His *propassiones* (as theologians called them) were completely controlled by His will enlightened by His intellect, even if, at times, He allowed His emotions and their effects (even in His body) to be expressed so naturally that it might have appeared to outsiders to be different than it really was because Jesus "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." (Philippians 2:6-7)

3. Regarding her use of the phrase "impulsive shot," Fr. Berti writes, "The writer here is expressing herself a bit humanly, as in Genesis 6: 5-7." Mystical writers (and even the authors of the books of Scripture) have a certain degree of liberty of expression in their personal subjective description as an outside observer of their authentic vision or description of events or history:

- (a) Not unlike the author of Genesis in Sacred Scripture who describes God "[repenting] that He had made man on the earth" and saying, "I will destroy man [...] for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Genesis 6: 5-7) as if God could make a mistake or repent! (which, taken literally, would contradict Catholic theology and defined dogma) – not to mention, strangely worded (and easily misinterpreted by the ignorant) passages like: "And the Lord sent a very evil spirit between Abimelech and the inhabitants of Sichem: who began to detest him." (Judges 9:23) "But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." (1 Samuel 16:14) There are other passages that, without footnotes or proper interpretation, could be interpreted wrongly, such as: "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Romans 9:2) St. Paul was wishing to be an anathema from Christ!? He, like Valtorta and the author of the book of Genesis, is also expressing himself in a non-literal way.

(b) Not unlike when Sr. Lucy of Fatima explicitly says that she may be mistaken in her impression of what she observed in her vision of the Third Secret, when she writes: “we saw in an immense light that is God: ‘something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of it’ a Bishop dressed in White ‘we had the impression that it was the Holy Father.’”¹ [emphasis added] Having the “impression” of something is far from certainty. Maria Valtorta herself sometimes mentioned that her own personal *impression* (to borrow the term Sr. Lucy used) of what she was observing was sometimes unclear to her or imperfect. In many instances, just like Sr. Lucy of Fatima did in her vision of the Third Secret, Maria Valtorta uses qualifiers such as; “what looks like...” or “I think it is a...” (for example, *Poem*, Volume 1, Chapter 42, p. 223; *The Gospel as Revealed to Me*, Volume 1, Chapter 42, p. 272).

Just as with dozens (if not hundreds) of difficult passages in Scripture, in these passages in Valtorta, a correct interpretation and a footnote clears up any potential misunderstanding or concern. And fortunately, there are Fr. Berti footnotes for just about every passage and page number that the critic referred to. All of these points will be developed further later on. However, I will first jump to the heart of the critic’s argument which concerns reaction to sense stimuli.

Here is the primary argument of the critic (we will break down his other arguments later):

1. St. Thomas Aquinas affirms in *Summa Theologica* III, Q. 15, Art. 4 that everything in Jesus is subject to His will, including first reactions to sense stimuli and His human passions and emotions, such as the human emotion of anger.
2. In a number of places in her work, Valtorta describes that Jesus experienced the emotion of anger and that there were occasions when Jesus chose to either not exercise this anger or put limits on how much He expressed the emotion of anger in word or in deed.
3. The description of Jesus’ reaction to what is going on in one of these episodes gives the appearance or impression to an outside observer that Jesus is having to struggle and exert His Will to control passions or first reactions to sense stimuli.
4. Assumption: Jesus was not voluntarily displaying these human emotions and reactions to sense stimuli.
5. Therefore, it means that Valtorta wrote an error because she is claiming that Jesus’ human passions or first reactions to sense stimuli were not subject to His Will.

In the above argumentation, premise 4 is false. Since premise 4 is false, the conclusion is false.

As will be demonstrated, consulting the commentary of Fr. Corrado Berti, O.S.M. (professor of dogmatic and sacramental theology of the Pontifical Marianum Theological Faculty in Rome from 1939 onward, and Secretary of that Faculty from 1950 to 1959) on the relevant Valtorta passages, as well as consulting St. Thomas Aquinas and applying an objective analysis of the passages and issues in question, it is the truth and is evident that:

1. The anger Jesus experiences in the passages under question is not sinful anger. There is no evidence in the text to suggest or substantiate that.

2. In Valtorta's work, everything in Jesus is subject to His will, including first reactions to sense stimuli and His human passions, such as the human emotion of anger, just as St. Thomas Aquinas affirms in *Summa Theologica* III, Q. 15, Art. 4.

3. Jesus chose to voluntarily express certain first reactions to sense stimuli and His human passions, such as the human emotion of anger, (1) just as St. Thomas Aquinas affirms in the very citation the critic quoted (III, Q. 15, a4; also: III, Q. 15, a6, a7, a9) and (2) just as Scripture affirms when it describes the attitude assumed by Jesus with the money changers and merchants when He drove them out with whips (Matthew 21: 12-17; Mark 11: 15-19; Luke 19: 45-46; John 2: 13-17), and can also be affirmed in other Scripture passages as well, such as Mark 3:5, where it explicitly says that Jesus experienced anger: "And looking round about on them **with anger**, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, [Jesus] said to the man: Stretch forth your hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored unto him." [emphasis added]

Summa Theologica (III, Q. 15, Art. 4, ad. 1): "The soul of Christ could have prevented these passions from coming upon it, and especially by the Divine power; yet of His own will He subjected Himself to these corporeal and animal passions."

4. When Jesus exercises this deliberate, voluntary control over his sense stimuli and human passions and emotions, and allows some of the sense stimuli and human passions and emotions to be expressed as described in Valtorta's work, He does so for perfect reasons that are consistent with One who is both God and man.

5. Not only is there no error or heresy in the passages under examination, but the passages are insightful, instructive, and beneficial.

Introduction to Fr. Berti's Footnotes (Secretary of the Pontifical Marianum Theological Faculty in Rome from 1950 to 1959)

So now let's examine the passages that the critic quoted. It is significant that Fr. Corrado Berti, O.S.M., analyzed these statements and provided commentary on them. Before we analyze these statements in further depth, I think it is important to relate what he wrote about this, especially considering that he was a distinguished theologian.

Fr. Corrado Berti, O.S.M., was a professor of dogmatic and sacramental theology of the Pontifical Marianum Theological Faculty in Rome from 1939 onward, and Secretary of that Faculty from 1950 to 1959. Fr. Berti supervised the editing and publication of the critical second edition of the *Poem* and provided the extensive theological and biblical annotations that accompany that edition and all subsequent editions.

Fr. Berti was an extremely learned and traditional/orthodox scholar who thoroughly analyzed Maria Valtorta's writings and provided more than 5,675 scholarly footnotes and several appendices for her work, many of which specifically address various difficult passages in the work that have been or could possibly be criticized. This averages about 568 footnotes per volume and averages slightly more than one footnote per page throughout the whole 5,264 printed pages. In 1961, the second critical Italian edition of the *Poem of the Man-God*, published by Knight Michele Pisani's son Emilio Pisani, contained these scholarly footnotes and appendices by Fr. Berti. The subsequent editions, including the current fourth edition released in 2001, have many of these footnotes.

Fr. Gabriel Roschini, world-renowned Mariologist and Consultant of the Holy Office, stated in 1961 that the new critical second edition "was not to be considered to be on the *Index*, because it was totally renewed, conformed in all to the original, and provided with notes that removed any doubt and which demonstrated the solidity and orthodoxy of the work."²

It is also significant what a contemporary traditional Catholic priest, Fr. Kevin Robinson, FSSPX, said about these footnotes of Fr. Berti. He wrote:³

I have read about a 1,000 pages a year of Valtorta for 20 years, since Fr. (now Bishop) Williamson appointed me to run the seminary bookstore. He was led to read it by the great Retreat Master of Ecône, Fr. Barrielle.

I have in my office a huge file "pro", and a small file "con" of the works of Maria Valtorta. I have the 10-volume Italian edition for reference with its many profound footnotes. The pros far outweigh the cons.

The holiest and most learned clergy I know are those who appreciate Valtorta, including two Rome-trained Pre-Vatican II Doctors of Canon Law who only say the Tridentine Mass.

In fact, Bishop Williamson wrote in an article in October 2012, “the seeming doctrinal errors are not difficult to explain, one by one, as is done by a competent theologian in the notes to be found in the Italian edition of the *Poem*.”⁴ The bishop is referring to Fr. Berti. I could also refer to additional learned theologians who have affirmed the orthodoxy of Valtorta’s work after thoroughly analyzing it who have also expressed appreciation of Fr. Berti’s footnotes.

Considering that numerous theologians and bishops who have seriously invested the requisite time and effort to investigate Valtorta properly have consulted Fr. Berti’s scholarly footnotes, it’s surprising that the critic in question failed to do so himself. If he had paid attention to them, he would have likely saved himself from numerous mistakes in his article, including the new one currently being examined.

Fr. Berti’s Footnotes for the Main Passage Under Examination

In order to show you Fr. Berti’s footnotes for the particular passages in question, it is necessary to quote the paragraph where the footnotes were referenced so that you know which sentences the footnotes apply to in context. Fr. Berti’s footnotes will always be highlighted in yellow and will follow the quoted citation. Note that the full references for all Fr. Berti footnotes are listed at the end of this refutation.

First, here is one of the passages that the critic focused on and quoted from (on p. 223 in the first English edition):⁵

[...] What eyes has Jesus! He does not say one word. But when He sees a kind of picklock stick out from the belt of Judas' tunic, He has a fearful outburst of rage. He raises His arm with its clenched fist as if He wanted to strike the thief, and His lips begin to utter the word: « Cursed! » or « Curse! ». But He controls Himself.³ He stops His arm that was about to strike, and He breaks the word at the first three letters. And with an effort of self-control that makes His whole body tremble, He just unclenches His fist and lowers His raised arm to the level of the bag that Judas has in his hand and He snatches it and throws it on the floor, saying in a dull voice, while He tramples on bag and coins and scatters them with controlled but dreadful fury: « Away! Filth of Satan! Cursed gold! Spittle of hell! Snake's poison! Away!⁴ » [...]

Fr. Berti Footnote 3: The writer, using the expression “But He controls Himself,” intended to say that, even in such circumstances, Jesus wills the predominance of His prerogative and mission of “Savior” to that of “Judge”, reserved above all for the end times (see John 3:17; Matthew 25: 31-

46). This interpretation flows from and is authorized by passages of this same paragraph, marked by the notes 7, 10, 17, and 21.

Fr. Berti Footnote 4: People tend to think back to the attitude assumed by Jesus with the money changers and merchants, violators of the Temple. See: Matthew 21: 12-17; Mark 11: 15-19; Luke 19: 45-46; John 2: 13-17.

Below is a quote from *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Book 3, Section 2, §29, #2:

The Emotions of Christ's Soul (passions animae)

By the passions animae are understood the emotions of the sensual appetite: proprissime dicuntur passiones animae affectiones appetitus sensitivi (S. th. III 15,4).

Christ's soul was subject to sensual emotions (Sent. certa.)

According to the testimony of Holy Writ, Christ possessed a truly human soul with the corresponding emotions, for example, sadness (Mt. 26,37: "to fear and be to be heavy"), anger (Mk. 3,5: "He looked round about on them with anger"), love (Mk. 10,21: "He (Jesus) loved Him"; John 11,36; 19,26), Joy (John 11,15: "And I am glad for your sakes"). He wept with emotion at the sight of the City of Jerusalem doomed to destruction because of its unbelief (Luke 19,41), and at the grave of His friend Lazarus (John 11,35) and rejoiced in the Holy Ghost at the thought of the efficacy of the grace of God (Luke 10,21). Cf. Hebr. 2,17; 4,15; 5,2.

The sensual emotions appertain to the nature of mankind, and are therefore also natural to Christ. In consequence of His freedom from concupiscence, however, in Christ they could not be directed towards an unlawful object, could not arise in Him without His consent or against His Will, and could not achieve dominion over His Reason. Theologians therefore following St. Jerome (In Mt. 26,37) call them propassiones (=initiatory excitations and not passions properly so-called). On account of their being free from moral disorder the Greek Fathers call them *πάη άνυπαίτια* or *άναμάρτητα*, Cf. St. John Damascene, De fide orth. III 20; S. th. III 15,4.

As the *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* demonstrated, there were very many circumstances when Jesus chose to voluntarily experience and express strong emotions (sadness, anger, love, joy) and the consequent effects (His tear ducts releasing tears, His physically expressing His anger via whipping the money-changers and overturning money tables, His sweating blood in the Agony of the Garden due to being "sorrowful unto death", His smiling in experiencing joy, etc.)

Jesus Had a Right, Even as Man, to Judge and Exercise Just Anger

Did Jesus have a right, even as man, to judge and exercise just anger in the case of Him making a scourge of little cords (a whip) and using this whip, driving many people out of the Temple, and in the scene in Valtorta's work, expressing anger at Judas Iscariot caught stealing? Yes. In his well-known work, *A Tour of the Summa (A Journey Through St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica)*, Msgr. Paul Glenn gives a summary of St. Thomas Aquinas's teaching on this matter:⁶

1. Christ, by testimony of Scripture (Acts 10:42) is appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. Now, a judge must have, in addition to jurisdiction, a zeal for justice; he must be wise; he must know truth. The Son of God is wisdom itself eternally begotten; He is Lord and lover of justice; hence He has perfect qualifications for the function of a judge. St. Augustine says: "The Father judges no man, but has given all judgment to the son." (*De Vera Relig.* xxxi). Of course, speaking simply, the judicial power is in the Trinity. For reasons here indicated, it is *appropriated* to the Son.

2. **Even as man, Our Lord has power and right to judge.** Scripture says that the Father "hath given him power to do judgment because he is the Son of man." (John 5:27)

3. **The judicial or judiciary power belongs to Christ as man** because of His divine personality, the dignity of His headship, and the fullness of His habitual grace. This power also belongs to Our Lord by reason of His merit. For He who fought for God's justice, and won through to victory, though unjustly condemned, should, by divine justice, now be the judge.

4. Since, as Scripture says, "the Father hath given all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22), it is evident that Our Lord is judge with reference to all human affairs. [emphasis added]

Jesus Chose to Deliberately Express Certain First Reactions to Sense Stimuli and His Human Passions (*Propassiones*) for Perfect Reasons that are Consistent with One Who is Both God and Man

The book *Theology of Christian Perfection* relates:⁷

There are two principal ways in which the word passion is used. In its philosophical sense, the passions are movements or energies which we can use for good or for evil. In themselves they are neither good nor evil; it depends upon the orientation which is given to them (*cf.* St. Thomas, *Summa*, I-II, q. 24). When placed at the service of the good, they can be of incalculable assistance, even to the point that one could say that it is morally impossible for a soul to arrive at great sanctity without possessing a great energy or passion which is directed

to God. But, when placed at the service of evil, the passions are converted into a destructive force which is truly terrifying.

In popular language and in the works of many spiritual writers, the word passion is often used as synonymous with evil passions, which one must combat and dominate. We shall use the word in its philosophical sense to designate powers which of themselves are indifferent, but which one must channel along the way of good. [...]

A distinction needs to be made between sinful passions versus *propassiones* and emotions (that have no positive or negative moral value in themselves). Jesus had normal human emotions to be human, but no sinful passions, and His *propassiones* (as theologians called them) were completely controlled by His will enlightened by His intellect, even if, at times, He allowed His emotions and their effects (even in His body) to be expressed so naturally that it might have appeared to outsiders to be different than it really was because Jesus “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man.” (Philippians 2:6-7)

Jesus wills to sometimes utilize human emotions (such as anger) for a purpose of good. Just as in the canonized Gospel passages where Jesus expressed the emotion of anger in overturning the money-changer tables, driving them out with whips, where “the zeal of [God’s] house hath eaten [Him] up” (John 2:17), in the passage under examination in Valtorta, Jesus is experiencing the emotion and passion of anger, but it is not sinful. It is just. Judas Iscariot was held to a *much* higher standard than your common Israelite like the money-changers in the Temple who were extorting money. Judas was selected as one of the twelve Apostles and was being prepared by Jesus to become a bishop, and was given special graces such as the ability to work miracles in Jesus’ Name and the honor of being one of the leaders among Jesus’ disciples who were sent to announce the Gospel to all of Israel. The catechism teaches that stealing a large amount of money is a mortal sin and that the greater one’s calling (such as a high election like Judas had) and the more graces one receives (and what a greater grace then to be constantly near Jesus throughout nearly His entire Public Ministry which only the twelve Apostles had the privilege of), the greater the sin. Jesus, the Son of God, most certainly could be justified with experiencing just anger! If Jesus were to strike Judas Iscariot just as much as He struck the merchants in the Temple with whips (John 2: 13-17), it would not be sinful anger, but just. Is Jesus not one with the Father? And yet didn’t God the Father destroy many individuals, groups, tribes, and cities (both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament)? For dozens of examples of how God destroyed individuals, groups, tribes, and cities (including the entire world population except for eight people in the Deluge), as well as for examples of those who narrowly escaped God’s wrath, see: [Bible Study: People Killed by God](#).

The canonized Scriptures also explicitly say that Jesus experienced anger: “**And looking round about on them with anger**, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, [Jesus] said to the man:

Stretch forth your hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored unto him.”
[emphasis added] (Mark 3:5)

In the passages in Valtorta, Jesus tempered His just anger, for the reason Fr. Berti specified:⁸

The writer, using the expression “But He controls Himself,” intended to say that, even in such circumstances, Jesus wills the predominance of His prerogative and mission of “Savior” to that of “Judge”, reserved above all for the end times (see John 3:17; Matthew 25: 31-46). This interpretation flows from and is authorized by passages of this same paragraph, marked by the notes 7, 10, 17, and 21.

As Divine Judge Jesus could not merely strike Judas Iscariot and admonish him with strong words, but outright destroy him if He wanted to and it would not be sinful. But Jesus came to save and to show mercy rather than exercise His justice, “For God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him.” (John 3:17) Jesus’ Judgement on humanity is primarily reserved for the End of Time. Therefore, Jesus “controlling Himself” in His sinless anger was His Mercy tempering His Justice. Both His Justice and His Mercy were sinless and perfect and not subject to human emotions or passions, but rather His human emotions or passions (often called *propassiones* by theologians since they were free from moral disorder) were an instrument that He used to express His just anger and warn Judas just as He did with those in the Temple. They were tools subject to His Will. Jesus exercises His deliberate, voluntary control over His sense stimuli and human passions and emotions, and allows some of the sense stimuli and human passions and emotions to be expressed as described in Valtorta’s work (including with His trembling of hands and strong words), but He tempers them with Judas. As explained in *Summa Theologica* III Q. 15, a7, Jesus did not have the necessity of human emotions (fear, sorrow, anger, etc.), but to show the reality of His human nature, He voluntarily assumed fear and sorrow. In this case, Jesus voluntarily assumed the emotion of anger for the benefit of Judas Iscariot so that Judas would see the effects of his sin and possibly repent. *Jesus spared no sacrifice or effort to try to save Judas.* Being willing to show His just anger was not the greatest or most surprising sacrifice or action Jesus did to attempt to save Judas. This critic *presumed* from his own subjective misinterpretation and reading into the text that this anger must have been sinful or that Jesus’ will was subject to passions. It seems that our critic might have been so eager to find faults with Valtorta’s work that he finds fault where there is none. Far more learned theologians who studied Valtorta’s work thoroughly with an open mind and with a scholarly level quite above this critic have affirmed the contrary.

Summa Theologica III, Q. 15, Art. 7 states that Christ did not have the necessity of fearing or sorrow, but to show the reality of His human nature, He voluntarily assumed fear and sorrow. However, the aspect of fear is irrelevant to the objection of the critic in this passage since Valtorta described Jesus’ outburst of rage as “fearful” to express her own reaction to what she saw as an outside observer. She did not state that Jesus was experiencing fear in that moment. The holy

anger induced fear in the beholders. One could equally legitimately describe Jesus making a scourge of cords and driving the money-changers out of the Temple as “fearful” to onlookers and the recipients of the scourges as well (which is described in all four canonical Gospels).

This principle also applies to anger, and it is understandable that the anger Jesus experienced in Scripture wasn’t sinful or a result of disordered passions that overpowered His reason: **“And looking round about on them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts...”** [emphasis added] (Mark 3:5)

In the chapter in Valtorta’s work that the critic objected to, how would one know that the anger described wasn’t Divine Justice? Evidence shows that it was. Jesus deliberately showed His anger for Judas’ good in an attempt to convert him. There are no grounds to accept the critic’s unsubstantiated presumption that this anger was based on disordered passions and therefore sinful. Anti-Christians could equally use that same argument to say that Jesus sinned in Mark 3:5 and especially in Matthew 21: 12-17; Mark 11: 15-19; Luke 19: 45-46; and John 2: 13-17. As can be even more clearly seen in the refutation of the other critic’s objections in my [e-book](#), the critic seems to have a tendency to make presumptions, without any evidence, that agree with his unfounded thesis aimed at trying to identify error in or discredit Valtorta’s work. Someone once wrote: “If others tell us something we make assumptions, and if they don't tell us something we make assumptions to fulfill our need to know and to replace the need to communicate. Even if we hear something and we don't understand we make assumptions about what it means and then believe the assumptions. We make all sorts of assumptions because we don't have the courage to ask questions.”⁹ Let’s start asking questions!

A Link to the Refutation of the Critic’s Objections of the Other Scenes that He References

The seminary professor quoted various pages from that chapter in Valtorta’s work where there are descriptions that seem to him to support his erroneous thesis (which is based on a faulty presumption and misinterpretation of the text). He referred to: p. 223, 228, 232, 234, 608, and 507. So far in this analysis, we have already addressed one of the specific passages he quoted (namely, the one on p. 223), including giving Fr. Berti’s footnotes for that passage.

I have analyzed all of the other instances and page numbers that the critic referred to and demonstrated how every single case is consistent with Catholic theology and that there is no problem. Fortunately, there are Fr. Berti footnotes for nearly all of the specific cases and page numbers he referenced and those are also given. This analysis of these other sections can be accessed online here: [Supplement: Refutation of the Critic’s Objections About the Other Scenes that He References](#).

I felt it was important to analyze every single example the critic referred to for the sake of thoroughness, and because some of the other examples were unique and required a unique analysis and response, such as the scene of the nailing of Jesus' feet where, as St. Thomas Aquinas points out in the *Summa Theologica*, Jesus naturally "[shrank] from sensible pains and bodily hurt" and "to show the reality of His human nature, He voluntarily assumed fear, even as sorrow." (III, Q. 15, Art. 7; also see: III, Q. 14, Art. 2; III, Q. 18, Art. 5) I also discuss how theologians who examine mystical writings such as descriptions of visions of authentic mystics distinguish between subjective personal descriptions originating from the mystic (the author writing it down) – such as a personal subjective description of a scene, image, or vision – and objective revealed truths which come entirely from another source, and are tried to be written as accurately as possible, such as dictated words. I address the critic's objection of her use of the words "involuntarily" and "impulsive shout" in her personal subjective description and impression (to borrow the term Sr. Lucy of Fatima used) of several of her visions, not unlike, as Fr. Berti points out, when the author of Genesis in Sacred Scripture describes God "[repenting] that He had made man on the earth" (Genesis 6: 5-7) – as if God could repent – and not unlike when Sr. Lucy of Fatima explicitly says that she may be mistaken in her impression of what she observed in her vision of the Third Secret, when she writes: "we saw in an immense light that is God: 'something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of it' a Bishop dressed in White '**we had the impression that it was the Holy Father.**'"¹⁰ [emphasis added]

See the above link for more details. The content available at that link is omitted in this present refutation for the sake of brevity and because the underlying error of this critic's argument has already been addressed and so the refutation of the other specific page numbers he referred to is not absolutely needed to refute the basis of his argument.

Concluding Comments

Our Lord gave a dictation in which He alludes to the "people who deny the human phases of Jesus' life" and "make of Me a being so remote from human life as to be only a divine being." It seems that our critic might be at risk of falling into this category. Here is the dictation:¹¹

« My little John [Maria Valtorta], how many times have I cried with My face on the ground because of men! And you would like to suffer less than I did?

Also amongst you, good people are in the proportion that existed between good people and Judas. And the better one is, the more one suffers. But also for you it is necessary to learn by studying Judas, and I say that particularly for those who are responsible for the spiritual care of souls. Each of you, priests, is a "Peter". And you have to forgive and retain. But how much power of observation you must have, how much union with God, what great pains you must

take and how many comparisons with the method of the Master you must make, in order to be a priest as it is your duty to be!

Some people may think that what I am saying is useless, human, impossible. They are the usual people who deny the human phases of Jesus' life and they make of Me a being so remote from human life as to be only a divine being. What happens then to the most holy Humanity, to the sacrifice of the Second Person in becoming flesh? Oh! I was truly a Man amongst men. I was the Man. And that is why I suffered in seeing the traitor and ungrateful people. That is why I rejoiced on account of those who loved Me or were converted to Me. That is why I shuddered and cried before Judas' spiritual corpse. I shuddered and cried before My dead friend. But I knew that I would call him back to life and I rejoiced seeing his soul already in Limbo. Here... I had the Demon in front of Me. And I will say no more.

Follow Me, [Maria Valtorta]. Let us give men also this gift. And then... Blessed are those who listen to the Word of God and strive to do what it says. Blessed are those who want to know Me in order to love Me. In them and to them I shall be a blessing. »

To view several other dictations of Christ that touch on this topic, see: [Supplemental Citations](#).

Returning to the introduction of this refutation, I mentioned that a priest made the same objections as those of his former seminary professor. It is normal to trust one's superiors. But in this case, it was a mistake. The errors of someone in authority were repeated by a subordinate without consulting relevant sources and perhaps without adequate questioning and double-checking. And yet this same seminary professor who misled his subordinate failed to consult others of higher authority and learning than him (of notable repute) who had already written about the passages in question and affirmed that they are free of error in faith and morals. To list a handful of these authorities, I merely need to mention:

- **Fr. Corrado Berti, O.S.M.** (professor of dogmatic and sacramental theology at the Pontifical Marianum Theological Faculty in Rome from 1939 onward, and Secretary of that Faculty from 1950 to 1959), who spent decades studying Valtorta's work and provided more than 5,675 scholarly footnotes and several appendices for her work, many of which specifically address various difficult passages in the work that have been or could possibly be criticized.
- **Fr. Gabriel Roschini, O.S.M.** (world-renowned Mariologist, decorated professor and founder of the Marianum Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Rome in 1950 under Pope Pius XII, professor at the Lateran Pontifical University, and a Consultant to the Holy Office and the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints), who studied Valtorta's work for years and wrote a 395-page Mariological study of Valtorta's writings that even received the praise of the Vatican at the time of its publication. Note that he reviewed the first volume of Valtorta's work and wrote a *nihil obstat* for

it as far back as 1946. His Mariological study of all of her writings was published in 1973. He passed away in 1977.

- **Msgr. Hugo Lattanzi**, dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Lateran Pontifical University, and Consultant to the Holy Office, who approved the *Poem* in 1952 after studying it, stating: "The author...could not have written such an abundant amount of material...without being under the influence of a supernatural power."¹²

- **Archbishop Alphonsus Carinci** (who was in charge of investigating pre-Vatican II causes of beatification and canonization, who visited Maria Valtorta multiple times, wrote dozens of letters back and forth with her which have been published, and who analyzed her case in depth) praised Maria Valtorta and the *Poem*, writing in 1952:¹³

"There is nothing therein which is contrary to the Gospel. Rather, this work, a good complement to the Gospel, contributes towards a better understanding of its meaning... Our Lord's discourses do not contain anything which in any way might be contrary to His Spirit."

Archbishop Carinci also stated:¹⁴

"...it seems impossible to me that a woman of a very ordinary theological culture, and unprovided with any book useful to that end, had been able on her own to write with such exactness pages so sublime. [...] Judging from the good one experiences in reading it [that is, *The Poem*], I am of the humble opinion that this Work, once published, could bring so many souls to the Lord: sinners to conversion and the good to a more fervent and diligent life.

[...] While the immoral press invades the world and exhibitions corrupt youth, one comes spontaneously to thank the Lord for having given us, by means of this suffering woman, nailed to a bed, a Work of such literary beauty, so doctrinally and spiritually lofty, accessible and profound, drawing one to read it and capable of being reproduced in cinematic productions and sacred theater."

- **Camillo Corsánego** (1891-1963), former national president of Catholic Action in Italy, Dean of the Consistorial Lawyers, and a professor at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, wrote:¹⁵

Throughout my life, by now fairly long, I have read a very large number of works in apologetics, hagiography [saints' lives], theology, and biblical criticism; however, I have never found such a body of knowledge, art, devotion, and adherence to the traditional teachings of the Church, as in Miss Maria Valtorta's work on the Gospels.

Having read those numerous pages attentively and repeatedly, I must in all conscience declare that with respect to the woman who wrote them only two hypotheses can be made: a) either

she was talented like Manzoni or Shakespeare, and her scriptural and theological learning and her knowledge of the Holy Places were perfect, at any rate superior to those of anyone alive in Italy today; b) or else "*digitus Dei est hic*" ["*God's finger is here*"].

Obedient as I am (and as, with God's grace, I intend being all my life) to the supreme and infallible Magisterium of the Church, I will never dare take its place. Yet, as a humble Christian, I profess that I think the publication of this work will help to take many souls back to God, and will arouse in the modern world an apologetic interest and a leavening of Christian life comparable only to the effects of the private revelation [of the Sacred Heart] to St. Marie Alacoque.

It has been said that the Work lowers the adorable Person of the Saviour. Nothing could be more wrong: Christians, I believe, usually after having affirmed faith in Jesus Christ, God and man, always forget to consider the humanity of the Incarnate Word, Whom He is regarded as the true God, but rarely as true Man, frustrating the invitation to many ways of sanctification, which is offered to us by the exemplary human life of the Son of God.

Anyone who reads [even] a limited number of these wonderful pages, literally perfect, if he has a mind free of prejudices, cannot not draw from them the fruits of Christian elevation.

- **Fr. Ludovic-Marie Barrielle, FSSPX**, who was not only a professor at the SSPX Econe seminary but also its first spiritual director and, furthermore, a confessor of Archbishop Lefebvre. This traditional Catholic figure was called by Archbishop Lefebvre "our model spiritual guide". Archbishop Lefebvre, in a homily to the traditional Carmelites of Quievrain on July 21, 1986, said of Fr. Barrielle:

I read part of [*The Poem of the Man-God*] because Father Barrielle was very much in favor of this book of Maria Valtorta. **He was convinced that it was absolutely true, that it could not be not true.** [emphasis added]

Fr. Barrielle (1897-1983) is also well known as a great retreat master with over 40 years of experience, and he is the author of the book *Rules for the Discernment of Spirits in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* used extensively in all SSPX Ignatian retreats. He wholeheartedly approved Maria Valtorta's writings, believed them to be an authentic private revelation, and led many others to read it. Fr. Barrielle said to the SSPX Econe seminarians: "If you wish to know and love the Sacred Heart of Jesus, read Valtorta!"¹⁶ Fr. Kevin Robinson, FSSPX, testifies that Fr. Barrielle "used Maria's writings and urged their use at all times in his latter years in the SSPX Seminary."¹⁷ This was done with the awareness of Archbishop Lefebvre. On a holy card for the Requiem Mass of Fr. Barrielle, Archbishop Lefebvre wrote, "To dear Fr. Louis Marie Barrielle, *our model spiritual guide*, with our affectionate assurance of our faithful prayers (signed Archbishop Lefebvre, 1983)." [emphasis added]

I could go on listing 24 extremely learned clerics or Doctors of Theology, Divinity, or Canon Law; seven Members or Consultants of the Holy Office or Congregation for the Causes of Saints; and seven Saints, Blesseds, Venerables, or Servants of God (not all of whom SSPX priests would doubt their holiness or learning) who have all publicly praised Valtorta's writings and recommended their use and affirmed that they are free of errors in faith and morals.

Why should any traditional Catholic trust what this critic says? Because he's a traditional Catholic priest? To be frank, as proven by Fr. Laisney's highly flawed analysis of Valtorta, that is not a sufficient credential. A theologian is only as good as his ability to stick to objective facts, do correct methodological reasoning, remove personal subjective bias from his analysis, and consult all the best resources available. I highly doubt that this critic can compete, in these areas, with the likes of Fr. Roschini, Fr. Berti, Blessed Allegra, etc., who all studied her writings for years: specifically, Fr. Berti studied her writings for 34 years; Blessed Allegra studied her writings for 11 years; and Fr. Roschini first published a critique about her writings as far back as 1946 but completed his most intensive study of her writings in later years, culminating in a 395-page Mariological analysis of her writings.

It is well known that the saints and the Church have historically more clearly explained or defined Church teaching when presented with objections of skeptics, critics, or heretics – thus making the truth shine even more brightly. In like manner, I am pleased that this critic's objections, attempted to be based on St. Thomas Aquinas, were actually countered by a more complete perusal of St. Thomas Aquinas, and that the end results are a gain for a deeper and more complete and objective knowledge of Valtorta's work. Now we can even more clearly see the strength of the Valtortian position and that it is worthy of faithful Catholics of good will to read her work, to benefit from it, and to recognize that it not only is free of error in faith and morals, but also has tremendous spiritual benefit for Catholics for generations to come.

The Pharisees and scribes rejected Christ because they did not want to know the truth. They did not want to be "confused with the facts." I hope this refutation and my [e-book](#) will serve humble, honest Catholics of good will who *want* to know the truth about this private revelation and this great gift of God for our generation. Heaven indeed did not waste its time in giving this great gift! "Extinguish not the Spirit. Despise not prophecies; but test all things, and hold fast that which is good." (The Great Apostle St. Paul to the Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians 5: 19-21)

References

Fr. Berti Footnote References

Many of these footnotes are used in [Supplement: Refutation of the Critic's Objections About the Other Scenes that He References](#). All of the following footnotes are found in *Il Poema Dell'Uomo-Dio (Second Italian Edition)*. Centro Editoriale Valtortiano srl. Viale Piscicelli, 89/91, 03036 Isola del Liri (FR), Italia. 1986, albeit on different pages, as specified below:

Footnote 3: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 278. Footnote 3.

Footnote 4: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 278. Footnote 4.

Footnote 4: Volume 6, Chapter 98, p. 766. Footnote 4.

Footnote 7: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 281. Footnote 7.

Footnote 10: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 282. Footnote 10.

Footnote 17: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 284. Footnote 17.

Footnote 21: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 285. Footnote 21.

Footnote 22: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 285. Footnote 22.

Footnote 24: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 286. Footnote 24.

Footnote 33: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 289. Footnote 33.

Footnote 36: Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 290. Footnote 36.

Footnote 63: Volume 9, Chapter 19, p. 217. Footnote 63.

References

¹ *The Message of Fatima*. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html

² *A Testimony on Maria Valtorta's Poem of the Man-God*. By Rev. Corrado Berti, O.S.M. December 8, 1978.

<http://www.bardstown.com/~brchrys/Corberti.html>

This is the English translation of a photostated copy of Fr. Berti's original signed Italian typescript testimonial, which is in possession of Dr. Emilio Pisani in Isola del Liri, Italy. A photocopy of Fr. Berti's original signed Italian typescript is viewable and downloadable here:

<http://www.bardstown.com/~brchrys/Testimony%20of%20Fr.%20Berti.pdf>

³ *Maria Valtorta*. Angelqueen Forums. Fr. Kevin Robinson's Comments about the *Poem of the Man-God*. Posted on April 25, 2006, and April 28, 2006.

<http://iloughnan.tripod.com/valtorta.htm>

Note: The original URL above has since become dead, but an archive of it can still be viewed here:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150912200311/http://iloughnan.tripod.com/valtorta.htm>

⁴ *Home Reading: Eleison Comments*. Number CCLXXV (275). By Bishop Richard Williamson. October 20, 2012.

⁵ *The Poem of the Man-God*, Volume 5, Chapter 565, p. 223; *The Gospel as Revealed to Me*, Volume 9, Chapter 567, p. 140.

⁶ *A Tour of the Summa (A Journey Through St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica)*. By Msgr. Paul J. Glenn. Tan Books and Publishers. 1978. p. 362. ISBN-13: 9780895550811.

⁷ *Theology of Christian Perfection*. By Anontio Royo, O.P. and Jordan Aumann, O.P. Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press. 1962. pp. 300-301. Library of Congress Card No. 62-17314.

⁸ *Il Poema Dell'Uomo-Dio (Second Italian Edition)*. Centro Editoriale Valtortiano srl. Viale Piscicelli, 89/91, 03036 Isola del Liri (FR), Italia. 1986. Volume 8, Chapter 28, p. 278. Footnote 3.

⁹ *Quotes About Assumptions*. Goodreads.com.

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/assumptions>

¹⁰ *The Message of Fatima. Op. cit.*

¹¹ *The Poem of the Man-God*, Volume 1, Chapter 83, pp. 448-449; *The Gospel as Revealed to Me*, Volume 2, Chapter 83, pp. 48-49.

¹² *Pro e contro Maria Valtorta (5th Edition)*. By Dr. Emilio Pisani. Centro Editoriale Valtortiano. 2008. pp. 80-82. ISBN-13: 9788879871528.

¹³ *Pro e contro Maria Valtorta (5th Edition)*. By Dr. Emilio Pisani. Centro Editoriale Valtortiano. 2008. pp. 68-74. ISBN-13: 9788879871528.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *Pro e contro Maria Valtorta (5th Edition)*. By Dr. Emilio Pisani. Centro Editoriale Valtortiano. 2008. pp. 75-77. ISBN-13: 9788879871528.

¹⁶ *Valtorta Reveals How Gamaliel's Notes Compared to the Book of Hebrews Resolves the Issue of the Origin on This Book*. By Fr. Kevin Robinson, FSSPX. June 29, 2011. p. 30.

<http://en.gloria.tv/?media=170613>

¹⁷ *Valtorta Reveals How Gamaliel's Notes Compared to the Book of Hebrews Resolves the Issue of the Origin on This Book*. p. 28. *Op. cit.*