

# *The Life of The Blessed Virgin Mary*

From the Visions of

Anne Catherine Emmerich

Translated by: Sir Michael Palaiet

Translator's Note: I have omitted some of Clemens Brentano's notes altogether and have translated only extracts of some of the others; but have included everything that seemed likely to interest the English reader.

Supplementary notes by the translator, Sir Michael Palaiet, are indicated with (Tr)

Supplementary notes by Rev. Sebastian Bullough, O.P. are indicated with (SB)

Supplementary notes by Clemens Brentano are indicated with (CB)

Supplementary notes by Ronald L. Conte Jr. are indicated with (RC)

Note: Anne Catherine Emmerich was born on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1774, at Flamske, near Koesfeld, Westphalia, West Germany, and became on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1803, a nun of the Augustinian Order at the Convent of Agnetenberg at Dülmen (also in Westphalia). She died on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1824. Full details of her life and death will be found in the preface to *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.

Extract From The Preface To The German Edition:

Most readers of *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the visions of the devout Anne Catherine Emmerich* are no doubt aware that this book contains only a part of those visions. Clemens Brentano spent several years in Dülmen in the endeavour to reproduce with scrupulous care the visionary's utterances, which were sometimes fragmentary and sometimes formed a connected narrative. This was the origin of his diary, which was begun in January 1820 and contained a great variety of visions regarding the lives of the Saints, the feasts of the Church and other events. Later, however, in the years 1821 and 1822, these visions became more and more concentrated on the Life of Christ and of the holy persons about Him. The records of these visions, which still exist in their original form, were made by the late Clemens Brentano with almost documentary precision. He extracted from them everything relating to the Life of Christ, and was thus able to present to the reader the public Life of Our Lord day by day according to Catherine Emmerich's visions. The last portion of these records has been printed under the title of *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord*.

Besides this large collection of accounts of the Life of Christ, Clemens Brentano completed another smaller one relating to the life of the Blessed Virgin. After arranging the relevant extracts and choosing wood-cuts to illustrate them, he started printing them in 1841, and had finished a considerable part when a lingering illness put a stop to his work and finally caused his death on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1842. After this sad event his papers, including those relating to Catherine Emmerich, came into the hands of his brother Christian Brentano in Aschaffenburg. The latter died on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1851, without having carried out his intention of continuing to print the *Life of Our Lady*; but fortunately his widow was able, with the help of some learned friends, to complete the work.

When the *Dolorous Passion* appeared, Catherine Emmerich's visions were known only to a few, though very distinguished men. In the meantime the voices of many thousands of readers have swelled the originally very modest applause. However the historical or theological character of the work may be judged, it is acknowledged to be a treasury of holy scenes and pictures which contribute to the edification and inspiration of the faithful. In this respect the *Life of Mary* is, we consider, a worthy companion to the *Dolorous Passion*. It does not, however, like the latter, present a complete and comprehensive narrative. The gaps which occur in it are to be explained by its close connection with the *Life of Christ*. Since the latter was necessarily often concerned with the Virgin Mother, sections of the *Life of Mary* had to be omitted in order to avoid repetitions when the *Life of Christ* should be printed (as it was later). The latter work should therefore be read in conjunction with the *Life of Mary*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Currently these books are titled: *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, and *The Life of Jesus Christ and Biblical Revelations*. The latter title was published in 1914 as: *The Lowly Life and Bitter Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother together with the Mysteries of the Old Testament*.

## Observations On The Supplementary Notes:

Those who read or even merely look at this book must perforce ask themselves to what extent the statements of Anne Catherine Emmerich are consonant with what can be known of the persons, places, and events in question through the channels of inspired Scripture, reliable history, legitimate tradition, and established geography. Clemens Brentano set out to meet this inquiry as far as he could with the materials and evidence that were available to him at the time. His notes (as completed by his brother) have been preserved, and are here followed by his initials CB in parentheses. A further series of notes has been prepared for this edition, sometimes annotating the text directly, and sometimes elucidating the notes of Brentano. These are indicated by the initials SB in parentheses. Attention has been paid throughout to the witness of the four channels of information mentioned above, either to corroborate the statements or to indicate that there is no supporting evidence, or to suggest that there has been some confusion of facts, or occasionally to correct some detail (usually of a chronological, geographical, or philological nature) which appears to be mistaken.

These notes have not been concerned with the problem of the immediate provenance of the material and the relationship of the visionary to Brentano and any other sources which he may or may not have used. Nor are they concerned with the nature or origin of the visions. Their only object has been to test the accuracy of the material as it stands.

It is wise to be aware throughout of what Scripture relates about the events described, and to this end the Scriptural reference has been inserted in a note to each chapter-heading. Similarly, when a Biblical character or event appears, a reference is given except in the most obvious cases. Old Testament legislation is also referred to, when a point of ritual is raised, supplemented by Rabbinic rulings which were current at the time of Christ, and which are preserved in the *Mishnah*. In all these matters, it may be said at once that the statements of Anne Catherine Emmerich (always written AC in the Supplementary Notes) are never found to be counter to the Scriptures, nor mistaken about Jewish ritual at the time, as far as this is ascertainable, apart from a small point about the calendar. When AC's statements involve a particular interpretation of a Biblical text, this is noted. The Biblical references of Clemens Brentano (always referred to as CB) have all been checked, and they have always been found correct, though occasionally in need of supplement. His Rabbinic references, similarly, have sometimes required expansion.

The contemporary historian Josephus (A.D. 37-c. 100) is an indispensable source for the period. His main works, *The Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Wars of the Jews*, are referred to by their usual abbreviations *Ant.* and *Wars*. The *Mishnah* is quoted by tractate and section. CB's references to other authors have also been checked, and sometimes more exact references have been provided. His philological observations have usually been simply supplemented by additional notes, confirming or correcting according to more recent studies. It may be said that CB's findings, especially in the field of Scripture and history, have in most cases been found reliable, and his annotations, especially in view of his confessed lack of training and equipment, deserve the highest commendation.

Many early Christian traditions were preserved in the so-called apocryphal gospels. These documents, while plainly composed not as serious histories but as edifying or even

diverting imaginations, usually under the pseudonym of some Biblical person (being more like pious 'historical novels' of the time), do in all probability enshrine many historical facts subsequently adorned with fancies of a later age. When a parallel can be traced between AC's statements and these traditional sources, the matter is duly noted, and it is interesting to observe how rarely AC's account shares the fanciful elaborations of the apocryphal material. Furthermore, her frequent descriptions of people's appearance and attire seem usually to be of an entirely independent nature. It is worth remembering in this connection that AC was at one time a professional seamstress, a fact which adds interest to her minute observation of clothes. Most of her intricate genealogical statements, so remarkably consistent throughout, find no parallels in the apocryphal literature. The documents referred to most frequently in the notes are the so-called *Protevangelion of James* (*Protev.*), *Pseudo-Matthew* (*Ps-Matt.*), and the *Nativity of Mary* (*Nat. Mar.*), with references to chapters. The editions used were *The Apocryphal New Testament*, translated by M. R. James (1924), and *The Apocryphal Gospels*, translated by J. Harris Cowper (1897). These editions made use of many texts hardly available to CB.

For exegetical work on the Bible, an invaluable aid has been the large *Catholic Commentary* published in 1953, where the general findings of modern scholarship have been made readily available and reliably presented. The references are to paragraphs.

The geographical side presented many problems, and here the same *Catholic Commentary* was of great assistance in the identification of Biblical sites, and the maps it includes are the result of the latest geographical surveys of the Holy Land.

For the conclusions of modern hagiography *The Book of Saints* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), produced by the monks of Ramsgate in 1947, has been a handy work of reference. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1912) and the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1905) have often given valuable assistance and guidance to sources.

Lastly, one cannot fail to mention the monumental work of Kaplan Helmut Fahsel, *Der Wandel Jesu in der Welt, nach den Visionen der Anna Katharina Emmerich*, Basel, 1942, which is by far the most elaborate work on the subject, and whose maps and genealogies have been consistently useful.

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*In festo SS. Nominis Mariae*, 1953

## I. OUR LADY' S ANCESTORS

Last night there came again before my soul everything that I had so often seen as a child concerning the life of the ancestors of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I saw it all in a series of pictures just as I did then. If only I could tell it all as I know it and have it before my eyes, it would certainly give great joy to the Pilgrim.<sup>2</sup> In my miserable state I was greatly revived by contemplating these pictures. As a child I was so certain of all I saw that if anyone told me any of the stories differently, I would say straight out: 'No, this is how it is.' And, indeed, I would have let myself be killed rather than deny that it was thus and not otherwise. Later on, life in the world confused me, and I kept silence. The inner certainty has, however, always remained with me, and last night I once more saw everything even to the smallest details.

When I was a child, my thoughts were always taken up with the Crib and the Child Jesus and with the Mother of God, and I often wondered very much why people told me nothing about the family of Our Lady. I could not understand at all why so little had been written down about her ancestors and relations. In the great longing which I had, I then received a multitude of visions of the Blessed Virgin's ancestors. I must have seen them back to the fourth or fifth generation. I saw them always as wonderfully pious and simple people inspired by a quite extraordinary secret longing for the coming of the promised Messias. I saw them always living amongst other men who, compared to them, seemed to me rough and barbarous. They themselves, I saw, were so quiet, gentle and kindly, that I often said to myself in great anxiety about them: 'Oh where can these good people find a refuge, how are they to escape from those rough, wicked men? I will seek them out and will be their servant, I will fly with them into a wood where they can hide themselves; I am sure I shall still be able to find them!' So clearly did I see them and believe in them, that I was always afraid and full of anxiety about them.

I always saw these people leading a life of great self-denial. I often saw that those among them who were married bound themselves mutually to observe continence for a time; and this gave me much joy, though why this was I could not clearly say. They practised these separations chiefly when they were occupied with all kinds of religious ceremonies, accompanied by incense and prayers.<sup>3</sup> From these I perceived that there were priests among them. I often saw them moving from one place to another, leaving large homesteads and retiring to smaller ones, in order to lead their lives undisturbed by wicked people.

They were so devout and so full of longing towards God that I often saw them, alone in the field by day and by night too, running about and crying to God with such intense desire that, in the hunger of their hearts, they tore open their garments at their breasts, as if God were about to burn Himself into their hearts with the hot rays of the sun, or to quench with the moonlight and starlight their thirst for the fulfilment of the Promise.

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<sup>2</sup> The 'Pilgrim' is Clemens Brentano, who wrote down the visions at Catherine Emmerich's dictation. These were communicated by her to him on the morning of June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1819. (Tr.)

<sup>3</sup> It is commonly stated that such separation was required of priests on duty, and this can be deduced from Lev.15.18 (ceremonial uncleanness contracted) and Lev. 22.3 (ceremonial cleanness required). (SB)

Pictures like these came to me, I remember, when as a child or as a young girl I was kneeling and praying to God, alone with the flock in the pastures, or at night on the high fields above our farm; or when, in Advent, I walked through the snow at midnight to the *Rorate* devotions in St. James' Church at Koesfeld, three-quarters of an hour away from our cottage at Flamske. The evening before, and in the night too, I prayed much for the poor souls in purgatory. I thought that in their lives they had perhaps not been eager enough for grace; perhaps they had given way to other desires for the creatures and goods of the world, had fallen into many faults, and were now yearning to be released. So I offered up my prayer and my longing to God our Saviour for them, trying as it were to pay their debt for them. I got a little benefit, too, for myself, for I knew that the kind Holy Souls, in gratitude to me and because of their constant desire for help by prayers, would wake me at the right time and would not let me over-sleep. And so they did; they floated round my bed like little flames, little dim, quiet flames, and woke me just in time for me to be able to offer up my morning prayer for them. Then I sprinkled myself and them with holy water, put on my clothes, and started on my way. I saw the poor little lights accompanying me in a regular procession; and on the way I sang with true heart's desire: 'Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One.' And as I sang, I saw here and there in the wilderness and in the fields the beloved ancestors of Our Blessed Lady running about and crying for the Messiah; and I did as they did, and came to Koesfeld always in time for the *Rorate* Mass,<sup>4</sup> even when the Holy Souls led me, as they sometimes did, a very long way round past all the Stations of the Cross.

Now, in my visions of these beloved ancestors of Our Lady praying so hard in their hunger for God, they seemed to me strange indeed in their dress and in their way of living, and yet so near and so clear to me, that I still know and have before my eyes all their features and figures. And I kept asking myself: 'What manner of people are these? Everything is different from nowadays, yet there these people are, and all that I see has really happened!' And so I always used to hope that I might go to them.

In all they did and in all they said and in their religious services, these good people were very decided and exact; and they made no lamentations except over the sufferings of their neighbours.

## THE ANCESTORS OF ST. ANNE <sup>5</sup>

I had a detailed vision of the ancestors of St. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin. They lived at Mara in the region of Mount Horeb, and were connected spiritually with a kind of very devout Israelites of whom I have seen a great deal. I will relate as much as I can recall about them. I was with these people almost the whole of yesterday, and if I had not been oppressed by so many visits, I should not have forgotten nearly all of what I saw.

These devout Israelites who were connected with the ancestors of St. Anne were called Essenes or Essaees. They have, however, changed their name three times, for they were first called Eskarenes, then Chasidaees, and finally Essenes. Their first name, Eskarenes, came

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<sup>4</sup> Mass of the Fourth Sunday in Advent.

<sup>5</sup> Communicated in July and August 1821.

from the word Eskara or Azkara, which is the name for the part of the sacrifice belonging to God, and also for the sweet-smelling incense at the offering of wheaten flour.<sup>6</sup> The second name, Chasidaees, means merciful.<sup>7</sup> I cannot remember what the name Essenes comes from.<sup>8</sup> The way of life of these devout people is an inheritance from the time of Moses and Aaron and in particular from the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant; but it was not until the period between Isaias and Jeremias that their way of life was regularly established. At the beginning there were not many of them; later on, however, their settlements in the Promised Land occupied a space twenty-four hours' journey long and thirty-six hours' journey broad. They did not come to the region of the Jordan until later; they lived mostly on the slopes of Mount Horeb and Mount Carmel, the home of Elias.

In the lifetime of St. Anne's grandparents, the Essenes had a spiritual head who lived on Mount Horeb. He was an aged prophet called Archos or Arkas.<sup>9</sup> Their organization was very like that of a religious order. All who wished to enter it had to undergo a year's tests, and the length of time for which they were accepted was decided by prophetic inspirations from above. The real members of the Order, who lived in a community, did not marry but lived in chastity; but there were others (who had formerly been in the Order or were attached to it) who married and carried out in their families, and with their children and household, something similar in many ways to the traditional discipline of the real Essenes. Their relationship with these was like that between the lay members of a Catholic Third Order, or Tertiaries, and the professed priests of the Order. In all important matters, especially as to the marriages of their relations, these married Essenes always sought

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<sup>6</sup> This was taken down in August 1821 by the writer from Catherine Emmerich's words. In July 1840, when preparing the book for printing, he asked a language expert for an explanation of the word Azkara, and was told that Azkarah meant commemoration and is the name of the portion of the unbloody sacrifice, which was burnt on the altar by the priest to the glory of God and to remind Him of His merciful promises. The unbloody sacrifices generally consisted of the finest wheaten flour mixed with oil and sprinkled with incense. The priest burnt as the Azkarah all the incense and also a handful of flour and oil (baked or unbaked). In the case of the shew-bread the incense alone was the Azkarah (Lev. 24.7). The Vulgate translates the word Azkarah alternatively as 'memoriale', 'in memoriam', or 'in monumentum'. (CB)

Lev. 24.7, literally: 'And thou shalt place upon the shew-bread pure incense, and it shall be for the bread as a memorial (*azkarah*), a burnt offering to the Lord.' The other references to the word *azkarah* are in Lev. 2.2, 9, 16; 5.12; 6.8; Num. 5.26 in connection with the burning of a meal-offering (*minhah*). The connection with the Essenes remains obscure. (SB)

<sup>7</sup> Hasid (pl. Hasidim), originally meaning 'merciful' (of God), came to mean 'devout' of men, and was later in Maccabean times used to designate a specific group of devout and observant Jews who joined the Maccabean party in their light for freedom (I Macc.2.42). These Hasideans (Gk. *Asidaioi*), as they were then called, are generally believed to be the forerunners of the Pharisees (cf. Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, 1931, pp. 56, 272), and probably of the Essenes (Bonsirven, *Le Judaïsme Palestinien*, 1935, I, pp. 43, 64), both sects being mentioned by Josephus in Maccabean times (*Ant.*, XIII, v, 9). (SB)

<sup>8</sup> They were called *Essenoi* by Josephus, *Esseni* by Pliny, and *Essaioi* by Philo (and six times by Josephus). The origin of the name is uncertain (cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 320). Their way of life, as described by AC, is for the most part fully attested by the contemporary historian Josephus (*Wars*, II, viii, 2-13), as well as by Philo (*Quod omnis probus liber sit*, 75-88). Pliny's remarks (*Hist. Nat.*, V, 17) attribute to the Essenes an antiquity of 'thousands of years'. There is no other evidence of an antiquity beyond Maccabean times. (Most texts in Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-17.) Passing references by Josephus are in *Ant.*, XIII, v, 9 and XVIII, i, 5. (SB)

<sup>9</sup> The spiritual head on Mount Horeb, Archos, is not mentioned in any of the documents. (SB)



instruction and counsel from the aged prophet on Mount Horeb. St. Anne's grandparents belonged to this kind of married Essenes.

Later there arose a third kind of Essenes who exaggerated everything and fell into great errors, and I saw that the others would have no dealings with them.

The real Essenes were specially concerned with prophetic matters, and their head on Mount Horeb was often vouchsafed divine revelations in the cave of Elias respecting the coming of the Messias. He had knowledge of the family from which the mother of the Messias was to come, and at the time that he gave prophetic advice to the grandparents of St. Anne in matters of marriage, he saw that the day of the Lord was approaching. He did not, however, know how long the birth of the Saviour's mother might still be prevented or delayed by sin, and so he was always preaching penance, mortification, prayer, and inner sacrifice for this intention—pious exercises of which all Essenes had ever given the example.

Until Isaias assembled these people together and gave them a more regular organization, they were scattered about the land of Israel, leading lives of piety and intent on mortification. They wore their clothes without mending them till they fell off their bodies. They fought particularly against sexual immorality, and often by mutual consent lived in continence for long periods, living in huts far removed from their wives. When they lived together as husband and wife, it was only with the intention of producing a holy offspring which might bring nearer the coming of the Saviour. I saw them eating apart from their wives; the wife came to take her meal after the husband had left the table. There were ancestors of St. Anne and of other holy people among these early Essenes.

Jeremias too was connected with them, and the men called 'Sons of the Prophet' came from them. They often lived in the desert and round Mount Horeb and Carmel, and later I saw many of them in Egypt. I also saw that for a time they were driven away from Mount Horeb by war and were reassembled by new leaders. The Maccabees also belonged to them. They had a great devotion to Moses, and possessed a sacred piece of his clothing given by him to Aaron, from whom it had come down to them. This was their most precious relic, and I had a vision of some fifteen of them being killed in defending it. Their prophet leaders had knowledge of the secret mysteries of the Ark of the Covenant.

The real Essenes who lived in chastity were indescribably pure and devout. They adopted children and brought them up to lead a very holy life. To be accepted as a member of the regular Order, a boy had to have reached the age of fourteen. Those who had been already tested had to undergo a year's novitiate, others two years. They did not carry on any form of trade, but exchanged the produce of their agriculture for whatever else they needed. If one of them had committed a grave sin, he was expelled from among them and excommunicated by their head. This excommunication had the force of that pronounced by Peter against Ananias, who was struck dead by it. Their head knew by prophetic inspiration who had committed sin. I also saw some Essenes undergoing penitential punishment; they were obliged to stand in a stiff robe with their arms extended immovably in sleeves lined with thorns.

Mount Horeb was full of little caves, which formed the cells where they lived. An assembly hall of light wattle-work had been built on to the mouth of one of the large caves. Here they came together at eleven o'clock in the morning and ate. Each had a small loaf of

bread in front of him with a goblet. The head went from place to place and blessed each one's bread. After the meal they returned to their separate cells. In this assembly-hall there was an altar on which stood little blessed loaves covered up; they were in some way sacred and were, I think, distributed among the poor.

The Essenes had a great number of doves, which were tame and ate out of their hands. They ate doves, but also used them in their ritual ceremonies. They said something over them and let them fly away. I saw, too, that they released lambs in the desert after saying something over them, as if they were to take their sins on them.<sup>10</sup>

I saw them go three times a year to the Temple in Jerusalem. They had also priests among them whose special duty was the care of the sacred vestments; they cleaned them, contributed money for them, and also made new ones. I saw them engaged in cattle-breeding and agriculture, but specially in gardening. Mount Horeb was full of gardens and fruit-trees in the spaces between their huts. I saw many of them weaving and plaiting, and also embroidering priests' vestments. I did not see them producing silk; that came in bundles to be sold to them, and they exchanged other produce for it.

In Jerusalem they had a quarter of their own to live in and a separate place in the Temple as well. The other Jews rather disliked them because of their austerity. I saw, too, that they sent presents to the Temple; for example, great bunches of grapes, carried by two people on a pole. They also sent lambs, but not to be slaughtered; I think they just let them run into a garden. I did not see the real Essenes offering bloody sacrifices in these later times. I saw that before they journeyed to the Temple they made a very rigorous preparation by prayer, fasting, and penance, including even scourgings. If one laden with sins went to the Temple and to the Holy of Holies without having made atonement by penance, he usually died on the spot. If on their journey, or in Jerusalem itself, they found anyone who was ill or in any way helpless, they did not go to the Temple until they had given him all the aid in their power.

I saw that, in general, they employed themselves in healing. They gathered herbs and prepared potions. I saw also that those holy people whom I had seen some time before laying sick folk down on a bed of healing plants were Essenes.<sup>11</sup> I saw, too, that the Essenes

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<sup>10</sup> It is well known that the Essenes refused to sacrifice animals, but the ritual of releasing them (as described by AC) is one of the few matters that is not documented. In Lev. 14.53 the Law prescribed the freeing of a bird after purification from leprosy, and in 16.22 the ritual of the scapegoat, which was to 'carry away all their iniquities into an uninhabited land'. (SB)

<sup>11</sup> The little daughter of Catherine Emmerich's brother, who came from the farm of Flamske near Koesfeld to visit her at Dülmen in the winter of 1820, was seized with violent convulsions occurring every evening at the same time and beginning with distressing choking. These convulsions often lasted until midnight, and Catherine Emmerich, knowing as she did the cause and significance of this and indeed of most other illnesses, was greatly affected by her niece's sufferings. She prayed many times to be told of a cure for them, and at last was able to describe a certain little flower known to her which she had seen St. Luke pick and use to cure epilepsy. As a result of her minute description of the little flower and of the places where it grew, her physician, Dr. Wesener (the district doctor of Dülmen), found it; she recognized the plant which he brought her as the one she had seen, which she called 'star-flower', and he identified it as *Cerastium arvense linnaei* or *Holosteum caryophylleum veterum* (Field Mouse-ear Chickweed). It is remarkable that the old herbal *Tabernamontani* also refers to the use of this plant for epilepsy. On the afternoon of May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1821, Catherine Emmerich said in her sleep: 'Rue [which she had used before] and star-flower sprinkled with holy water should

healed the sick by the laying-on of hands, or by stretching themselves on them with arms extended. I saw them also healing at a distance in a wonderful way, for the sick who could not come themselves sent a representative to whom everything was done as it would have been to the sick person. The time was noted, and the distant sick person was cured at that very hour.

I saw that the Essenes on Horeb had in their caves recesses in the walls where bones, carefully wrapped in cotton and silk, were kept as sacred relics behind gratings. They were bones of prophets who had lived here, and also of the children of Israel who had died near here. There were little pots of green plants standing beside them. The Essenes used to light lamps and pray before the bones in veneration of them.

All the unmarried Essenes who lived together in communities on Mount Horeb and elsewhere observed the greatest cleanliness. They wore long white robes. The head of the Essenes on Horeb wore wonderful priestly vestments during solemn religious services, after the manner of the high priest in Jerusalem, only shorter and not so magnificent. When he prayed and prophesied in the cave of Elias on Mount Horeb, he always wore these sacred vestments, which consisted of about eight pieces. Amongst them was a very sacred relic, a sort of dalmatic or scapular, covering the breast and shoulders, which Moses had worn next to his body and had given to Aaron, from whom it had later descended to the Essenes. The prophet Archos, their head on Mount Horeb, always wore this dalmatic next his body when he was clothed in all his vestments and was praying for prophetic enlightenment. The lower part of his body was wrapped in a loin-cloth, while breast and shoulders were covered with this sacred garment, which I will describe as exactly as I can remember. It will probably be clearer if I cut out a sort of pattern of it in paper. [She then quickly cut the shape out of paper put together, saying:] This sacred scapulary had more or less this shape when spread

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be pressed, and the juice given to the child, surely that could do no harm? I have already been told three times to squeeze it myself and give it to her.' The writer, in the hope that she might communicate something more definite about this cure, had, unknown to her, wrapped up at home some blossoms of this plant in paper like a relic and pinned the little packet to her dress in the evening. She woke up and said at once: 'That is not a relic, it is the star-flower.' She kept the little flower pinned to her dress during the night, and on the morning of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1821, she said: 'I had no idea why I was lying last night in a field amongst nothing but star-flowers. I saw, too, all kinds of ways in which these flowers were used, and it was said to me, "If men knew the healing power of this plant, it would not grow so plentifully around you". I saw pictures of it being used in very distant ages. I saw St. Luke wandering about picking these flowers. I saw, too, in a place like the one where Christ fed the 5,000, many sick folk lying on these flowers in the open air, protected by a light shelter above them. The plants were spread out like litter for them to lie on; and arranged with the flowers in the centre under their bodies, and the stalks and leaves pointing outwards. They were suffering from gout, convulsions, and swellings, and had under them round cushions filled with the flowers. I saw their swollen feet being wrapped round with these flowers, and I saw the sick people eating the flowers and drinking water which had been poured on them. The flowers were larger than those here. It was a picture of a long time ago; the people and the doctors wore long white woolen robes with girdles. I saw that the plants were always blessed before use. I saw also a plant of the same family but more succulent and with rounder, juicier, smoother leaves and pale blue blossoms of the same shape, which is very efficacious in children's convulsions. It grows in better soil and is not so common. I think it is called eyebright. I found it once near Dernekamp. It is stronger than the other.' She then gave the child three flowers to begin with; the second time she was to have five. She said: 'I see the child's nature, but cannot rightly describe it; inside she is like a torn garment, which needs a new piece of stuff for each tear.'

(CB)

out. Its stuff was woven as stiff as hair-cloth. On the middle of the breast and back was a triangular place of double thickness and as it were quilted. I cannot now say for certain what was between the layers. At the neck of the scapulary a triangular piece was cut out, and a ribbon or little strap ran across the top of the opening. Its lower point was still attached to the scapulary, and the triangle could be let down to hide completely another opening over the breast. The place of double thickness mentioned above was ribbed or quilted, and letters were fastened into it with little pins and on the inside with sharp little hooks sticking out and pricking the breast. On the cut-out triangle (which was also of double thickness) at the neck there was also something like letters. I do not now know what was inside these triangles. When the priest put on this sacred vestment, the upper triangle exactly covered the lower one. In the middle of the back there was another place where the stuff was quilted and of two thicknesses, and here, too, there were letters and sharp pins. Over his scapulary the head of the Essenes wore a grey woollen tunic, and on this again a large full tunic made of white twisted silk, girt with a broad belt inscribed with letters. He had a kind of stole round the neck crossed over the breast, and it was held fast under the girdle and hung down below his knees. The stole was fastened with three straps above and below the place where it was crossed. On this he put a vestment not unlike a chasuble which was also made of white twisted silk. [She cut out a pattern of this vestment as it looked when spread out.] The back was narrow and came down to the ground; it had two bells attached to the lower hem, which tinkled with the priest's movements and called the people to the service. The front was shorter and broader and open from the neck downwards. This front part had large openings on the breast and below it, through which the stole and undergarment could be seen. These openings were held together in places by fastenings ornamented with letters and precious stones. The front and back of this vestment were held together by strips of stuff under the arms. [These were not shown in the pattern which she cut out.] Round the neck was an upright collar, hooked together in front. The priest's beard, divided in the middle of the chin, fell down over this collar. Over all this he finally put on a little cloak of white twisted silk. It shimmered and shone and was fastened in front with three clasps ornamented with precious stones on which something was engraved. From both shoulders of his cloak there were fringes, tassels, and fruits hanging. Besides all this, he wore a short maniple on one arm. The head-dress was, as far as I can remember, also of white silk, twisted into a round shape and padded, like a turban, yet resembling our priests' birettas to a certain extent, for at the top it had ridges like theirs and also a tuft of silk. A little plate of gold set with precious stones was fastened over the forehead.

The Essenes were very austere and frugal in their way of living. They generally ate only fruit, which they often cultivated in their gardens. I saw that Archos usually ate a bitter yellow fruit. About 200 years before Christ's birth I saw near Jericho a very devout Essene called Chariot.

Archos or Arkas, the old prophet on Mount Horeb, ruled over the Essenes for ninety years. I saw how St. Anne's grandmother questioned him about her own marriage. It is remarkable that it was always about female children that these prophets made predictions, and that Anna's ancestors and Anna herself had mostly daughters. It was as if the object of all their devotion and prayers was to obtain from God a blessing on pious mothers from

whose descendants the Blessed Virgin, the mother of the Saviour Himself, should spring, as well as the families of His precursor and of His servants and disciples.

The place where the head of the Essenes on Mount Horeb prayed and prophesied was the cave where Elias had dwelt. Many steps led to it up the mountain-side, and one entered the cave through a small cramped opening and down a few steps. The prophet Archos went in alone. For the Essenes this was as if the high priest in the Temple went into the Sanctissimum, for here was their Holy of Holies. Within, there were several mysterious holy things, difficult to describe. I will tell what I can remember of them. I saw Anna's grandmother seeking counsel from the prophet Archos.

Anna's grandmother came from Mara in the desert, where her family, which belonged to the married Essenes, owned property. Her name sounded to me like Moruni or Emorun. It was told me that this means something like 'good mother' or 'noble mother'.<sup>12</sup> When the time came for her to be married, she had several suitors, and I saw her go to the prophet Archos on Horeb for him to decide whom she was to accept. She went into a separate part of the large assembly-hall and spoke to Archos, who was in the hall, through a grating, as if she were making her confession to him. It was only in this way that women approached the place. I then saw Archos put on his ceremonial vestments, and ascend thus arrayed the many steps to the top of Mount Horeb, where he entered the cave of Elias by the little door and down the steps. He shut the little door of the cave behind him, and opened a hole in the vaulting dimly illuminating the cave, the interior of which had been carefully hollowed out. Against the wall I saw a little altar carved out of the rock, and noticed, though not quite clearly, several sacred objects on it. On the altar were several pots with low-growing bushes of herbs. They were the herbs which grow as high as the hem of Jesus' garment.<sup>13</sup> I know this herb, it grows with us but less vigorously. The plants gave Archos some sort of indication in his prophetic knowledge according to whether they faded or flourished. In the middle between these little bushes of herbs I saw something like a little tree, taller than them, with leaves that looked yellowish and were twisted like snail-shells. There seemed to me to be little figures on this tree. I cannot now say for certain whether this tree was living or was artificial, like the Tree of Jesse. [On the next day she said:] On this little tree with the twisted leaves could be seen, as on a tree of Jesse or genealogical table, how soon the coming of the Blessed Virgin was to be expected. It looked to me as if it were living and yet

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<sup>12</sup> These were Catherine Emmerich's words on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1821. The names are here written down as the writer heard them pronounced by her lips, and also her explanation 'noble mother'. When the writer read this passage to a language expert in 1840, the latter said that it was indeed true that *Em romo* means a noble mother. (CB)

*Em ramah* could mean 'noble mother', though the adjective *ram*, usually meaning materially 'high' or else 'proud' has no obvious parallel in a proper name, except perhaps in Amram (the father of Moses), which may mean 'noble uncle'. (SB)

<sup>13</sup> She unquestionably meant that these herbs were the same as those mentioned by Eusebius in his ecclesiastical history, Book VII, Chapter 18, which he says grew round the statue of Jesus Christ put up by the woman of Caesarea Philippi, who was cured of the issue of blood. The plants acquired the power of healing all kinds of sicknesses as soon as they had grown high enough to touch the hem of the statue's garment. Eusebius says that this plant is of an unknown species. Catherine Emmerich had spoken before of the statue and of these plants. (CB)

it seemed also to be a receptacle, for I saw that a blossoming branch was kept inside it. I think it was Aaron's rod, which had once been in the Ark of the Covenant. When Archos prayed in the cave of Elias for a revelation on the occasion of a marriage among Our Lady's ancestors, he took this rod of Aaron into his hand. If the marriage was destined to take its place in Our Lady's ancestry, the rod put forth a bud which produced one or more flowers, among which single flowers were sometimes marked with the sign of the elect. Certain buds represented particular ancestors of Anna, and when these came to be married, Archos observed the buds in question and uttered his prophecies according to the manner in which they unfolded.

The Essenes of Mount Horeb had, however, another holy relic in the cave of Elias; nothing less than a part of the most holy mystery of the Ark of the Covenant which came into their possession when the Ark fell into the hands of enemies. [She spoke here uncertainly of a quarrel and of a schism among the Levites.] This holy thing, concealed in the Ark of the Covenant in the fear of God, was known only to the holiest of the high priests and to a few prophets, but I think that I learnt that it is in some way mentioned in the little-known secret books of the old Jewish thinkers.<sup>14</sup> It was no longer complete in the new Ark of the Covenant in the Temple as restored by Herod. It was no work of man's hands, it was a mystery, a most holy secret of the divine blessing on the coming of the Blessed Virgin full of grace, in whom by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost the Word became Flesh and God became Man. Before the Babylonian captivity this holy thing had been whole in the Ark of the Covenant; I now saw part of it here in the possession of the Essenes. It was kept in a chalice of shining brown, which seemed to me to be made of a precious stone. They prophesied, too, with the help of this holy thing, which seemed sometimes to put forth as it were little buds.

Archos, after entering the cave of Elias, shut the door and knelt down in prayer. He looked up to the opening in the vaulting and threw himself face downwards on the ground. I then saw the prophetic knowledge that was given to him. He saw that from under the heart of Emorun, who was seeking his counsel, there grew as it were a rose-tree with three branches, with a rose on each of them. The rose on the second branch was marked with a letter, I think an M. He saw still more. An angel wrote letters on the wall; I saw Archos rise up as if awaking and read these letters. I forget the details. He then went down from the

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<sup>14</sup> In July 1840, some twenty years after this communication, as this book was being prepared for the press, the writer learnt from a language expert that the cabalistic book Zohar contains several references to this matter. (CB)

The Zohar is a rabbinic book, claiming descent from Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai (second century), in the form of a commentary on the Pentateuch, interpreting it throughout, in an enigmatic and esoteric style, according to a mystical sense. The Zohar first became known through the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Rabbi Moses de Leon, who has often been accused of fabricating the whole thing. Present-day opinion, however, suspends judgment, while emphasizing that the Zohar shows evidence of being a compilation of texts and fragments whose composition probably extended over many centuries, and which is likely to enshrine teaching of the greatest antiquity. The Zohar is one of the principal sources of spiritual interpretation among the Jews, and its main theme may be said to be the significance of every detail in sacred history, and the symbolic reflection in this world of the eternal realities of heaven. With regard to its connection with the statements of AC, see further n. 2, p. 43. (SB)

cave, and announced to the maiden who was awaiting his answer that she was to marry and that her sixth suitor was to be her husband. She would bear a child, marked with a sign, who was chosen out as a vessel of election in preparation for the coming of the Saviour.

Hereupon Emorun married her sixth suitor, an Essene called Stolanus; he did not come from Mara, and as a result of his marriage and of his wife's possessions he was given another name, which I can no longer remember distinctly; it was pronounced in different ways and sounded like Garesha or Sarzirius.<sup>15</sup> Stolanus and Emorun had three daughters, called, I remember, Ismeria and Emerentia, and a younger one whose name I think, was Enue. They did not remain long at Mara, but moved later to Ephron. I saw that their daughters Ismeria and Emerentia both married in accordance with the prophetic counsels of the prophet on Horeb. (I can never understand why I have so often heard that Emerentia was the mother of Anna, for I always saw that it was Ismeria.) I will tell in God's name what I still have in my mind about these daughters of Stolanus and Emorun.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Catherine Emmerich pronounced these and all other name-sounds with her Low-German accent and often hesitatingly. Her pronunciation, she said, only resembled the real names, and it is impossible to be sure how correctly or incorrectly they have been written down. It is all the more astonishing to find elsewhere long afterwards similar names for the same persons. The following is an instance. Several years after Catherine Emmerich's death the writer found in the *Encomium trium Mariarum Bertaudi*, Petragorici, Paris, 1529, and in particular in the treatise *De cognatione divi Joannis Baptistae cum filiabus et nepotibus beatae Annae*, lib. III, f. lii, etc., attached to it, that St. Cyril, the third General of the Carmelite Order, who died in 1224, mentions in a work concerning the ancestors of St. Anne similar visions of branches, buds, and flowers seen by the prophet of whom counsel was sought. He further states that Stolanus was also called Agarim or Garizi, names which reproduce sounds recognizable in the above-mentioned Garesha or Sarziri. On the other hand, in this account it is a Carmelite on Mount Carmel instead of an Essene on Mount Horeb of whom counsel is sought. Seventeen years after the death of Catherine Emmerich the writer was reading, on the feast of Corpus Christi, 1840, the life of Our Lady's holy mother in the *Actis Sanctorum*, Tom. VI, Julii, where Joannes Eckius in his homily on St. Anne says that Stolanus is called by tradition Stolan, and that the Roman Breviary of 1536 and several Breviaries printed before the reign of Pius V mention a daughter Gaziri, while others call her Garzim. A philological friend who was kind enough to read my proofs, observed: 'It is surprising that the names Gaziri, Garzi (the final m has been added), Garsha or Garesha (all three forms are correct, though formed from different verbs) all agree in meaning "outcast", and that Agari(m) in Arabic also conveys the idea of flight and banishment. Stolanus in Greek contains the idea of wandering. Sarssir means starling and thus also signifies a wandering bird.' (CB)

The Hebrew root *g-r-sh* and the corresponding Arabic root *g-sh-r* convey the idea of banishment. The Hebrew *ger* (and its Arabic equivalent) means a 'stranger'. The Greek *stolos* means a 'journey' (cf. *apostolos*). *Zurzûr* is the Arabic for a 'starling', being derived apparently from the bird's noise. (SB)

<sup>16</sup> It is certainly true that the writers who follow tradition generally give Emerentia as the mother of St. Anne; but they give the wife of Stolanus as Emerentia, whereas Catherine Emmerich calls her Emorun. According to tradition, Emerentia, the wife of Stolanus, bore Ismeria, the mother of Elisabeth, and Anna, the mother of the Blessed Virgin. Yet according to Catherine Emmerich's account, Anna is the granddaughter, not the daughter, of Stolanus. If this is a mistake of hers, the reason for it may be that the humble visionary has confused her own visions with the account which she had heard from her childhood of the traditional descent of St. Anne. The name Emerentia is perhaps nothing more than the Latinized form of the name (heard by her) of Emorun. But being either ignorant or forgetful of this, and having always heard of the names Emerentia and Ismeria as being traditionally in close association with Stolanus as the nearest relations of Anna before her marriage, she may have described them as daughters of Stolanus. At the same time it was very noticeable that she never confused any of the countless names which came to her ears except in extreme illness and distress. We are, however, inclined to suppose that there must be some error here, for tradition in general mentions St. Elisabeth

Emerentia married one Aphras or Ophras, a Levite. Of this marriage was born Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. A second daughter was named Enue like her mother's sister. At the time of Mary's birth she was already a widow. There was a third daughter, Rhode, one of whose daughters was Mara, whom I saw present at the death of the Blessed Virgin.

Ismeria married Eliud. They lived after the manner of the married Essenes in the region of Nazareth. They had inherited from their parents the tradition of discipline and continence in married life. Anna was one of their children. The first-born of Ismeria and Eliud was a daughter called Sobe. Because this child did not bear the sign of the promise, they were much distressed and again went to the prophet on Mount Horeb to seek counsel. Archos exhorted them to betake themselves to prayer and sacrifice, and promised them consolation. After Sobe's birth, Ismeria remained barren for some eighteen years. When she again became pregnant by God's blessing, I saw that Ismeria was given a revelation at night. She saw an angel beside her bed writing a letter on the wall. It seems to me that it was again that letter M. Ismeria told her husband of it; he also had seen it in his sleep, but now, while awake, they both saw the sign on the wall. After three months Ismeria gave birth to St. Anne, who came into the world with that sign upon her body.

In her fifth year Anna was, like Our Lady, taken to the school in the Temple, where she remained twelve years. She was brought home again in her seventeenth year, to find two children there—her little sister Maraha, who had been born while she was away, and a little son of her elder sister Sobe called Eliud. A year after this Ismeria fell mortally ill. As she lay dying she spoke to all her relations and presented Anna to them as the future mistress of the house. Then she spoke once more with Anna alone, telling her that she was a chosen vessel of grace, that she must marry, and must seek counsel from the prophet on Mount Horeb. Then she died.

Sobe, Anna's elder sister, was married to Salomo. Besides her son Eliud she had a daughter, Mary Salome, who married Zebedee and was the mother of the apostles James and John. Sobe had a second daughter who was an aunt of the bride-groom of Cana and the mother of three of Our Lord's disciples. Eliud, the son of Sobe and Salomo, was the second husband of the widow Maroni of Naim and the father of the boy raised by Jesus from the dead.

Maraha, Anna's younger sister, was given the homestead in Sephoris when her father Eliud moved to the valley of Zabulon. She married and had a daughter and two sons, Arastaria and Cocharia, who became disciples. Anna had yet a third sister who was very poor and was the wife of a shepherd on Anna's pastures. She was often in Anna's house.

Enue, the third daughter of Stolanus, married and lived between Bethlehem and Jericho. One of her descendants was with Jesus.

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as being a niece of St. Anne's, whereas according to Catherine Emmerich's account Elisabeth is the niece of Anna's mother, which would seem to make Elisabeth almost older than Anna, who is called a late-born child. Since the writer cannot explain the error which may possibly have crept in, he begs the kind reader to accept it with patience and thus make amends for the writer's lack of that Christian virtue in his difficult and often interrupted task of compiling an account of these visions. (CB)



Anna's great-grandfather was a prophet. Eliud, her father, was of the tribe of Levi; her mother Ismeria was of the tribe of Benjamin.<sup>17</sup> Anna was born at Bethlehem, but afterwards her parents moved to Sephoris, four hours from Nazareth, where they had a house and land. They also owned land in the beautiful valley of Zabulon, one and a half hours from Sephoris and three hours from Nazareth. In the fine season of the year Anna's father was often with his family in the valley of Zabulon,<sup>18</sup> and after his wife's death he moved there altogether. This led to the connection with the parents of Joachim, whom Anna married. Joachim's father was called Matthat<sup>19</sup> and was the step-brother of Jacob (father of St. Joseph) and of Joses. Matthat had settled in the valley of Zabulon.

I saw Anna's ancestors helping to carry the Ark of the Covenant with great devotion and piety, and I saw also that they received from the holy thing therein rays of light which extended to their descendants, to Anna and the Blessed Virgin. Anna's parents were rich. This was clear to me because of their possessions; they had many oxen; but they kept nothing for themselves alone, they gave everything to the poor. I saw Anna as a child; she was not particularly beautiful, but yet more so than others. She was far less beautiful than Mary, but remarkably simple and childlike in her piety; I have always seen her like that, whether as girl, mother, or old, old woman. Indeed, whenever I saw a real childlike old peasant woman, it always made me think 'she is like Anna'. She had several other brothers and sisters, all married, but she did not wish to marry. She was particularly fond of her parents, and though she had at least six suitors, she rejected them all. After taking counsel like her ancestors with the Essenes, she was directed to marry Joachim, whom she did not yet know, but who sought her in marriage when her father Eliud moved to the valley of Zabulon, the home of Joachim's father Matthat.

## ST. ANNE AND ST. JOACHIM

Joachim was far from handsome. St. Joseph, though no longer young, was in comparison a very handsome man. Joachim was short and broad and at the same time thin, and though he was a wonderfully pious, holy man, I can't help laughing when I think of his appearance. Joachim was poor. He was related to St. Joseph in the following way: Joseph's grandfather was descended from David through Solomon and was called Mathan. He had two sons, Jacob and Joses. Jacob was the father of Joseph. When Mathan died, his widow married as her second husband Levi (descended from David through Nathan), and by him had Matthat, the father of Heli, also called Joachim.

Wooing was in those days a very simple affair. The suitors were quite awkward and bashful, and when the young people spoke to each other, they accepted the idea of marriage

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<sup>17</sup> The Apocryphal Gospels tell us nothing about the ancestors of Our Lady, except the names of Joachim and Anne, which are also attested by the liturgy and the calendar. *Nat. Mar.* I further states that Joachim was from Nazareth and Anne from Bethlehem, and *Ps-Matt.* I that Anne's father was called Achar. Apart from these, AC's statements are all independent. (SB)

<sup>18</sup> Most of AC's geographical references are to features traceable on the map, even though some, such as the Valley of Zabulon here, are not specifically mentioned in the Bible. (SB)

<sup>19</sup> Matthat, son of Levi, is named in Luke's genealogy (3.23), and see further n. I, pp. 57-58. (SB)

as something that had to be. If the bride-to-be said yes, the parents were glad, but if she said no and had reason for it, they were just as satisfied. If everything was settled between the parents, the betrothal followed in the synagogue of the place. The priest prayed at the holy place where the scrolls of the Law lay, the parents in their usual place. Meanwhile the betrothed couple went together into a room and discussed their plans and their marriage contract; if they were in agreement, they told their parents, and their parents told the priest, who came towards them and received their declaration. On the next day the wedding took place in the open air and with many ceremonies.

Joachim and Anna were married in a little place with only a small school. Only one priest was present. Anna was about nineteen years old. They lived with Eliud, Anna's father. His house belonged to the town of Sephoris, but was some distance away from it, among a group of houses of which it was the largest. Here I think they lived for several years. There was something very distinguished about both of them; they were completely Jewish, but there was in them, unknown to themselves, a wonderful seriousness. I seldom saw them laugh, but they were certainly not sad when they began their married life. They had a serene and even character, and even in their young days they seemed a little like sedate old people. Often in my youth I have seen similar sedate young couples, and even then I used to say to myself, they are just like Anna and Joachim.

Their parents were well-to-do, they had many flocks and herds, beautiful carpets and household things, and many manservants and maidservants. I never saw them cultivating the fields, but often saw them driving cattle out to pasture. They were very pious, devout, charitable, simple, and upright. They often divided their herds and everything else into three parts, and gave a third of the beasts to the Temple, driving them there themselves and handing them over to the Temple servants. The second part they gave to the poor or in answer to the requests of their relations, some of whom were generally there to drive the beasts away. The remainder, which was generally the worst, they kept for themselves. They lived very frugally and gave to all who asked. As a child I often used to think, 'Giving brings plenty; he who gives, receives twice in return', for I saw that their third always increased and that soon everything was in such abundance that they were able to make the three divisions again. They had many relations who were assembled in their house on all festive occasions, but I never saw much feasting. I saw them giving food to the poor now and then, but I never saw them having real banquets. When the family were together I generally saw them lying on the ground in a circle, speaking of God in eager expectation. I often saw bad men from their neighbourhood watching them with ill-will and bitterness as they spoke together, looking up to heaven so full of longing. They were kindly disposed towards these ill-wishers, however, and lost no opportunity of asking them to their house, where they gave them double shares of everything. I often saw these men violently and angrily demanding what the good people gave them in love and charity. There were poor people in their own family, and I often saw them being given a sheep or even several.

The first child born to Anna in her father's house was a daughter, but she was not the child of promise. The signs which had been predicted were not present at her birth, which was attended by some trouble. I saw that Anna, when with child, was distressed about her servants. One of her maidservants had been led astray by a relation of Joachim. Anna, in

great dismay at this infringement of the strict discipline of her house reproached her somewhat severely for her fault, and the maidservant took her misfortune so to heart that she was delivered prematurely of a still-born child. Anna was inconsolable over this, fearing that it was her fault, with the result that her child was also born too soon. Her daughter, however, did not die. Since this child had not the signs of the promise and was born too early, Anna looked upon this as a punishment of God, and was greatly distressed at what she believed to be her own sin. She had, however, great joy in her new-born little daughter, who was called Maria. She was a dear, good, gentle child, and I always saw her growing up rather strong and fat. Her parents were very fond of her, but they felt some uneasiness and distress because they realized that she was not the expected holy fruit of their union. They therefore did penance and lived in continence for a long time. Afterwards Anna remained barren,<sup>20</sup> which she looked upon as the result of her having sinned, and so redoubled all her good works. I saw her often by herself in earnest prayer; I saw, too, how they often lived apart from each other, gave alms and sent sacrifices to the Temple.

Anna and Joachim had lived with Anna's father Eliud for some seven years (as I could see by the age of their first child), when they decided to separate from their parents and settle in a house with land in the neighbourhood of Nazareth that had come to them from Joachim's parents. There they intended in seclusion to begin their married life anew, and to bring down God's blessing on their union by a way of life more pleasing to Him. I saw this decision being taken in the family, and I saw Anna's parents making the arrangements for their children's new home. They divided their flocks and herds, setting apart for their children oxen, asses, and sheep, all much bigger than we have at home. All the household goods, crockery, and clothes were packed upon asses and oxen standing before the door. All the good people were so clever at packing the things up, and the beasts so intelligent in the way they took their loads and carried them off. We are not nearly so clever in packing things into carts as these people were in loading them onto beasts. They had beautiful household things; all the vessels were more delicate than nowadays, as if each had been made by the craftsman with special love and intention. I watched them packing the fragile jugs, decorated with beautiful ornamentation; they filled them with moss, wrapped more moss round them, and made them fast to both ends of a strap, so that they hung over the animal's backs, which were covered with bundles of coloured rugs and garments. I saw them, too, packing up costly rugs heavily embroidered with gold; and the parents gave their departing children a heavy little lump in a pouch, no doubt a piece of precious metal.

When everything was ready, the manservants and maidservants joined the procession, and drove the flocks and herds and the beasts of burden before them to the new home, which was some five or six hours' journey distant. I think it had belonged to Joachim's parents. After Anna and Joachim had taken leave of all friends and servants, with thanks and admonitions, they left their former home with much emotion and with good resolutions. Anna's mother was no longer alive, but I saw that the parents accompanied the couple to their new home. Perhaps Eliud had married again, or perhaps it was only

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<sup>20</sup> The Apocryphal Gospels (*Protev.* 2, *Ps-Matt.* 1, *Nat. Mar.* 1) represent Anna as childless until the conception of Mary. *Protev.* 2 also relates an incident (though of a different nature) with a handmaid. (SB)

Joachim's parents who were there. Maria Heli, Anna's elder daughter, who was about six or seven years old, was also of the party.

Their new home lay in a pleasant hilly country; it was surrounded by meadows and trees, and was one and a half hours, or a good hour, to the west of Nazareth, on a height between the valley of Nazareth and the valley of Zabulon. A ravine with an avenue of terebinth trees led from the house in the direction of Nazareth. In front of the house was an enclosed courtyard, the floor of which looked to me like bare rock. It was surrounded by a low wall of rocks or rough stones, with a wattle hedge growing either on it or behind it. On one side of this court there were small, not very solid buildings for the workpeople and for storing tools of various kinds; also an open shed had been put up there for cattle and beasts of burden. There were several gardens, and in one near the house was a great tree of a strange kind. Its branches hung down to the ground, took root there and threw up other trees, which did the same until it was encircled by a whole series of arbours. There was a door opening on hinges in the centre of the rather large house. The inside of the house was about as big as a moderate-sized village church, and was divided into different rooms by more or less movable wickerwork screens which did not reach to the ceiling. The door opened into the first part of the house, a big ante-room running the whole breadth of the building and used for banquets, or, if necessary, it could be divided up by light movable screens to make small bedrooms when there were many guests. Opposite the house-door was a less solid door in the middle of the back wall of this ante-room, leading to the middle part of the house through a passage with four bedrooms on each side of it. These rooms were partitioned off by light wickerwork screens of a man's height and ending at the top in open trellis-work. From here this passage led into the third or back part of the house, which was not rectangular, as it ended in a semicircular curve like the apse of a church. In the middle of this room, opposite the entrance, the wall of the fireplace rose up to the smoke-opening in the roof of the house; at the foot of this wall was the hearth where cooking was done. A five-branched lamp hung from the ceiling in front of this fireplace. At the side of it and behind it were several rather large rooms divided off by light screens. Behind the hearth, divided off by screens of rugs, were the rooms used by the family—the sleeping-places, the prayer alcove, the eating and working rooms.

Beyond the beautiful orchards round the house were fields, then a wood with a hill behind it.

When the travellers arrived in the house they found everything already in order and in its place, for the old people had sent the things on ahead and had them arranged. The menservants and maidservants had unpacked and settled all the things just as beautifully and neatly as when they were packed up, for they were so helpful and worked so quietly and intelligently by themselves that one did not have to be giving them orders all the time about every single thing as one must do today. Thus everything was soon settled and quiet, and the parents, having brought their children into their new home, blessed and embraced them in farewell, and set off on their journey home, accompanied by their little granddaughter, who went back with them. I never saw feasting going on during such visits and on similar occasions; they often lay in a circle and had a few little bowls and jugs on the carpet before them, but their talk was generally of divine things and holy expectations.

I now saw the holy couple beginning an entirely new life here. It was their intention to offer to God all that was past, and to behave as though their marriage had only then taken place, endeavouring to live in a manner pleasing to God, and thus to bring down upon them His blessing which they so earnestly desired beyond all else. I saw both of them going amongst their flocks and herds and following the example of their parents (as I have described above) in dividing them into three portions between the Temple, the poor, and themselves. The best and choicest portion was driven off to the Temple; the poor were given the next best one, and the least good they kept for themselves. This they did with all their possessions. Their house was quite spacious; they lived and slept in separate little rooms, where I saw them very often praying by themselves with great devotion. I saw them living in this way for a long time, giving generous alms, and each time they divided their herds and goods I saw that everything quickly increased again. They lived very abstemiously, observing periods of self-denial and continence. I saw them praying in penitential garments, and I often saw Joachim kneeling in supplication to God when he was with his herds far away in the pastures.

For nineteen years after the birth of their first child they lived thus devoutly before God in constant yearning for the gift of fruitfulness and with an increasing distress. I saw ill-disposed neighbours coming to them and speaking ill of them, saying that they must be bad people since no children were born to them, that the little girl with Anna's parents was not really her daughter, but had been adopted by her because of her barrenness, otherwise she would have had her at home, and so forth. Each time they heard such words, the distress of the good couple was renewed.

Anna's steadfast faith was supported by an inmost certainty that the coming of the Messiah was near, and that she herself was among His human relations. She prayed for the fulfilment of the Promise with loud supplications, and both she and Joachim were always striving after more perfect purity of life. The shame of her unfruitfulness distressed her deeply. She could hardly appear in the synagogue without affront. Joachim, though short and thin, was robust, and I often saw him going to Jerusalem with the beasts for sacrifice. Anna was not tall either, and very delicately formed. Her grief so consumed her that her cheeks, though still slightly tinged with red, were quite hollow. They continued to give portions of their herds to the Temple and to the poor, while the portion they kept for themselves grew ever smaller and smaller.

After having besought God's blessing on their marriage for so many years in vain, I saw that Joachim was minded to offer another sacrifice at the Temple. He and Anna prepared themselves for this by penitential devotions. I saw them lying on the hard earth in prayer during the night, girt in penitential garments; after which Joachim went at sunrise across the country to where his herds were pasturing, while Anna remained at home by herself. Soon after this I saw Anna sending him doves, other birds and many different things in cages and baskets. They were all taken to him by menservants to be offered up in the Temple. He took two donkeys from the pasture, and loaded them with these baskets and with others into which he put, I think, three very lively little white creatures with long necks. I cannot remember whether they were lambs or kids. He had with him a staff with a light on the top of it, which looked as if it were shining inside a hollow gourd. I saw him arriving with his

menservants and beasts of burden at a beautiful green field between Bethany and Jerusalem, place where later I often saw Jesus stay. They journeyed on to the Temple, and stabled the donkeys at the same Temple inn, near the cattle-market, where Joachim and Anna afterwards lodged at Mary's Presentation. They then took the sacrificial offerings up the steps, and passed through the dwellings of the Temple servants as before.<sup>21</sup> Here Joachim's servants went back after handing over the offerings.

Joachim himself entered the hall, where stood the basin of water in which all the sacrifices were washed. He then went through a long passage into a hall on the left of the place in which were the altar of incense, the table of the shew-breads and the seven-branched candlestick.<sup>22</sup> There were several others assembled there to make sacrifices, and it was here that Joachim had to bear his hardest trial. I saw that one of the priests, Reuben<sup>23</sup> by name, disdained his offerings, and did not put them with the others on the right-hand of the hall, where they could be seen behind the bars, but thrust them on one side. He reproached the unfortunate Joachim loudly and before the others for his unfruitfulness, refused to admit him and sent him, in disgrace, to an alcove enclosed with gratings. I saw that upon this Joachim left the Temple in the greatest distress and betook himself to an assembly-house of the Essenes near Machaerus, passing Bethany on the way. Here he sought counsel and consolation. (In this same house, and earlier in a similar one near Bethlehem, lived the prophet Manachem,<sup>24</sup> who prophesied to the young Herod about his kingdom and his crimes.) From here Joachim betook himself to his most distant herds on Mount Hermon. His way led him across the Jordan through the desert of Gaddi. Mount Hermon is a long narrow mountain, beautifully green and rich with fruit-trees on the sunny side, but covered with snow on the other.

Joachim was so grieved and ashamed at having been rejected with scorn at the Temple that he did not even send to tell Anna whither he had betaken himself. She heard, however, of the humiliation he had suffered from others who had witnessed it, and her distress was indescribable. I saw her often lying weeping with her face to the earth, because she had no knowledge of where Joachim was. I believe that he remained hidden among his flocks on Mount Hermon for as long as five months. During the end of that time Anna's distress was much increased by the rudeness of one of her maidservants, who kept reproaching her for her misfortunes. Once, however, when this maidservant asked to be allowed to go away for the Feast of Tabernacles (which was just beginning), Anna, remembering how her former maidservant had been led astray, refused permission out of vigilant care for her household.

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<sup>21</sup> The reader must not be disconcerted by Catherine Emmerich's references (here and subsequently) to events which may not yet have been mentioned in her account. It must be remembered that the visions from the story of the Blessed Virgin, here given in chronological order, were vouchsafed to Catherine Emmerich year by year on the various church festivals with which these visions were connected; so that now when relating in July and August 1821, at the time of the feasts of St. Anne and St. Joachim, her visions of the life of Our Lady's parents, she is referring (in order to make herself more comprehensible) to something which she had already seen in previous years in November on the occasion of the feast of Our Lady's Presentation at the Temple. (CB)

<sup>22</sup> Cf. III Kings 7-48,49. (SB)

<sup>23</sup> The priest Reuben appears in *Protev.* 1, *Ps-Matt.* 2, and in *Nat. Mar.* 2 is named Issachar. (SB)

<sup>24</sup> This Manachem appears in no document. (SB)

Whereupon this maidservant attacked her so violently, declaring that her barrenness and Joachim's desertion of her was God's punishment for her severity, that Anna could not bear to have her in her house any more. She sent her back to her parents with presents and accompanied by two menservants, with the request that they would take back their daughter who had been entrusted to her, as she could not keep her in her house any longer. After sending away this maid, Anna went sadly into her room to pray. Towards evening she threw a large shawl over her head, wrapping herself in it completely, and went with a shaded light to the great tree in the courtyard which I, have described before as forming an arbour. Here she lit a lamp hanging on this tree in a sort of box, and prayed from a scroll. This tree was a very large one, there were arbours and seats arranged under it, for its branches reached over the wall to the ground, where they took root and shot up and again sank to the ground and took root, so that a whole series of arbours encircled it. This tree was like the tree in the Garden of Eden which bore the forbidden fruit. Its fruits hung from the ends of the branches generally in bunches of five. They are pear-shaped, and their flesh has blood-coloured streaks; there is a hollow in the centre, round which are the seeds embedded in the flesh. The leaves are very large, resembling, I think, those with which Adam and Eve covered themselves in the Garden of Eden. The Jews used these leaves especially for the Feast of Tabernacles. They decorated the walls with them, because they could be fitted together beautifully one behind the other like fishes' scales. Anna remained under this tree for a long time, crying to God and begging that even though He made her barren, yet He might not keep her pious companion Joachim far from her. And lo, there appeared to her an Angel of God, he seemed to step down before her from the top of the tree, and spoke to her, telling her to be of good heart, for the Lord had heard her prayer<sup>25</sup>; she was to journey next day to the Temple with two maidservants, taking with her doves as a sacrifice. Joachim's prayer, too, he said, had been heard, and he was on his way to the Temple with his offerings; she would meet him under the Golden Gate. Joachim's sacrifice would be accepted, and they would be blessed and made fruitful; soon she would learn the name by which their child was to be called. He told her, too, that he had given a like message to her husband. Then he disappeared.

Anna, full of joy, thanked God for His mercies. She then went back into the house and gave her maidservants the necessary orders for their journey to the Temple next morning. I saw her afterwards lying down to sleep after praying. Her bed was a narrow blanket with a pillow under her head. (In the morning her blanket was rolled up.) She took off her upper garments, wrapped herself from head to foot in an ample covering and lay down at full length on her right side, with her face to the wall against which was the bed. After she had slept for a short time, I saw a brightness pouring down towards her from above, which on approaching her bed was transformed into the figure of a shining youth. It was the angel of the Lord, who told her that she would conceive a holy child; stretching his hand over her, he wrote great shining on the wall which formed the name MARY. Thereupon the angel dissolved into light and disappeared. During this time Anna seemed to be wrapped in a secret, joyful dream. She rose half-waking from her couch, prayed with great intensity, and

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<sup>25</sup> The story of Anna's consolation by the angel, and the appointment of a rendezvous at the Golden Gate is found in *Protev.* 4, *Ps-Matt.* 3, *Nat. Mar.* 3. (SB)

then fell asleep again without having completely recovered consciousness. After midnight she awoke joyfully, as if by an inner inspiration, and now she saw, with alarm mixed with joy, the writing on the wall. This seemed to be of shining golden-red letters, large and few in number; she gazed at them with unspeakable joy and contrite humility until day came, when they faded away. She saw the writing so clearly, and her joy thereat became so great, that when she got up she appeared quite young again. In the moment when the light of the angel had enveloped Anna in grace, I saw a radiance under her heart and recognized in her the chosen Mother, the illuminated vessel of the grace that was at hand. What I saw in her I can only describe by saying that I recognized in her the cradle and tabernacle of the holy child she was to conceive and preserve; a mother blessed indeed. I saw that by God's grace Anna was able to bear fruit. I cannot describe the wonderful manner in which I recognized this. I saw Anna as the cradle of all mankind's salvation, and at the same time as a sacred altar-vessel, opened, yet hidden behind a curtain. I recognized this after a natural manner, and all this knowledge of mine was one and was natural and sacred at the same time. (Anna was at that time, I think, forty-three years old.) She now got up, lit the lamp, prayed, and then started on her journey to Jerusalem with her offerings. All the members of her household were full of strange joyfulness that morning, though none but Anna knew of the coming of the angel.

At the same time I saw Joachim among his flocks on Mount Hermon beyond the Jordan constantly praying God to grant his supplications. As he watched the young lambs bleating and frolicking round their mothers, he felt sorely distressed at having no children, but did not tell his shepherds why he was so sad. It was near the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, and he and his shepherds were beginning to put up the tabernacles. Remembering his humiliation at the Temple, he had abandoned the idea of going up as usual to Jerusalem for the feast and offering sacrifices, but as he was praying I saw an angel appear to him, telling him to be of good courage and to journey to the Temple, for his sacrifice would be accepted and his prayers granted. He would meet his wife under the Golden Gate. Thereupon I saw Joachim joyfully dividing his flocks and herds once more into three portions—and what numbers of fine beasts he had! The least good he kept for himself, the next best he sent to the Essenes, and the best of all he drove to the Temple with his herdsmen. He arrived in Jerusalem on the fourth day of the feast, and stayed in his usual lodgings near the Temple. Anna arrived in Jerusalem also on the fourth day of the feast and stayed with Zacharias' relations by the fish-market. She did not meet Joachim until the end of the feast.

Although on the previous occasion it was by a sign from above that Joachim's offerings were rejected, I saw that the priest who had treated him so harshly instead of comforting and consoling him was in some way (I cannot remember how) punished by God. Now, however, the priests had received a divine warning to accept his offerings, and I saw that some of them, on being told of his approach with the sacrificial beasts, went out of the Temple to meet him and accepted his gifts. The cattle which he had brought as a gift to the Temple were not his actual offering. The sacrifice he brought to be slaughtered consisted of two lambs and three lively little animals, kids, I think. I saw, too, that many of his acquaintances congratulated him on his sacrifice being accepted. I saw that because of the



feast the whole Temple was open and decorated with garlands of fruit and greenery, and that in one place a Tabernacle had been set up on eight detached pillars. Joachim went from place to place in the Temple exactly as he did before. His sacrifice was slaughtered and burnt at the usual place. Some part of it was, however, burnt at another place, to the right, I think, of the entrance hall with the great teaching pulpit.<sup>26</sup> I saw the priests making a sacrifice of incense in the Holy Place. Lamps, too, were lighted and lights burned on the seven-branched candlestick, but not on all seven branches at once. I often saw that on different occasions different branches of it were lighted. As the smoke arose from the offering, I saw as it were a beam of light falling upon the officiating priest in the Holy Place and at the same time on Joachim without in the hall. There came a sudden pause in what was going on, it seemed from astonishment and the realization of something supernatural. Thereupon I saw that two priests went out into the hall to Joachim as though by God's command, and led him through the side rooms up to the golden altar of incense in the Holy Place. The priest then laid something on the altar. This was not, I could see, separate grains of incense; it looked like a solid lump, but I cannot remember what it was.<sup>27</sup> This lump gave out a powerful and sweet smell of incense as it was burnt upon the altar of incense before the veil of the Holy of Holies. Then I saw the priest going away, leaving Joachim alone in the Holy Place. While the incense-offering was being consumed I saw Joachim in a state of ecstasy, kneeling with outstretched arms. I saw approaching him a shining figure of an angel, such as later appeared to Zacharias when he received the promise of the Baptist's birth. The angel spoke to Joachim, and gave him a scroll on which I recognized, written in shining letters, the three names Helia, Hanna, Miriam.<sup>28</sup> Beside the last of these names I saw the picture of a little Ark of the Covenant or tabernacle. Joachim fastened this scroll to his breast under his garment. The angel told him that his unfruitfulness was no disgrace for him, but on the contrary, an honour, for the child his wife was to conceive was to be the

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<sup>26</sup> This statement is confirmed by the following: According to Jewish tradition a portion of the burnt offering had to be burnt not on the altar, but near it and to the east, on the so-called ash-heap. This portion was the sinew of the thigh, which in Jacob's wrestling with the Angel withered up on being touched by the latter ('forthwith it shrank', Gen. 32.25). See also Gen. 32.32. (CB)

Gen. 32.32 states that the Israelites 'eat not of the sinew which shrank', but there is no available subsequent legislation about this matter. (SB)

<sup>27</sup> It was doubtless a mixture, melted together, of the ingredients required by Jewish tradition for the daily incense-offering, namely myrrh, cassia, spikenard, saffron, sweet-scented reed, cinnamon, costus, sea-lavender, thrift, galbanum, and incense, mixed with pure salt. (CB)

Exod. 30.34-38 prescribed four elements in the preparation of incense. Later rabbinic tradition increased these (as CB notes), and by the time of Christ thirteen elements were used, as Josephus relates (*Wars*, V, v, 5). (SB)

<sup>28</sup> The writer was at the time unaware that these three names were only other forms of Joachim, Anna, and Mary. His later discovery of this proof of the accuracy of Catherine Emmerich's version of the names was a striking testimony to the authenticity of her visions. (CB)

See *infra*, n. I, pp. 57-58, on the identification of Joachim and Heli. The name Joachim (*Yehoyaqim*) means 'The Lord shall make to stand (or rise)' (e.g. IV Kings 23.34). The name Helia (presumably *Heli-yah*) would mean 'My strength is the Lord' but does not occur in the Bible. It is, however, maintained in *Cath. Enc.*, art. 'Virgin Mary', p. 464, E d, that Elia (Helia) is but an abbreviation of the name Eliacim (*Elyaqim*), which, using the other divine name, means 'God shall make to stand (or rise)' and, indeed, in IV Kings 23.34 the name of King Eliacim was changed by Pharaoh to Joakim (*Yoyaqim*). (SB)

immaculate fruit of God's blessing upon him and the crowning point of the blessing of Abraham. Joachim, being unable to grasp this, was led by the angel behind the veil hanging in front of the Holy of Holies. Between this veil and the bars of the screen before the Holy of Holies was a space large enough to stand in. I saw the angel approach the Ark of the Covenant, and it seemed to me as if he took something out of it, for I saw him hold towards Joachim a shining globe or circle of light, bidding him breathe upon it and look into it. (When he held the circle of light so near his face it made me think of a custom at our country weddings where the sacristan gives one a little board to kiss with a head painted on it, and makes one pay three halfpence for doing so.) Then I saw as if all kinds of pictures appeared in the circle of light when Joachim breathed on it and that these were visible to him. His breath had in no way dimmed the circle of light, and the angel told him that the conception of Anna's child would be as untarnished as this globe, which had remained shining in spite of his having breathed on it. Thereupon I saw as if the angel lifted the globe until it stood like an encircling halo in the air, in which I saw, as through an opening in it, a series of pictures starting with the Fall and ending with the Redemption of mankind. The whole course of the world passed before my eyes as one picture merged into another. I knew and understood it all, but I cannot reproduce the details. Above, at the very summit, I saw the Blessed Trinity, and below and on one side of the Trinity I saw the Garden of Eden, with Adam and Eve, the Fall, the promise of Redemption and all its prototypes—Noah, the Flood, the Ark, the receiving of the blessing through Abraham, its handing on to his first-born Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, how it was taken from Jacob by the angel with whom he struggled, how the blessing came to Joseph in Egypt and increased in glory in him and in his wife. I saw how the sacred presence of the blessing was removed by Moses from Egypt with relics of Joseph and his wife Aseneth, and became the Holy of Holies of the Ark of the Covenant, the presence of the living God among His people. Then I saw the reverence paid by God's people to this sacred thing and their ceremonies respecting it; I saw the relationships and marriages which formed the sacred genealogy of Our Lady's ancestry, as well as all the prototypes and symbols of her and of Our Saviour in history and in the prophets. All this I saw in encircling symbols and also rising from the lower part of the ring of light. I saw pictures of great cities, towers, palaces, thrones, gates, gardens, and flowers, all strangely woven together as it were by bridges of light; and all were being attacked and assaulted by fierce beasts and other figures of might. These pictures all signified how Our Blessed Lady's ancestral family, from which God was to take Flesh and be made Man, had been led, like all that is holy, by God's grace through many assaults and struggles. I remember, too, having seen at a certain point in this series of pictures a garden surrounded by a thick hedge of thorns, which a host of serpents and other loathsome creatures attempted in vain to penetrate. I also saw a strong tower assaulted on all sides by men-at-arms, who were falling down from it. I saw many pictures of this kind, relating to the history of the ancestry of Our Lady; and the bridges and passages which joined all together signified the victory over all attempts to disturb, hinder, or interrupt the work of salvation. It was as if by God's compassion there had been poured into mankind, as into a muddy stream, a pure flesh and a pure blood, and as if this had with great toil and difficulty to reconstitute itself out of its scattered elements, the whole stream striving the while to draw it

into its troubled waters; and then as if by the countless mercies of God and the faithful co-operation of mankind, it had at last issued forth, after many pollutions and many cleansings, in an unfailing stream out of which rose the Blessed Virgin, from whom the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us.

Among the pictures that I saw in the globe of light there were many which occur in the litany of Our Lady. Whenever I say that litany, I see them and recognize them and venerate them with great devotion. The pictures in the globe unfolded themselves still further till they reached the fulfilment of all God's compassion towards mankind, so divided and dispersed in its fallen state, and ended, on the side opposite the Garden of Eden, with the heavenly Jerusalem at the foot of the Throne of God. After I had seen all these pictures, the globe (which was really a series of pictures passing in and out of a circle of light) disappeared. I think that all this was a communication to Joachim of a vision revealed to him by the angel and also seen by me. Whenever I receive such a communication, it appears in a circle of light like a globe.

I saw now that the angel touched or anointed Joachim's forehead with the tip of his thumb and forefinger, and that he gave him a shining morsel to eat and a luminous liquid to drink from a gleaming little chalice which he held between two fingers. It was of the shape of the chalice at the Last Supper, but without a foot. It seemed to me, too, that this food which he put in his mouth took the form of a little shining ear of corn and a little shining cluster of grapes, and I understood that thereafter every impurity and every sinful desire left Joachim. Thereupon I saw that the angel imparted to Joachim the highest and holiest fruit of the blessing given by God to Abraham, and culminating, through Joseph, in the holy thing within the Ark of the Covenant, in the presence of God among His people. He gave Joachim this blessing in the same form as I had been shown before, except that while the angel of benediction gave Abraham the blessing from himself, out of his bosom as it were, he seemed to give it to Joachim from out of the Holy of Holies.<sup>29</sup>

The blessing of Abraham was as it were the beginning of God's grace given in blessing to the father of His future people so that from him might proceed the stones for the building of His Temple. But when Joachim received the blessing, it was as though the angel were taking the holy benediction from the tabernacle of this Temple and delivering it to a priest, in order that from him might be formed the holy vessel in which the Word was to be made Flesh. All this cannot be expressed in words, for I speak of that Holy of Holies inviolate, yet violated in man when he sinned and fell. From my earliest youth I have very often, in my visions from the Old Testament, seen into the Ark of the Covenant, and have always had the impression of a complete church, but more solemn and awe-inspiring. I saw therein not only the Tables of the Law as the written Word of God, but also a sacramental presence of the

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<sup>29</sup> Catherine Emmerich, who in communicating her many and various visions from the Old Testament often spoke in great detail of the Ark of the Covenant, never said that after the Babylonian captivity the first Ark of the Covenant with all its contents was placed in the rebuilt Temple or later in the Temple restored by Herod. She did, however, state that there was a restored Ark in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, in which were still preserved a few remains of the sacred contents of the first Ark of the Covenant, some of which she saw in the possession of the Essenes and venerated by them. (CB)

Josephus (*Wars*, V, v, 5) plainly states that there was 'nothing at all' in the Holy of Holies in Herod's Temple. (SB)

Living God,<sup>30</sup> like the roots of the wine and wheat and of the flesh and blood of the future sacrifice of our redemption.

The grace given by this blessed presence produced, with the co-operation of God-fearing men under the Law, that holy tree whose final blossoming was the pure flower in which the Word became flesh and God became Man, thus giving us in the New Covenant His humanity and His divinity by instituting the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, without which we cannot attain eternal life. I have never known the Ark of the Covenant without the sacramental presence of God except when it had fallen into the hands of the enemy, at which times the holy presence was safe in the hands of the high priest or of one of the prophets. When only the Tables of the Law were present in the Ark of the Covenant, without the holy treasure, it seemed to me like the Temple of the Samaritans on Mount Garizim or like a church of our own time which is without the Blessed Sacrament and, instead of the Tables of the Law written by God's hand, contains only the books of Holy Scripture imperfectly understood by mankind.

In the Ark of the Covenant made by Moses, which stood in the Temple and Tabernacle of Solomon, I saw this most Holy Thing of the Old Covenant in the form of a shining circle crossed by two smaller rays of light intersecting each other; but now, when the angel imparted the blessing to Joachim, I saw this blessing being given to him in the form as it were of something shining, like a shining seed or bean in shape, which he laid in the open breast of Joachim's garment. When the blessing was imparted to Abraham, I saw grace being conveyed to him in the same manner, and its virtue and efficacy remaining with him in the degree ordained by God until he handed it over to his first-born son Isaac, from whom it passed to Jacob and from him, through the angel, to Joseph, and from Joseph and his wife, with increased virtue, to the Ark of the Covenant. I perceived that the angel bound Joachim to secrecy, and I understood why it was that later Zacharias, the Baptist's father, had become dumb after he had received the blessing and the promise of Elisabeth's fruitfulness from the Angel Gabriel at the Altar of Incense. [St. Luke 1.9-22.] It was revealed to me, that with this blessing Joachim received the highest fruit and the true fulfilment of Abraham's blessing, namely the blessing for the immaculate conception of the most Holy Virgin who was to bruise the head of the serpent. The angel then led Joachim back into the Holy Place and disappeared, upon which Joachim sank to the ground in an ecstasy as though paralysed. The priests who re-entered the Holy Place found him radiant with joy. They lifted him up reverently, and placed him outside in a seat generally used only by priests. Here they washed his face, held some strong-smelling substance to his nostrils, gave him to drink and in general treated him as one does someone who has fainted. When he had recovered, he looked young and strong, and was beaming with joy.

It was a warning from on high that had led Joachim into the Holy Place, and it was by a similar inspiration that he was brought into a subterranean passage which belonged to the consecrated part of the Temple and ran under it and under the Golden Gate. I have been told what was the meaning and origin of this passage when the Temple was built, and also what it was used for, but I have no clear recollection of this. Some religious observance

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<sup>30</sup> The reader need not be scandalized by the expression 'sacramental presence of God', for Holy Writ dearly declares that God was present above the Ark of the Covenant in a mysterious and visible manner. (CB)

relating to the blessing and reconciliation of the unfruitful was, I think, connected with this passage. In certain circumstances people were brought into it for rites of purification, expiation, absolution, and the like.<sup>31</sup> Joachim was led by priests near the slaughtering-place through a little door into this passage. The priests turned back, but Joachim continued along the passage, which gradually sloped downwards. Anna had also come to the Temple with her maidservant, who was carrying the doves for sacrifice in wicker baskets. She had handed over her offering and had revealed to a priest that she had been bidden by an angel to meet her husband under the Golden Gate. I now saw that she was led by priests, accompanied by some venerable women (among whom I think was the prophetess Anna), through an entrance on the other side into the consecrated passage, where her companions left her. I had a very wonderful view of what this passage was like. Joachim went through a little door; the passage sloped downwards, and was at first narrow but became broader afterwards. The walls were of glistening gold and green, and a reddish light shone in from above. I saw beautiful pillars like twisted trees and vines. After passing through about a third of the passage Joachim came to a place in the midst of which stood a pillar in the form of a palm-tree with hanging leaves and fruits. Here he was met by Anna, radiant with happiness. They embraced each other with holy joy, and each told the other their good tidings. They were in a state of ecstasy and enveloped in a cloud of light. I saw this light issuing from a great host of angels, who were carrying the appearance of a high shining tower and hovering above the heads of Anna and Joachim. The form of this tower was the same as I see in pictures, from the litany of Our Lady, of the Tower of David, the Tower of Ivory, and so forth. I saw that this tower seemed to disappear between Anna and Joachim, who were enveloped in a glory of brightness. I understood, that as a result of the grace here given, the conception of Mary was as pure as all conceptions would have been but for the Fall.<sup>32</sup> I had at the same time an indescribable vision. The heavens opened above them, and I saw the joy of the Holy Trinity and of the angels, and their participation in the mysterious blessing here bestowed on Mary's parents. Anna and Joachim returned, praising God, to the exit under the Golden Gate: towards the end the passage sloped upwards. They came into a kind of chapel under a beautiful and high arch, where many lights were burning. Here they were received by priests who led them away. The part of the Temple above which was the hall of the Sanhedrin lay over the middle of the subterranean passage; above this end of it were, I think, dwellings of priests whose duty it was to look after the vestments. Joachim

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<sup>31</sup> The matter of the tunnel is one that has long puzzled students. Josephus (*Ant.*, XV, xi, 5) certainly mentions an eastern gate where the 'pure' could enter, and (*ib.*, 7) a tunnel that led from the eastern gate into the central enclosure, adding that this was built specially for the king (Herod). Then the Mishnah, *Middoth*, I, 9, mentions a tunnel leading under the Temple to a bath-house within the enclosure, where ceremonial cleansing could be performed. Whether these refer to the same tunnel is uncertain. (SB)

<sup>32</sup> The figure of a tower is a symbol of the Virgin Mary. The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is here described as miraculous and virginal. This point more clearly expressed in another book of AC's visions, *The Lowly Life and Bitter Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.

If not for the Fall of Adam and Eve from grace, all conceptions would have been miraculous virgin conceptions. However, the singular grace of the Immaculate Conception, by which Mary was preserved from inheriting original sin from parents who were sinners, would not have been found in all conceptions, even Adam and Eve never sinned. That singular grace belongs solely to the Virgin Mary. (RC)

and Anna now came to a kind of bay at the outermost edge of the Temple hill, overlooking the valley of Josaphat, where the path could no longer go straight on but branched to right and left. After they had visited another priest's house, I saw Joachim and Anna and their servants starting on their journey home. On their arrival at Nazareth, Joachim, after a joyful meal, gave food to many poor people and distributed generous alms. I saw how full he and Anna were of joy and fervour and gratitude to God when they thought of His compassion towards them; I often saw them praying together with tears.

It was explained to me here that the Blessed Virgin was begotten by her parents in holy obedience and complete purity of heart, and that thereafter they lived together in continence in the greatest devoutness and fear of God. I was at the same time clearly instructed how immeasurably the holiness of children was encouraged by the purity, chastity, and continence of their parents and by their resistance to all unclean temptations; and how continence after conception preserves the fruit of the womb from many sinful impulses. In general, I was given an overflowing abundance of knowledge about the roots of deformity and sin.

[Here follow various visions which Catherine Emmerich communicated at different times in the course of her yearly meditations during the octave of the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Though they do not directly continue the story of Our Lady's life, yet they throw a remarkable light on the mystery of her election, preparation, and veneration as the vessel of grace. As these visions were related by Catherine Emmerich in the midst of much suffering and many interruptions, it is not surprising if they are somewhat fragmentary in character.]

I saw in a wonderful picture that God showed the angels how it was His will to restore mankind after the Fall. At first sight I did not understand this picture, but soon it became quite clear to me. I saw the Throne of God and the Holy Trinity, and at the same time a movement within that Trinity. I saw the nine choirs of angels, and how God announced to them in what manner it was His will to restore the fallen human race. I saw an inexpressible joy among the angels over this. I was now shown in a number of symbolic pictures the unfolding of God's designs for the salvation of mankind. I saw these pictures appearing among the nine choirs of angels and following each other in a kind of historical sequence. I saw the angels helping to make these pictures, protecting and defending them. I cannot now remember for certain the order in which they appeared, but will tell in God's name what I can still recollect. I saw a mountain as of precious stones appear before the Throne of God; it grew and spread. It was in terraces, like a throne; then it changed into the shape of a tower—a tower which enshrined every treasure of the spirit and every gift of grace and was surrounded by the nine choirs of angels. At one side of this tower vine tendrils and ears of corn, intertwined like the fingers of folded hands, seemed to be streaming down from the edge of a golden cloud. I cannot remember at what exact moment in the whole picture I saw this. I saw in the sky a figure like a virgin which passed into the tower and as it were melted into it. The tower was very broad and was flat at the top; it seemed to have an opening at the back through which the virgin passed into it. This was not the Blessed Virgin as she is in time, but as she is in eternity, in God. I saw the appearance of her being formed before the

face of the Holy Trinity, just as when one breathes, a little cloud is formed before one's mouth.<sup>33</sup> I also saw something going forth from the Holy Trinity towards the tower. At this moment of the picture I saw a vessel like a ciborium being formed among the choirs of angels. The angels all joined in giving this vessel the form of a tower surrounded by many pictures full of significance. Beside it stood two figures joining hands behind it. This spiritual vessel went on increasing in size, beauty, and richness. Then I saw something proceed from God and pass through all nine choirs of angels; it seemed to me like a little shining holy cloud which became more and more distinct as it approached the sacramental vessel which it finally entered. But in order that I should recognize this to be a real and essential blessing of God conferring the grace of a pure and sinless line from generation to generation (like the cultivation of some plant in all its purity), I finally saw this blessing in the shape of a shining bean, enter the ciborium, which then passed into the tower.<sup>34</sup> I saw the angels actively taking part in the showing forth of these visions. There rose, however, from the depths below a series of what seemed to be false visions, for I saw the angels combating these and thrusting them aside. Many of these false visions I have forgotten, but here is what I still remember about them.

I saw a church rise up from below, almost in the same form which the holy universal Church always appears to me when I see it not as a particular building but as the Holy Catholic Church in general. There was, however, this difference, that latter has a tower over the entrance and the church rising from the depths had not. It was a very large church but a false one. The angels thrust it aside so that it stood all crooked. I also saw a great bowl, with a lip on one side; which tried to enter the false church but was also thrust aside. I then saw the angels preparing a chalice, of the shape of the Chalice of the last Supper, which passed into the tower entered by the virgin. I also saw a lower tower or building appear, with many doors, through which I saw crowds of people passing, among them figures like Abraham and the Children of Israel. I think this had reference to the slavery in Egypt. I saw a round terraced tower arise, which also had reference to Egypt. This was thrust back and made to stand crooked. I also saw an Egyptian temple arise, like the one on the ceiling of which I had seen the Egyptian priests, idolaters, fastening the image of a winged virgin after

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<sup>33</sup> See the Little Chapter in the Vespers of the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Ecclus. 24.14. 'From the beginning, and before the world, was I created, and unto the world to come I shall not cease to be' (*'Ab initio et ante saecula creata sum et usque ad futura saecula non desinam'*). Compare also the passage of Holy Writ which has long been applied by the Church to Mary: 'I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures, I made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth... My throne is in a pillar of cloud' (*'Ego ex ore Altissimi prodivi primogenita ante omnem creaturam, ego feci in coelis, ut orietur lumen indeficiens. Thronus meus in columna nubis'*) (Ecclus. 24.5). (CB)

<sup>34</sup> In the course of her many visions, some historical and some symbolical, from the Old and New Testaments, Catherine Emmerich referred to this blessing in many different connections, some of which we will here enumerate in their chronological order. 'This was the same blessing by means of which Eve was brought forth from the right side of Adam. I saw this blessing withdrawn by God's merciful providence from Adam when he was about to acquiesce in sin; but it was restored to Abraham by the angel after the institution of circumcision, with the promise of Isaac's birth. Abraham handed it on, with solemn sacramental ceremony, to his first-born Isaac, from whom it descended to Jacob. It was taken away from Jacob by the angel that strove with him and handed on to Joseph in Egypt. Finally it was taken by Moses, together with the bones of Joseph, in the night before the flight out of Egypt, and became the Israelites' sacred treasure in the Ark of the Covenant.'

receiving from Elias' messenger communications of a prophetic vision of Our Lady. I will speak of his vision later; it was seen by the prophet on Mount Carmel. This temple, too, was thrust back and made to stand crooked.

I then saw between the choirs of angels, to the right of the holy tower, a branch which put forth buds, making a whole ancestral tree of little male and female figures holding each other's hands. This family tree ended with the appearance of a little crib with a little child in it. The crib was of the same shape as the one I had seen exposed in the temple of the Three Kings.<sup>35</sup> Then I saw a beautiful great church appear.

The way in which all these pictures were united with each other and yet melted one into the other was very wonderful. The whole vision was indescribably rich and full of significance. Even the hateful, evil, false appearances of towers, chalices, and churches, which were thrust aside, were made to assist in the unfolding of the scheme of salvation.

[When recounting these scattered visions, she came back again and again to the unspeakable joy of the angels. There was no real conclusion to these fragmentary visions,

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<sup>35</sup> In Catherine Emmerich's visions of the public ministry of Our Lord, which she daily recounted in chronological order for three years, she saw Our Lord, after the raising of Lazarus (which happened on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> of His third year of teaching), withdraw Himself beyond the Jordan in order to escape the persecutions of the Pharisees. From here He dismissed the apostles and disciples to their homes, and Himself went on with three young men named Eliud, Silas, and Erimen-Sear. (These were descended from the companions of the Three Kings who, when the latter went away, had remained behind in the Holy Land and intermarried with the families of the shepherds of Bethlehem.) With these Our Lord journeyed to the place where the Three Kings were then settled, returning afterwards to the Promised Land by way of Egypt. On the first day of the January which preceded His death, He re-entered Judaea, and on the evening of Monday, Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, He again met the Apostles at Jacob's well, thereafter teaching and healing in Sichar, Ephron, round Jericho, in Capharnaum, and in Nazareth. Towards February He came again to Bethany and the surrounding country, teaching and healing in Bethabara, Ephraim, and round Jericho. From the middle of February till His Passion, He was in Bethany and Jerusalem by turns. The Evangelists are silent about the whole period between the raising of Lazarus and Palm Sunday, except for St. John, who says (11.53, 54): 'From that day therefore they devised to put him to death, wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but he went into a country near the desert, unto a city that is called Ephrem. And there he abode with his disciples.' Catherine Emmerich mentions the presence of Our Lord in Ephraim near Jericho on Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>, and again between Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, without giving the exact date. We must, however, return to what gave rise to this note. From Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the third year of His ministry, Catherine Emmerich saw and daily described the sojourn of Our Lord and His three companions in a town of tents inhabited by the three Holy Kings of Arabia, where they had established themselves shortly after their return from Bethlehem. Two of these chieftains were still alive. She describes in most remarkable detail their way of life and their religious practices and the festivities with which they received Jesus. Amongst many other things she recounted from Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> how these star-worshippers brought Our Lord into their temple (which she described as a square flattened pyramid surrounded with terraced wooden steps), from the top of which they observed the stars and inside which they performed their religious ceremonies. They showed Him in it the image of the Child Jesus in the crib, which they had made and placed therein immediately after their return from Bethlehem; this was made in the exact shape of the one they had seen in the star before they set out on their journey to Bethlehem. Catherine Emmerich describes it in the following words: 'The whole representation was in gold and surrounded by a star-shaped sheet of gold. The golden child lay on a red blanket in a crib like the one at Bethlehem; his little hands were crossed on his breast and he was wrapped in swaddling-bands from breast to feet. They had even included the hay of the crib, it could be seen behind the child's head like a little white wreath; I cannot remember what it was made of. They showed Jesus this image; they had no other in their temple.' This is her description of the image of the crib to which she refers above in the text. (CB)



which seem to have been a series of symbolic pictures of the history of our salvation. She added: 'First of all I saw the emblems of the work of redemption among the choirs of angels, and then a series of pictures from Adam down to the Babylonian captivity.']

I saw something happening in Egypt very long ago which had a symbolic application to Our Lady. It must have been long before the days of Elias. I also saw something in Egypt, in his lifetime, which I will tell later.

I saw a place in Egypt, much farther away from the Promised Land than On or Heliopolis, where on an island in the river an idol stood. This idol had a head which was something between that of a man and of an ox, with three horns, one in the middle of the forehead. The figure was hollow, and had openings in its body in which sacrifices were burnt as in an oven. Its feet were like claws, and in one hand it held a plant like a lily which grows out of the water and opens and shuts with the sun. In the other hand the idol held a plant like ears of corn with quite thick grains; I think it grows out of the water too, but am not quite sure of this. After a great victory a temple had been built in honour of this idol, which was now to be consecrated, and all preparations had been made for the sacrifice. But as the people were on their way to the island I saw something wonderful happen. Near the idol I saw a dark and dreadful apparition, and then I saw a great angel descending upon it from heaven like the one who appeared to St. John the Evangelist in the Apocalypse. This angel struck the dark figure in the back with his staff. The demon, writhing, was forced to speak out of the mouth of the idol, warning the people to consecrate the temple, not in honour of it but of a virgin who was to appear upon earth and to whom thanks for their victory were due. I cannot remember the exact circumstances, but I saw that the people set up in the new temple the image of a winged virgin, which was fixed to the wall. The virgin as she flew was bending down over a little ship in which lay a child in swaddling-clothes. The ship stood on a little pillar, with a leafy top like a tree. One of her outstretched hands had a balance hanging from it, and I saw two figures beside her on the wall who were putting something into each scale of the balance. The little ship in which the child lay was like that in which Moses lay on the Nile, but it was uncovered, whereas Moses' one was entirely closed in except for a small opening at the top.

I saw the whole Promised Land withered and parched with drought, and I saw Elias ascending Mount Carmel with two servants to beseech God to give rain. First they climbed over a high ridge, then up steps of rock to a terrace, then up many more rock-steps, and so reached a great open space with a hill of rocks in its midst in which was a cave. Elias climbed up steps to the top of this rocky hill. He left the servants at the edge of the open space and bade one of them look towards the Sea of Galilee, which had, however, a terrible aspect, for it was quite dried up and was full of hollows and caverns with rotting bodies of animals in the swampy ground. Elias crouched down on the ground with his head sunk between his knees, and covering himself in his mantle prayed fervently to God and cried seven times to his servant to know whether he did not see a cloud rising out of the lake. At his seventh call I saw the cloud rise up, and saw the servant announce it to Elias, who sent him to King Achab. I saw a white eddy form itself in the middle of the lake; out of this eddy rose a little black cloud like a fist, which opened and spread itself out. In this little cloud I saw from the first a little shining figure like a virgin. I saw, too, that Elias perceived this

figure in the spreading cloud. The head of this virgin was encircled with rays, she stretched her arms out in the form of a cross, and had a triumphal wreath hanging from one hand. Her long robe seemed to be tied beneath her feet. She appeared as if hovering above the whole Promised Land in the cloud as it spread ever farther. I saw how this cloud divided into different parts and fell in eddying showers of crystal dew on certain holy and consecrated places inhabited by devout men and those who were praying for salvation. I saw these showers edged with the colours of the rainbow and the blessing taking shape in their midst like a pearl in its shell. It was explained to me that this was a symbolic picture, and that the favoured places watered by the showers from the cloud were in fact those which had had their share in contributing to the coming of the Blessed Virgin.

I saw as well a prophetic vision of how Elias, while the cloud was rising, discerned four mysteries relating to the Blessed Virgin. Unfortunately I have forgotten the details, and much else, as a result of disturbances and interruptions. Elias discerned in the cloud, among other things, that Mary would be born in the seventh age of the world; hence his sevenfold call to his servant. He saw, too, from what family she was to come. On one side of the country he saw a low but very broad family tree, and on the other a very high one, broad at the base but tapering towards its top, which bent down into the first tree. He understood all this, and discerned in this way four mysteries relating to the future mother of the Saviour. Hereupon I had a vision of how Elias enlarged the cave above which he had prayed and how he made the Sons of the Prophets into a more regular organization. Some of these were always praying in this cave for the coming of the Blessed Virgin and paying her honour in anticipation of her future birth. I saw that this devotion to Our Lady continued here uninterrupted, that the Essenes carried it on during Mary's earthly life, and that subsequently it was perpetuated up to our time by hermits and the Carmelite Order which eventually succeeded them.<sup>36</sup>

[When Catherine Emmerich communicated later her visions of the time of John the Baptist, she saw the same vision of Elias with reference to the state of the country and of mankind which prevailed in St. John's time. We therefore reproduce from this what follows as explanatory of what she has said above.]

I saw a great commotion in the Temple at Jerusalem, much consultation, much writing with reed pens, and messengers being sent about the country. Rain was besought from God with cries and supplications, and search was made everywhere for Elias. I saw Elias receiving food and drink in the wilderness from the angel, who held a vessel like a little shining barrel with white and red diagonal stripes. I saw all Elias' dealings with Achab, the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, the slaughter of the priests of Baal, Elias' prayer for rain and the gathering of the clouds. I saw as well as the dryness of the earth, a great dryness and failing of good fruit amongst men. I saw that by his prayer Elias called forth the blessing of which the cloud was the form, and that he guided and distributed its showers in accordance with inner visions; otherwise it might perhaps have become a destroying deluge. He asked his servant seven times for news of the cloud; this signifies the seven generations or ages of the

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<sup>36</sup> This is the general tradition about the origins of the Carmelite Order. It is briefly recounted in the Breviary Lessons for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16<sup>th</sup>), where mention is also made of the tradition that the cloud seen by Elias (III Kings 18.42-45) is a symbol of Our Lady. (SB)

world which must go by before the real blessing (of which this cloud of blessing was but a symbol) took root in Israel. Elias himself saw in the ascending cloud an image of the Blessed Virgin, and discerned several mysteries relating to her birth and descent.<sup>37</sup>

I saw that Elias' prayer called down the blessing at first in the form of dew. Layers of cloud sank down which formed themselves into eddies with rainbow edges; these finally dissolved into falling drops. I saw therein an association with the manna in the desert, but the manna lay thick and crisp on the ground in the morning like fleeces, and could be rolled up and taken away. I saw this whirling eddy of dew floating along the banks of the Jordan, but dropping down only at certain notable places, not everywhere. In particular at Ainon, opposite Salem, and at the places where baptisms took place later, I clearly saw these shining eddies floating downwards. I asked what the coloured edges of these dew-eddies portended, and was given as an explanation the example of the mother-of-pearl shells in the sea which also bore edges of shining colour; they expose themselves to the sun, absorbing the light and cleansing it of colour until the pure white pearls take form in their centres. It was shown to me, too, that this dew and the rain that followed it was something much more than the ordinary refreshing of the earth by moisture. I was given clearly to understand that without this dew the coming of the Blessed Virgin would have been delayed by more than a hundred years; whereas, after this softening and blessing of the earth, nourishment and refreshment were imparted to the human beings who lived on the fruits of the soil; the blessing communicated itself to their bodies and ennobled them. This fructifying dew was associated with the coming of the Messiah, for I saw its rays penetrating generation after generation until they reached the substance of the body of the Blessed Virgin. I cannot describe this. Sometimes, on the coloured edge that I have mentioned I saw emerge one or more pearls having the likeness of a human figure which disappeared in a breath to unite itself with others of these pearls. The picture of the pearl-shell was a symbol of Mary and Jesus.

I saw, too, that just as the earth and mankind were parched and panting for rain, so, at a later time, was the spirit of man thirsting for the baptism of John; so that the whole picture was not only a prophecy of the coming of the Blessed Virgin, but also of the state of the people at the time of the Baptist. In the first instance there was the alarm of the people, their longing for rain and their search for Elias, followed, nevertheless, by their persecution of him; and later there was a like yearning of the people for baptism and penance, and again the lack of comprehension by the synagogue and its messages to John. In Egypt I saw the message of salvation being announced in the following manner. I saw that by God's command Elias sent messages to summon devout families scattered about in three regions to the east, north, and south. For this purpose he sent forth three of the sons of the prophets, but only after asking a sign from God that he had decided rightly, for it was a difficult and dangerous mission, and he had to choose messengers whose prudence would lessen the danger of their being murdered. One travelled northwards, one eastwards, and the third southwards. This last one had to pass through a considerable part of Egyptian territory,

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<sup>37</sup> In the Office for the Immaculate Conception and in other liturgical books there occurs the following verse: 'As a cloud I covered all the earth' (Eccl 24.3), referring to wisdom, which is in complete harmony with this prophetic vision of the Mother of God, seat of wisdom. (CB) (RC)

where the Israelites were in particular danger of being killed. This messenger took the way followed by the Holy Family on their flight into Egypt. I think, too, that he passed near On, where the Child Jesus took refuge. I saw him come to an idolatrous temple on a great plain; in this temple, which was surrounded by a meadow and by many other buildings, they adored a living bull. They had an image of a bull and many other idols in their temple; their sacrifices were gruesome and they slaughtered deformed children. They seized the son of the prophet and brought him before the priests. Fortunately the latter were very inquisitive, otherwise they might easily have murdered him. They questioned him as to whence he came and what brought him there, and he answered without hesitation, telling them how a virgin would be born from whom the salvation of the world was to come, and that then all their idols would fall in pieces.<sup>38</sup>

They were amazed at his announcement, seemed greatly moved thereby and let him go unharmed. I saw them taking counsel together thereafter, and having the image of a virgin constructed and fixed in the middle of the temple-roof. This image, represented as floating downwards at full length, had a head-dress like the idols, so many of which lie in rows there, half like a woman, half like a lion. On the top of the head was something like a little high vessel or bushel of fruit; the elbows were close to the body, while the forearms were held out in a gesture as it were of withdrawal and repulse. In her hands were ears of corn. She had three breasts; a large one in the middle, with two smaller ones on each side of it but lower down. The lower part of the body was clothed in a long dress, and from the feet, which were comparatively small and pointed, hung tassels or something of the sort. She had as it were wings on her arms both above and below the elbows; these wings seemed to be made of delicate feathers spreading out on each side like rays and intertwined with each other. Feathers ran crosswise down both thighs and over the middle of the body to the feet. The dress had no folds. They venerated this image and sacrificed to it, begging it not to destroy their god Apis and their other gods. At the same time they continued their gruesome idolatry as before, except that they always began by invoking this virgin. In making this image they had, I believe, followed the indications given them by the son of the prophet in his account of the vision which Elias had seen.

I saw also that by the great mercy of God it was announced to certain God-fearing heathens that the Messias was to be born from a virgin in Judaea. The ancestors of the three holy kings, the star-worshippers of Chaldaea, received this message by the appearance of a picture in a star or in the sky, by which they made prophecies. I saw traces of these

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<sup>38</sup> Epiphanius, in his work on the life of the Prophet, says of Jeremias: 'This prophet gave the Egyptian priests a sign and told them that all their idols would fall in pieces, when a virgin mother should set foot in Egypt with her Divine Child. And so it befell. Therefore do they to this day adore a Virgin Mother and a Child lying in the crib. When King Ptolemy questioned them as to the reason therefore, they answered, "This is a secret which we received from our ancestors to whom it was announced by a holy prophet, and we await its fulfillment"' (*Epiphan.*, Vol. II, p. 240). The above-mentioned son of the prophet sent to Egypt by Elias cannot, however, be taken to be Jeremias, for the latter lived some three centuries later. (CB)

This is presumably the Greek Father, St. Epiphanius of Salamis, death in 403, but an examination of various editions, old and new, has so far failed to identify the passage. The quotation may be linked with Jeremias' prophecy (43.13) of the shattering of the idols of Egypt after his warning to the Jews who had assassinated Godolias and were preparing to flee to Egypt (Jer. 41-43). (SB)

prophetic images of Our Lady in the pictures in their temple, which I have described in my account of Jesus' visit to them after the raising of Lazarus in the last quarter of the third year of His ministry.

[On the feast of the Archangel Michael in September 1821, Catherine Emmerich recounted, amongst other fragments of a vision of the holy angels, the following fragment of the story of Tobias, whom she had seen with the Archangel Raphael as his guide.]

I saw many things from the life of Tobias, which is an allegory of the history of the coming of salvation in Israel; not an imaginative allegory, but one which actually happened and was lived. It was shown to me that Sara, the wife of the young Tobias, was a prototype of St. Anne. I will relate as much as I can remember of the many things that happened, but shall not be able to reproduce them in their right order. The elder Tobias was an emblem of the God-fearing branch of the Jewish race, those who were hoping for the Messiah. The swallow, the messenger of spring, indicated the near approach of salvation. The blindness of old Tobias signified that he was to beget no more children, and was to devote himself entirely to prayer and meditation; it signified also the faithful, though dim, longing and waiting for the light of salvation and the uncertainty as to whence it was to come. Tobias' quarrelsome wife represented the empty and harassing forms into which the Pharisees had converted the Law. The kid which she had brought home in lieu of wages had, as Tobias warned her, really been stolen, and had for that reason been handed on to her in return for very little. Tobias knew the people concerned and all about it, but his wife only mocked him. This mockery also indicated the contempt of the Pharisees and formalists for the devout Jews and Essenes and the relationship between the two groups, but I cannot now remember how this was.

The Archangel Raphael was not telling an untruth when he said that he was Azarias, the son of Ananias, for the general meaning of these words is: 'The help of the Lord out of the cloud of the Lord'.<sup>39</sup> This angel, the companion of young Tobias, represented God's watchfulness over Our Lady's descent through her ancestors and His preservation and guidance of the Blessing through the generations which preceded her conception. In the prayer of the Elder Tobias, and of Sara, the daughter of Raguel (I saw both these prayers being brought by the angels at one and the same time before the Throne of God and there granted), I recognized the supplications of the God-fearing Israelites and of the Daughters of Sion for the coming of salvation, as well as the simultaneous prayers of Joachim and Anna, separated from each other, for the promised offspring. The blindness of the elder Tobias and his wife's mockery of him also symbolized Joachim's childlessness and the rejection of his sacrifice at the Temple. The seven husbands of Sara, the daughter of Raguel, who were destroyed by Satan, came to their end through sensuality; for Sara had made a vow to give herself only to a chaste and God-fearing man. These seven men symbolized those whose entry into Our Lord's ancestry according to the flesh would have hindered the coming of the

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<sup>39</sup> This interpretation, alluded to but not definitely established by earlier commentators, is shown by Biblical philology to be perfectly correct. (CB)

The names Azarias and Ananias both occur in Neh. 3.23, where Ananias is in Hebrew *Ananyah*, which may mean 'the cloud of the Lord', but the much commoner name is *Hananyah*, 'the Lord is merciful'. *Azaryah* means 'the help of the Lord'. (SB)

Blessed Virgin, and thus the advent of salvation. There was also a reference to certain unblest periods in the history of salvation and to the suitors whom Anna had to reject that she might be united to Joachim, the father of Mary. The maidservant's reviling of Sara (Tob. 3.7) symbolized the reviling by the heathen and by the godless and unbelieving among the Jews against the expectation of the Messiah, for whose coming all God-fearing Jews were, like Sara, inspired to pray with ever-increasing fervour. It was also an image of the reviling of Anna by her maidservant, where after that holy mother prayed with such fervour that her prayer was granted. The fish which was about to swallow young Tobias symbolized the powers of darkness, heathendom and sin striving against the coming of salvation, and also Anna's long barrenness. The killing of the fish, the removal of its heart, liver, and gall, and the burning of this by Tobias and Sara to make smoke—all these symbolized the victory over the demon of fleshly lusts who had strangled Sara's seven husbands, as well as the good works and continence of Joachim and Anna, by which they had obtained the blessing of holy fruitfulness. I also saw therein a deep significance relating to the Blessed Sacrament, but can no longer explain this. The gall of the fish, which restored the sight of Tobias' father, symbolized the bitterness of the suffering through which the chosen ones among the Jews came to know and share in salvation; it indicated also the entry of the light into the darkness brought about by Jesus' bitter sufferings from His birth onwards.

I received many explanations of this kind, and saw many details of the history of Tobias. I think the descendants of young Tobias were among the ancestors of Joachim and Anna. The elder Tobias had other children who were not godly. Sara had three daughters and four sons. Her first child was a daughter. The elder Tobias lived to see his grandchildren.

I saw the line of the descent of the Messiah proceeding from David and dividing into two branches. The right-hand one went through Solomon down to Jacob, the father of St. Joseph. I saw the figures of all St. Joseph's ancestors named in the Gospel on this right-hand branch of the descent from David through Solomon. This branch has the greater significance of the two; I saw the line of descent issuing from the mouths of the separate figures in streams of white colourless light. The figures were taller and looked more spiritual than those of the left-hand line. Each one held a long flower-stem with hanging leaves like those of palms: this stem was crowned with a great bell-shaped flower shaped like a lily and having five stamens, yellow at the top, from which a line yellow dust was scattered. These flowers differed in size, vigour, and beauty. The flower borne by Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, was the most beautiful and purest of all, with fresh and abundant petals. Half-way down this ancestral tree were three rejected shoots, blackened and withered. In this line through Solomon there were several gaps separating its fruits more widely from each other. The right-hand and left-hand branches met several times, and they crossed each other at a point a few generations before the end. I was given an explanation about the higher significance of the line of descent through Solomon. It had in it more of the spirit and less of the flesh, and had some of the significance belonging to Solomon himself. I cannot express this.

The left-hand line of descent went from David through Nathan down to Heli, which is the real name of Joachim, Mary's father, for he did not receive the name of Joachim till later, just as Abram was not called Abraham until later. I forget the reason, but it will

perhaps come back to me. In my visions I often hear Jesus called after the flesh a son of Heli.<sup>40</sup>

I saw this whole line from David through Nathan flowing at a lower level: it generally issued from the navels of the separate figures. I saw it coloured red, yellow, or white, but never blue. Here and there were stains; then the stream became clear again. The figures upon it were smaller than those of the line through Solomon. They carried smaller branches which hung down sideways and had little yellow-green leaves with serrated edges; their branches were crowned with reddish buds of the colour of wild roses. These were always closed; they were not flower-buds but the beginnings of fruits. A double row of little twigs hung down on the same side as the serrated leaves. At a point three or four generations above Heli or Joachim, the two lines crossed each other and rose up, ending with the Blessed Virgin.<sup>41</sup> At the point of crossing I think I already saw the blood of Our Lady beginning to shine in the stream of descent.

St. Anne descended on her father's side from Levi, and on her mother's side from Benjamin. I saw in a vision the Ark of the Covenant being borne by her ancestors with great piety and devotion; I saw them receiving rays of blessing from it which extended to their descendants, to Anna and to Mary. I always saw many priests in the house of Anna's parents, and also in Joachim's house; this was the result of the relationship with Zacharias and Elisabeth.

[On the afternoon of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1819, Sister Emmerich, after relating many things about Anna, Our Lady's holy mother, fell asleep as she was praying. After a while she sneezed three times and exclaimed impatiently, but still half asleep, 'Oh, why must I wake up?' Then she woke up completely and said with a smile: 'I was in a much better place, I was much better off than here. I was being much comforted, and then all of a sudden I was woken by

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<sup>40</sup> The absence of any mention of Mary (whose line of descent is given by St. Luke) is explained by the basic principle of the Jewish genealogists: 'The father's race is called a race, the mother's race is not called a race' (Talmud Baba Bathra, f. 110). The father of Mary was, according to this rule, the first of Our Lord's forebears according to the flesh who could be named in His line of descent. Christ, who had no earthly father, may be as truly called, according to the flesh, the son of Heli as Laban (Gen. 29.5) could be called the son of Nachor, and Zacharias (1 Esdras 5.1) could be called the son of Addo, for these were both great-grandchildren. (CB)

The emphasis on Our Lord's Davidic descent (Luke 1.32, 69) shows that Our Lady must also have been of the Davidic line (see Fr. R. Ginns, O.P., in *Cath. Comm.*, 1953, 748b). (SB)

Joseph is named with the words, "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph" because Joseph is not of Jesus' lineage. Joseph is counted in this genealogy from the Gospel of Luke, even though he is not the father of Jesus, because he was the husband of the Virgin Mary. His name stands in her place; the Virgin Mary is the unnamed generation between her father, Heli, and her Son, Jesus. Since Joachim (Heli) is named by Sacred Scripture (without the words "as was supposed") in the lineage from Abraham to David to Mary to Jesus (Lk 3:23-38), Joachim must be the Virgin Mary's real biological father and her immediate ancestor, even though she was conceived solely and entirely by a miracle of God. (RC)

<sup>41</sup> Catherine Emmerich no doubt meant by this the connection between the line of David through Nathan and that through Solomon. In the third generation upwards from Joachim, St. Joseph's grandmother (who had married as her first husband Matthan, of the line of Solomon, and had by him two sons, one of whom was Jacob, the father of St. Joseph) took as her second husband Levi, of the line of Nathan, and had by him Matthat, the father of Heli or Joachim. Thus Joachim and Joseph were related to each other. It is remarkable that Raymundus Martini, in his *Pugio fidei* (p. 745, ed. Carp), also states that St. Joseph's grandmother after the death of Matthan married a second husband, from whom Joachim was descended. (CB)

my sneeze and someone said to me “You must wake up”, but I did not want to, I was so happy there and was annoyed at having to go away, then I had to sneeze, and I woke up.’

[Next day she told me:] I had just fallen asleep last night after saying my prayers when someone whom I recognized as a young girl I had often seen before came to my bed. She said to me rather shortly: ‘You have been speaking a great deal about me today, you shall now have a sight of me, so that you may make no mistakes.’ So I asked her: ‘Have I perhaps talked too much?’ She answered abruptly ‘No!’ and disappeared. She was still a girl, slim and attractive, her head was covered with a white hood, drawn together at the back of her neck and ending there in a hanging knot as if her hair were inside it. Her long dress, which completely covered her, was of whitish wool, the sleeves of it seemed to be rather full at the elbows. Over this she wore a long cloak of brownish wool, like camel’s hair.

Hardly had I had time to feel touched and pleased by this vision, when suddenly I saw by my bed an aged woman in similar dress with her head more bent and very hollow cheeks—a Jewess of some fifty years, thin but handsome. ‘Why,’ I thought, ‘does this old Jewess come to me?’ Then she said: ‘You need not be afraid; I only want to show you how I was when I bore the mother of the Lord, so that you may make no mistakes.’ I asked at once: ‘Oh, where is the dear little child Mary?’ and she replied: ‘I have not got her with me now.’ Then I asked again: ‘How old is she now?’ And she answered: ‘Four years old.’ I asked her once more: ‘But have I spoken rightly?’ and she said shortly, ‘Yes.’ I asked her: ‘Oh, please do not let me say too much!’ She did not answer and disappeared.

Then I woke up, and thought over everything that I had seen of Anna and of the childhood of the Blessed Virgin, and everything became clear to me and I felt blissfully happy. Next morning, when I was again asleep, I had a new and very beautiful vision. I thought I could not forget it, but the next day brought with it so many interruptions and sufferings that nothing of it remains in my mind.

## VISION OF THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION <sup>42</sup>

During the whole night I saw a terrible, horrifying picture of the sins of the whole world; but towards morning I fell asleep again and was transported to the place in Jerusalem where the Temple had stood, and then on to the region of Nazareth, where the house of Joachim and Anna used to stand. I recognized the country round. Here I saw a slender column of light rising out of the earth like the stem of a flower. This column was crowned with the appearance of a shining octagonal church, which grew forth from the stem like the calyx of a flower or the seed-vessel of a poppy.<sup>43</sup> The column grew up within this church like a little

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<sup>42</sup> Related on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

<sup>43</sup> Catherine Emmerich had visions of all the feasts of the Church being celebrated by the Church Triumphant, even when they were no longer celebrated on earth by the Church Militant. She saw these feasts being celebrated in a shining transparent church, the shape of which she generally described as octagonal. She saw a mysterious gathering of all the saints who were particularly associated with the feast in question, sharing in the celebrations. She usually saw this church floating in the air; but it is noteworthy that in all the feasts having so to speak a blood-relationship with Jesus Christ or with the mysteries of His life, she saw this church not floating in the air but appearing as the crown of a pillar or of a stem thrusting itself up like a flower or fruit growing out of the earth. What, however, surprised the writer in particular was that on all feasts of saints who



tree, with symmetrical branches bearing the figures of those among Our Lady's family who were the objects of veneration on this feast. It was as if they were standing on the stamens of a flower. I saw Our Lady's holy mother St. Anne, standing between Joachim and another man, her father perhaps. Beneath St. Anne's breast I saw a space filled with light, somewhat in the shape of a chalice, and in this I saw the figure of a shining child growing and developing. Its little hands were crossed on its breast and its little head was bent, and countless rays of light issued from it towards one part of the world. (I thought it strange that they did not shine in all directions.) On others of the surrounding branches were many figures turned towards the centre in veneration, and all round within the church I saw orders and choirs of saints, countless in number, all turning in prayer towards that holy mother. This celebration, in the sweetness of its harmony and devotion, can only be compared to a meadow of innumerable flowers, stirred by a gentle wind and lifting their heads to offer their scents and their colours to the sun from which they have received life itself and all they have to offer. Above this symbolical picture of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception the tree of light sent up another shoot, and in this second crown I saw a further moment of the feast being celebrated. Mary and Joseph were kneeling here, and a little lower St. Anne, all in adoration of the child Jesus, whom I saw above them in the top of the tree, holding in His hand the orb or globe and surrounded by an infinite glory of light. Around this scene, and bowing in adoration before it, were, nearest of all, the three holy kings, the shepherds, and the apostles and disciples; farther away other saints joined in the choirs of worshippers. In the light from above I saw indistinct figures of Powers and Principalities, and still higher I saw as it were a half-sun, its light streaming down through the dome of the church. This second picture seemed to indicate the approach of the Feast of the Nativity after the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. When the picture first appeared, I seemed to be standing outside the church, looking outwards from under the pillar; later I saw into the inside of the church as I have described it. I saw, too, the little child Mary developing in the space of light under St. Anne's heart, and received at the same moment an inexpressible conviction of the Immaculate Conception. I read it as clearly as in a book, and understood it. It was shown to me, that a church to the glory of God had once stood here, but had been given over to destruction in consequence of unworthy disputes about this holy mystery; that the Church Triumphant, however, still celebrated this feast on this spot.

[During her visions of Our Lord's ministry Catherine Emmerich related the following on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1822.]

I often hear the Blessed Virgin telling the women who were her close intimates (for instance, Joanna Chusa and Susanna of Jerusalem) various secrets about herself and about Our Lord, which she knows partly from inner knowledge and partly from what her holy mother Anna told her. Thus today I heard her telling Susanna and Martha that during the time when she was bearing Our Lord within her she never felt the slightest discomfort, nothing but infinite inner joy and beatitude. She told them, too, that Joachim and Anna had met in the hall under the Golden Gate in a golden hour; and that God's grace had been

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had received the stigmata (for instance, St. Francis of Assisi or St. Catherine of Siena), she saw the church not floating in the air but on the stem growing out of the earth. She never made any reflection on this point, probably from humility, though it might well have been edifying had she done so. (CB)

granted to them here in such abundance as to make it possible for her alone, from her parents' holy obedience and pure love of God, to have been conceived in her mother's womb without any stain of sin. She also explained to them that but for the Fall the conception of all men would have been as pure. She spoke, too, of her beloved elder sister Mary Heli, that her parents had realized that she was not the promised fruit and how, in their longing for that fruit, they had long practised continence. It was a joy to me to hear now from the Blessed Virgin herself what I have always seen about her elder sister. I saw now the whole sequence of grace received by Mary's parents just as I have always described it, from the appearance of the angel to Anna and Joachim down to their meeting under the Golden Gate; that is to say, in the subterranean hall under the Golden Gate. I saw Joachim and Anna encompassed by a host of angels with heavenly light. They themselves shone and were as pure as spirits in a supernatural state, as no human couple had ever been before them. I think that the Golden Gate itself was the scene of the examination and absolution of women accused of adultery, and that other ceremonies of reconciliation took place here.<sup>44</sup> There were five of these subterranean passages under the Temple, and one also under the part where the virgins lived. These were used for certain ceremonies of atonement. I do not know whether others before Joachim and Anna had gone there, but I think the place was very seldom visited. I cannot at present recall whether it was in general connected with sacrifices offered by the unfruitful, but the priests had been given some order about it.

[On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1820, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the soul of Catherine Emmerich was transported in an active state of prayer and meditation over a great part of the earth. The whole of this visionary journey will be described in its proper place, but in the meantime we will reproduce the following extracts from it in order to give some idea of these journeyings of her soul.

[She came to Rome, was with the Holy Father, visited a much-loved and devout nun in Sardinia, reached Palestine after a short visit to Palermo, went to India, and thence to what she calls the mountain of the Prophet.<sup>45</sup> Thence she journeyed to Abyssinia, where she came

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<sup>44</sup> Catherine Emmerich's remarks are here in agreement with the accounts of the most ancient Jewish literature. Thus, for instance, Mishnah, tract. *Tamid*, c. 5, and *Sotah*, c. I. (CB)

Mishnah, *Tamid*, V, 7, states that the ceremonially unclean were to wait at the eastern gate, but the tractate *Sotah*, I, 5, dealing with adultery, directs that the woman be taken to the 'eastern or Nicanor's gate', where also lepers and mothers awaiting 'purification' were to go. The 'Golden Gate' was probably an eastern gate. An eastern gate is also mentioned in *Middoth*, I, 9, in connection with ceremonial cleansing. John 8.2 mentions that Our Lord was teaching in the Temple when He spoke with the woman taken in adultery. (SB)

<sup>45</sup> 'Mountain of the Prophet' is the name given by Catherine Emmerich to a place high above all the mountains of the world to which she was taken for the first time on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1819, in her ecstatic state of dream-journeying, and again several times later. There she saw the books of prophetic revelation of all ages and all peoples preserved in a tent and examined and superintended by someone who reminded her partly of St. John the Evangelist and partly of Elias - particularly of the latter, since she perceived the chariot which had transported that prophet from the earth standing here on the heights near the tent and overgrown with green plants. This person then told her that he compared with a great book lying before him all the books of prophetic knowledge that had ever been given (often in a very confused state) or would in future be given to mankind; and that much of these he crossed out or destroyed in the fire burning at his side. Mankind, he said, was not yet capable of receiving these gifts, another must first come, and so forth. She saw all this on a green island in a lake of clear water. On the island were many towers of different shapes, surrounded by gardens. She

to a strange Jewish city on a high mountain-rock and visited its ruler Judith,<sup>46</sup> with whom she spoke of the Messias, of that day's feast of the Conception of His Mother, of the holy Advent time, and of the approaching Feast of His Birth. During the whole of this journey she did all that a conscientious missionary would have done on a similar journey to carry out his task and make use of his opportunities; she prayed, taught, helped, comforted, and learnt. But in order to make plain to the reader, in her own words, what she perceived on this journey regarding the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, we must refer him to the note on page 46, in which that part of Our Lord's ministry to which she here alludes is described in detail.]

When in my great dream-journey I came into the Promised Land, I saw all those things which I have related about the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Thereupon I entered into the daily visions of Our Lord's ministry and had today reached the 8<sup>th</sup> of December of the third year of His teaching. I found Jesus not in the Promised Land, but was brought by my guide eastwards over the Jordan to Arabia, where the Lord, accompanied by three young men, was in a tent-city of the three holy kings in which they had settled after their return from Bethlehem.

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had the impression that these towers were treasuries and reservoirs of the wisdom of different peoples, and that under the island, which was full of murmuring streams, lay the source of rivers held to be sacred (the Ganges amongst them) whose waters issued forth at the foot of the mountain range. The direction in which she was led to this mountain of the Prophet was always (taking into account the starting-point of her journey) towards the highest part of Central Asia. She described places, natural scenery, human beings, animals, and plants of the region which she traversed before being carried up through a lonely and desolate space, as if through clouds, to the place mentioned above. Her detailed description of this place, with all that she experienced there, will be set down in its proper place with an account of her whole visionary journey. On her return journey she was carried down through the region of clouds once more, and then again traversed lands rich in luxuriant vegetation and full of animals and birds, until she reached the Ganges and saw the religious ceremonies of the Indians beside this river.

The geographical situation of this place and Catherine Emmerich's statement that she had seen everything up there overgrown with living green, reminded someone who read her account twenty years later of traditions about a place of this kind (sometimes with a similar inhabitant) in the religions of several Asiatic peoples. The Prophet Elias is known to the Musulmans (under the name of Chiser, i.e. the Green One) as a wonderful half-angelic being, who dwells in the north on a mountain known as Kaf, celebrated in many religious and poetical writings, and there watches over secrets at the source of the river of life. The Indians called their holy mountain Meru, while to the Chinese it was Kuen-lun, both connected with representations of a state of paradise and both situated on the heights of Central Asia, where Catherine Emmerich saw the Mountain of the Prophet. The ancient Persians also believed in such a place and called it Elbors or Albordsch. According to Isa. 4.13 ('I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north'), the Babylonians would seem to have had a similar belief. That they, like the Persians and Moslems, placed this mountain in the north is explained by their geographical position as regards the mountains of Central Asia. (CB)

<sup>46</sup> When the writer copied down the very detailed account of her dealings with this Judith and her description of the place, he only knew (from the direction taken by her journey) that she was in Abyssinia; several years after her death he found in the journeys of Bruce and Salt an account of a Jewish settlement on the high mountains of Samen in Abyssinia. The ruler of this settlement was always called Gideon and, if it was a woman, Judith - the name which Catherine Emmerich herself mentioned. (CB)

James Bruce, *Travels and Adventures in Abyssinia*. He was one of the first Europeans to go there, and his journey was in 1769. Henry Salt, *A voyage to Abyssinia*. An account of a journey made on behalf of His Majesty's Government in 1809-1810. (SB)

I saw that the two holy kings who were still alive were celebrating with their tribe a three-day feast starting from today, December 8<sup>th</sup>. On this night, fifteen years before Christ's birth, they had seen for the first time the star promised by Balaam rise in the sky [Num. 24.17: 'A star shall rise out of Jacob']—the star for which they and their forefathers, had waited so long, scanning the heavens in patient watchfulness. They discerned in it the picture of a virgin, bearing in one hand a sceptre and in the other a balance. The scales were held even by a perfect ear of wheat in the one and by a cluster of grapes in the other. Therefore every year since their return from Bethlehem they kept a three-day feast beginning with this day. I saw, too, that as a result of this vision on the day of the conception of Mary, fifteen years before the birth of Christ, these star-worshippers did away with a terrible religious custom of theirs—a cruel sacrifice of children, long practised among them as the result of revelations which had been misunderstood by them and confused by evil influences. They had carried out at different times and in different manners sacrifices of both children and grown people. I saw that before Mary's conception they had the following custom. They took a child of one of the purest and most devout mothers amongst the followers of their religion, and she esteemed herself very fortunate to offer up her child in this way. The child was flayed and strewn with flour to absorb the blood. They ate this blood-soaked flour as a holy repast, and continued strewing the flour and eating until there was no blood left in the child's body. Finally the child's flesh was cut up into small pieces, which were distributed among them and eaten.<sup>47</sup> I saw them performing this gruesome ceremony with the greatest simplicity and devoutness, and I was told that they had adopted this dreadful practice as a result of misunderstanding and distorting certain prophetic and symbolical indications which they had received regarding the Holy Eucharist. I saw that this terrible sacrifice was carried on in Chaldaea, in the country of Mensor, one of the three holy kings, until he put an end to its horrors on receiving enlightenment in a vision from heaven on the day of Mary's conception. I saw him on a high wooden pyramidal edifice, engaged in studying the stars, as his people had done for centuries in accordance with their ancient traditions. I saw King

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<sup>47</sup> In this connection it seems remarkable that among the writers of the first centuries of the Christian era who reproduce the accusations made by the heathens against the Christians, Minutius Felix mentions this reproach among others that when the Christians initiated anyone into their religion, they laid before him a child completely covered with flour, so as to hide the murder which they were about to make him commit. He was then obliged to stab the child over and over again with a knife. They greedily sucked up the streaming blood, cut the child into small pieces and devoured them all. This crime, committed in common, was a mutual pledge of silence and secrecy in regard to other shameful excesses with which they ended their assemblies.

Should the origin of this accusation perhaps be sought in the above-mentioned sacrifice of children by the star-worshippers, who were among the first followers of Christianity? In any case, it may well be supposed that ideas of this kind (which, as we see in the case of the Magi, arise from superstition and from misinterpretation of messages of salvation) may be the hidden cause lying at the root of the murder of Christian children by Jews. If this be so, these dark and cruel deeds must be added to the many motives for which we have to pity the unfortunate people of Israel rather than to despise them; for it conceals a distorted longing for the Saviour. This constantly recurring phenomenon has so far as we know never been thoroughly investigated and elucidated in a completely unprejudiced spirit. Of late years it has generally been treated (like all historical riddles whose source is obscure) in a complacent and condescending manner as being nothing but a fanatical accusation. (CB)

Minutius Felix, *Octavius*, IX, 5, and cf. XXX, 1. (SB)

Mensor lying in an ecstasy as he contemplated the stars; his limbs were rigid and he had lost consciousness. His companions came to him and brought him back to himself, but at first he seemed not to know them at all. He had seen the picture in the star with the Virgin, the scales, the ear of corn, and the cluster of grapes, and had received an inner admonition, after which that cruel ceremony was abolished.

After seeing at night in my sleep the fearful picture of the murdered child on my right hand, I turned over in horror in my bed, but saw it again on my left hand. I begged God most earnestly to free me from this dreadful sight. I woke up and heard the clock strike. My heavenly Bridegroom said to me, pointing round Him as He spoke: 'See far more evil that befalls Me every day at the hands of many throughout the whole world.' And as I looked about me into the distance, many things came before my soul which were indeed still more dreadful than that sacrifice of children; for I saw Jesus Himself cruelly sacrificed on the Altar by unworthy and sinful celebrations of the Holy Mysteries. I saw how the blessed Host lay on the altar before unworthy degenerate priests like a living Child Jesus, whom they cut and terribly mutilated with the paten. Their sacrifice, though an efficacious celebration of the Holy Mysteries, appeared like a cruel murder.<sup>48</sup>

The same cruelty was shown to me in the heartless treatment of the members of Christ, His followers, and God's adopted children. I saw at the present time countless good, unhappy men being everywhere oppressed, tormented and persecuted; and I always saw that it was Jesus who suffered this ill-treatment. The times are terrible; a refuge is no longer anywhere to be found; a dense cloud of sin lies over the whole world and I see men giving way to the worst crimes with complete indifference and unconcern. I saw all this in many visions while my soul was being led through many lands over the whole earth. At last I came back to the visions of the Feast of Our Lady's Conception.

I am quite unable to tell in what a wonderful way I journeyed last night in dream. I was in the most different parts of the world and in the most different ages, and very often saw the Feast of Mary's Conception being celebrated in the most different places. I was in Ephesus, and saw this feast being celebrated in the house of the Mother of God, which was still standing there as a church. It must have been at a very early time, for I saw the Way of the Cross set up by Mary herself still in perfect preservation. [The second Way of the Cross was set up in Jerusalem and the third in Rome.]

The Greeks kept this feast long before the schism. I still remember something of this, but am not quite sure what led up to it. I saw how a saint, Sabbas, I think, had a vision relating to the Immaculate Conception. He saw the picture of the Blessed Virgin on the globe, crushing the head of the serpent under her feet, and recognized that the Blessed Virgin alone was conceived unwounded and unstained by the serpent.<sup>49</sup> I saw, too, that one of the Greek

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<sup>48</sup> Just as the sacrifice on Calvary was accomplished by the cruelty of ungodly priests and by the bloodthirsty hands of brutal executioners, so is the sacrifice of the Mass, even when unworthily celebrated, a true sacrifice; but the guilty and unworthy priest who celebrates it plays the part not only of the Jewish priests who condemned Our Lord but also of the soldiers who crucified Him. (CB)

<sup>49</sup> On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1835, the writer discovered from Cardinal Baronius' notes on the *Martyrologium Romanum* of December 8<sup>th</sup> that in the Sforza Library there is a Codex (No. 65) containing a speech by the Emperor Leo, who ascended the throne in 886, about this feast in Constantinople. It appears from this speech that the celebration of the feast was much anterior to this date. According to Canisius (*De beatissima virgine Maria*, lib.

churches or one of the Greek bishops refused to accept this truth unless the picture came to them across the sea. Then I saw the appearance of the picture float over the sea to their church and appear on the altar, whereupon they began to keep the feast. That church possessed a life-size picture of Our Lady painted by St. Luke just as she was in her earthly life, in a white robe and veil. (I have an idea that this picture had been sent from Rome, where they have only a half-length portrait.) They had placed the picture above the altar in the place where the vision of the Immaculate Conception had appeared: I think it was in Constantinople, or perhaps I have seen it venerated there in earlier times.

I was in England, too, and saw the feast being introduced and celebrated there in olden times. In this connection I saw the day before yesterday, on the Feast of St. Nicholas, the following miracle. I saw an abbot, coming from England, in great danger in a ship in a storm. They prayed very fervently for the protection of the Mother of God, and I saw an apparition of the holy bishop Nicholas of Myra floating over the sea to the ship and telling the abbot that he had been sent by Mary to announce to him that he was to cause the Feast of the Immaculate Conception to be kept in England on December 8<sup>th</sup>, and that then the ship would arrive safely. In reply to the abbot's question as to what prayers should be used for this feast, he answered, the same as those for Our Lady's nativity. The name of Anselm<sup>50</sup> was also associated with the introduction of this feast, but I have forgotten the details.

I also saw the introduction of this feast into France, and how St. Bernard wrote, in opposition to it because its introduction had not come from Rome.<sup>51</sup>

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1, c. 7) and Galatinus (*De arcanis catholicae veritatis*, lib. 7, c. 5), the feast is included in the Martyrology of St. John Damascene (*d.* A.D. 749). St. Sabbas, Abbot, mentioned by Catherine Emmerich, is known for his devotion to Our Lady. He died *c.* A.D. 500. (CB)

The year of the death of St. Sabbas is given in Ramsgate's *Book of Saints* (1947) as A.D. 532. (SB)

<sup>50</sup> It is remarkable that Catherine Emmerich does not give the name of Anselm to the abbot who had the vision, since Petrus de Natal in *Catal. Sanct.*, lib. 1, c. 42, does so, as the writer discovered in July 1835. Her account seems to be supported by Baronius in his notes to the Roman Martyrology for Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>, where he states that the announcement was made, not to Anselm, but at an earlier date in 1070 in exactly similar circumstances to Elsinus or Elpinus, a Benedictine abbot. This is said to be stated also in J. Carthagera in his homilies *De Arcanis Deiparae*,

tom. 1, lib. 1, hom. 19, on the authority of a letter from St. Anselm to the bishops of England. It was this holy Bishop of Canterbury who first introduced the feast into England. (CB)

Petrus de Natalibus' *Catalogus Sanctorum* was published in Venice in 1506. As the subsequent work of Baronius (1586, 1589) shows, AC is right in not attributing the event to Anselm. The source of the Helsin legend, a letter ascribed to Anselm, is now, however, considered to be spurious, though this need not impugn the truth of the legend itself. The Anselm mentioned by AC (with no title) is wrongly identified by CB with the Archbishop of Canterbury (*d.* 1109). It was his nephew, also called Anselm, who introduced the feast into England when he became Abbot of Bury St. Edmund's in 1121, having doubtless become acquainted with the feast as observed at the Greek abbey of St. Sabbas in Rome, where he was abbot 1109-1121. Cf. *Cath. Encyc.*, art. 'Immaculate' (Holweck), pp. 677b-678a. (SB)

<sup>51</sup> It was introduced in 1245 by the Chapter of the Cathedral of Lyons, to which Bernard wrote to oppose it. (CB)

The date should read 1140-1145. The reference is to St. Bernard's letter, 'To the Canons of the Church of Lyons', traditionally numbered 174, and numbered chronologically 215 (between 1140 and 1145) by Fr. Bruno Scott-James in his recent (1953) translation. (SB)

## NOTE BY THE WRITER

All that has so far been recorded of the blessing given to Joachim and Anna is compiled from visions and reminiscences of Catherine Emmerich during the feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8<sup>th</sup>. She explained, however, on that day in the year 1821 that the meeting of Joachim and Anna under the Golden Gate did not occur in December but in the autumn, at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles (which lasted from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month Tishri, i.e. in September or October).<sup>52</sup> Thus she saw Joachim building tabernacles with his shepherds before going to the Temple, and Anna receiving the promise of fruitfulness while she was praying under a tree which formed a tabernacle. In the previous year, 1820, she had, however, stated that she remembered Joachim having gone up to Jerusalem with his offerings on the occasion of a dedication festival. This cannot be the usual Jewish dedication feast in the winter (the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month (Kislev), but must doubtless be a memorial festival of Solomon's dedication of the Temple. According to Catherine Emmerich's daily accounts of the three years of Jesus' ministry, Our Lord was in Aruma (a few hours' distant from Salem) at the close of the Feast of Tabernacles in the second year of His ministry, and taught there about the approaching destruction of the Temple.

This feast is, it is true, not mentioned in the works about Jewish antiquities which we commonly consult, but its existence cannot, I think, be doubted, apart from Catherine Emmerich's statements, if it is remembered that Solomon celebrated the consecration of his Temple in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles (III Kings 8.2-66, and II Paralipomenon 7.10), and that the Masora on III Kings 8.2 and 54 appoints the account of the consecration of Solomon's Temple as festival lessons for the second and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Although Catherine Emmerich saw the meeting of Joachim and Anna happening at the close of the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus two months earlier than the Church's celebration of Mary's conception, it was always on the occasion of that feast on December 8<sup>th</sup> that she was impelled to communicate visions about Our Lady's conception. She said, too, that it was on that day, not at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn, that the remembrance of this grace-bringing event was already being celebrated by the three holy kings when Christ visited them in Arabia after the raising of Lazarus.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated, according to Lev. 23.34-36, for the seven days 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Tishri, with an eighth day of festival on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Hebrew lunar months do not correspond exactly to our months, and Tishri falls in Sept./Oct. CB quite correctly distinguishes the Dedication Feast of Solomon's Temple in the month Tishri, celebrated in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles (III Kings 8.2-66; II Paralipomenon 7.10), from the Dedication Feast on the 25<sup>th</sup> Kislev, which commemorated the cleansing of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C. (I Macc. 4.52). This feast was also called *Hanukkah* and the 'Feast of Lights' by Josephus (*Ant.* XII, vii, 7), and *Encaenia* or 'Dedication' in the Gospel (John 10.22). (SB)

<sup>53</sup> Saint Joachim and Saint Ann met in an underground passage of the Temple during a feast associated with the Temple. This feast at the Second Temple of Jerusalem was most likely that singular festival which took place at the completion of the rebuilding of the Sanctuary of the Temple by Herod in the second half of the first century B.C.

Here end the additional communications by Catherine Emmerich about the conception of Mary: the story of Our Lady's life is now resumed.

## II. THE BIRTH OF OUR LADY

I had a vision of the creation of Mary's most holy soul and of its being united to her most pure body. In the glory by which the Most Holy Trinity is usually represented in my visions I saw a movement like a great shining mountain, and yet also like a human figure; and I saw something rise out of the midst of this figure towards its mouth and go forth from it like a shining brightness. Then I saw this brightness standing separate before the Face of God, turning and shaping itself—or rather being shaped, for I saw that while this brightness took human form, yet it was by the Will of God that it received a form so unspeakably beautiful. I saw, too, that God showed the beauty of this soul to the angels, and that they had unspeakable joy in its beauty. I am unable to describe in words all that I saw and understood.

When seventeen weeks and five days after the conception of the Blessed Virgin had gone by (that is to say, five days before Anna's pregnancy was half accomplished), I saw Our Lady's holy mother lying asleep in her bed in her house near Nazareth. Then there came a shining light above her, and a ray from this light fell upon the middle of her side, and the light passed into her in the shape of a little shining human figure. In the same instant I saw Our Lady's holy mother raise herself on her couch surrounded by light. She was in ecstasy, and had a vision of her womb opening like a tabernacle to enclose a shining little virgin from whom man's whole salvation was to spring. I saw that this was the instant in which for the first time the child moved within her. Anna then rose from her couch, dressed herself, and announced her joy to the holy Joachim. They both thanked God, and I saw them

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Josephus describes that singular festival: "But the temple itself was built by the priests in a year and six months; upon which all the people were full of joy; and presently they returned thanks, in the first place, to God; and in the next place, for the alacrity the king had showed. They feasted and celebrated this rebuilding of the temple: and for the king, he sacrificed three hundred oxen to God, as did the rest every one according to his ability; the number of which sacrifices is not possible to set down, for it cannot be that we should truly relate it; for at the same time with this celebration for the work about the temple fell also the day of the king's inauguration, which he kept of an old custom as a festival, and it now coincided with the other, which coincidence of them both made the festival most illustrious." (*Ant.* 15.421-423).

The reason for AC's confusion was that this festival was not a regular celebration, but a one-time event, which occurred between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of the Dedication (Hanukah), at the time also of the anniversary of king Herod's inauguration. Since Herod captured Jerusalem on the fast day, Yom Kippur, (*Ant.* 14.487), he must have been inaugurated sometime soon afterwards, but not immediately because of the preparations that a fitting inauguration would require. Thus, the inauguration of king Herod and the singular festival dedicating the rebuilt Sanctuary of the Temple of Jerusalem to God most likely occurred in November (between the Feast of Tabernacles in Sept./Oct. and the Feast of the Dedication in Dec./Jan.). As a result, we must also place the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in November.

Anne Catherine saw Joachim and Ann both performing rituals related to tabernacles because this singular feast was a feast related to the Temple of Jerusalem, a tabernacle of God. This singular feast would therefore easily be confused with the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Dedication, both of which are also feasts related to the Temple. (RC)



praying under the tree in the garden where the angel had comforted Anna. It was made known to me that the Blessed Virgin's soul was united to her body five days earlier than with other children, and that her birth was twelve days earlier.<sup>54</sup>

Several days before Our Lady's birth Anna had told Joachim that the time was approaching for her to be delivered. She sent messengers to Sephoris, where her younger sister Maraha lived; to the widow Enue (sister of Elisabeth) in the valley of Zabulon; and to her niece Mary Salome at Bethsaida, asking these three women to come to her. I saw them on their journeys. The widow Enue had a serving-lad with her; the other two women were accompanied by their husbands who, however, went back on approaching Nazareth. I saw that on the day before Anna was delivered Joachim sent his many manservants out to the herds, and among Anna's new maidservants he kept in the house only those who were needed. He, too, went out into his nearest pasture. I saw that Anna's first-born daughter, Mary Heli, looked after the house. She was then about nineteen years old and was married to Cleophas, one of Joachim's chief shepherds, by whom she had a little daughter, Mary Cleophas, now about four years old. After praying, Joachim chose out his finest lambs, kids, and cattle, sending shepherds to take them to the Temple as a thank-offering. He did not return home until nightfall.

I saw the three cousins arriving at Anna's house in the evening. They went to her in her room behind the hearth and embraced her. After Anna had told them that the time was near for her to be delivered, they stood up and sang a hymn together: 'Praise the Lord God; He has shown mercy to His people and has redeemed Israel and has fulfilled the promise which He gave to Adam in Paradise that the seed of the woman should crush the head of the serpent,' and so on. I can no longer recite it all by heart. Anna prayed as though in ecstasy. She introduced into the hymn all the prophetic symbols of Mary. She said: 'The seed given by God to Abraham has ripened in me.' She spoke of the promise to Sara of Isaac's birth and said: 'The blossoming of Aaron's rod is perfected in me.' At that moment I saw her as though suffused with light; I saw the room full of radiance, and Jacob's ladder appearing above it. The women were overcome with astonishment and joy, and I think that they also saw the vision. When the prayer of welcome was over, the travellers were refreshed with a slight meal of bread and fruit, and water mixed with balsam. They ate and drank standing up, and then lay down till midnight to rest from their journey. Anna did not go to bed, but prayed, and at midnight woke the other women to pray with her. They followed her to her praying-place behind a curtain.

Anna opened the doors of a little cupboard in the wall which contained a casket with holy objects. On each side were lights—perhaps lamps, but I am not sure. They had to be pushed up in their holders, and then little bits of shavings put underneath to prevent them

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<sup>54</sup> Here is an example of the kind of misunderstanding that can occur in a private revelation. God is infallible, but private revelation is fallible, due to the possibility of misunderstanding on the part of the person who receives the revelation. Human life, with body and soul united, begins at conception. The soul is not added to the body at some later time after conception. AC must have misunderstood what God revealed to her. (RC)

from sinking down. After this the lights were lit. There was a cushioned stool at the foot of this sort of little altar. The casket contained some of Sara's hair (Anna had a great veneration for her), some of Joseph's bones brought by Moses from Egypt), and something belonging to Tobias, I think a relic of his clothing; also the little shining, white, pear-shaped goblet from which Abraham had drunk when blessed by the angel. (This had been given to Joachim from the Ark of the Covenant when he was blessed in the Temple. I now know that this blessing took the form of wine and bread and was a strengthening and sacramental food.)

Anna knelt before the little cupboard with one of the women on each side and the third behind her. She recited another hymn; I think it mentioned the burning bush of Moses. Then I saw the room filled with supernatural light which became more intense as it wove itself round Anna. The women sank to the ground as though stunned. The light round Anna took the exact form of the burning bush of Moses on Horeb, and I could no longer see her. The whole flame streamed inwards; and then I suddenly saw that Anna received the shining child Mary in her hands, wrapped her in her mantle, pressed her to her heart, and laid her naked on the stool in front of the holy relics, still continuing her prayer. Then I heard the child cry, and saw that Anna brought out wrappings from under the great veil which enveloped her. She wrapped the child first in grey and then in red swaddling-bands up to her arms; her breast, arms, and head were bare. The appearance of the burning bush around Anna had now vanished.

The women stood up and received the new-born child in their arms with great astonishment. They shed tears of joy. They all joined in a hymn of praise, and Anna lifted her child up on high as though making an offering. I saw at that moment the room full of light, and beheld several angels singing *Gloria* and *Alleluia*. I heard all their words. They announced that on the twentieth day the child was to be called Mary.

Anna now went into her bedroom and lay down on her couch. The women in the meantime unwrapped the child, bathed it, and wrapped it up again, and then laid it beside its mother. There was a little woven wicker basket which could be fastened beside the bed or against the wall or at the foot of the bed, whichever was wanted, so that the child could always have its place near its mother and yet separate.

The women now called Joachim, the father. He came to Anna's couch and knelt down weeping, his tears falling on the child; then he lifted it up in his arms and uttered his song of praise, like Zacharias at John's birth. He spoke in this hymn of the holy seed, implanted by God in Abraham, which had continued amongst God's people by means of the covenant ratified by circumcision, but had now reached its highest blossoming in this child and was, in the flesh, completed. I also heard how this song of praise declared that now was fulfilled the word of the prophet: 'There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse.' He said, too, in great humility and devoutness, that he would now gladly die.

It was only then that I noticed that Mary Heli, Anna's elder daughter, did not have sight of the child until later. Although she had become the mother of Mary Cleophas several years before, she was not present at Our Lady's birth—perhaps because, according to Jewish rules, it was not considered seemly for a daughter to be with her mother at such a time.

Next morning I saw the serving men and maids and many people from nearby gathered round the house. They were allowed to enter in groups, and the child was shown by the women to them all. Many were greatly moved, and some led better lives thereafter. The neighbours had come because they had seen in the night a glowing light above the house, and because the birth of Anna's child after long unfruitfulness was looked upon as a great favour from heaven.

In the moment when the new-born child lay in the arms of her holy mother Anna, I saw that at the same time the child was presented in heaven in the sight of the Most Holy Trinity, and greeted with unspeakable joy by all the heavenly host. Then I understood, that there was made known to her in a supernatural manner her whole future with all her joys and sorrows. Mary was taught infinite mysteries, and yet was and remained a child. This knowledge of hers we cannot understand, because our knowledge grows on the tree of good and evil. She knew everything in the same way as a child knows its mother's breast and that it is to drink from it. As the vision faded in which I saw the child Mary being thus taught in heaven through grace, I heard her weep for the first time.

I often see pictures like this, but for me they are inexpressible and probably for most people not quite comprehensible; therefore I do not relate them.

In the moment of Mary's birth I saw the tidings brought to the patriarchs in limbo. I saw them all, especially Adam and Eve, filled with inexpressible joy at the fulfilment of the promise given in Paradise. I also perceived that the patriarchs advanced in their state of grace, that the place of their sojourn became brighter and more spacious, and that it was given to them to have more influence on earth. It was as if all their labour and penance, all the struggling, crying and yearning of their lives had matured into its destined fruit.

At the time of Mary's birth I saw a great and joyful agitation in nature, in the animal world, in the hearts of all good men, and I heard the sound of sweet singing. Sinners, however, were overwhelmed by fear and sorrow. I saw, specially near Nazareth, but also in the rest of the Promised Land, many who were possessed break out at that time into violent ravings. They were hurled from side to side with loud cries, and the devils shrieked from within them, 'We must surrender, we must go out!'

In Jerusalem I saw how the aged priest Simeon, who lived in the Temple, was startled at the moment of Mary's birth by loud shrieks coming from the madmen and those possessed of the devil, of whom many were shut up in a building in one of the streets on the Temple Hill. Simeon lived near them and was partly responsible for looking after them. About midnight I saw him go to the open space before the house of those possessed and inquire of one of them who lived nearest as to the cause of the loud cries with which everyone had been roused from their sleep. The man cried still louder that he must go out. Simeon opened the door, the possessed one rushed out, and Satan cried from within him: 'I must go out, we must all go out! A virgin has been born! There are so many angels on earth who torment us! We must now go out and may nevermore enter into men!' I saw Simeon praying fervently; the wretched man was flung back and forth on the open space, and I saw the devil go out of him. It gave me great pleasure to see the aged Simeon. I also saw the prophetess Anna and Noemi wakened and informed by visions of the birth of a chosen child. [Noemi was the sister of Lazarus' mother; she was in the Temple and later became Mary's teacher.] They

met and told each other of what they had seen. I think they knew Anna, Our Lady's mother.

In the night of Mary's birth I saw in a city of the Chaldaeans that five sibyls, or virgin prophetesses, were granted visions. I saw them hastening to the priests, who then made known in many places that these prophetesses had seen that a virgin had been born and that many gods had come down to earth to greet her, while other spirits fled before her lamenting. I saw, too, that the picture of a Virgin holding scales evenly balanced with corn and grapes, which the watchers of the stars had seen since Mary's conception, was no longer visible to them. In the hour of Mary's birth it seemed to move out of the star, in which it left a gap, and to sink down and away from it in one particular direction. They now made and set up in their temple the great idol which I saw there in my visions of the life of Our Lord; it had some connection with the Blessed Virgin.<sup>55</sup>

Later they set up in their temple another symbolic image of the Blessed Virgin, the closed garden. I saw live animals lying in this temple and being cared for. I am not sure whether they were dogs. They were fed with the flesh of other animals. Within the temple of the three holy kings I had till now always seen a wonderful illumination at night. It was as if

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<sup>55</sup> On Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> of the third year of Our Lord's ministry she saw a temple of the Chaldaeans about which she related the following: 'On a neighbouring hill they had a terraced pyramid with galleries, from which they zealously watched the stars. They prophesied from the manner in which animals moved and they interpreted dreams. They sacrificed animals, but had a horror of the blood and always let it run away into the earth. In their religious observances they had holy fire and holy water, holy juice from a plant and little holy loaves of bread. Their temple, oval in shape, was full of images very delicately wrought in metal. They had a strong presentiment about the Mother of God. The principal object in the Temple was a three-cornered pillar ending in a point. On one side of this was an image with many arms and with animals' feet. It held in its hands, among other things, a globe, a diadem, a bunch of herbs, and a big ribbed apple held by its stalk. Its face was like a sun with rays, it was many-breasted, and represented the productive and preservative powers of nature. Its name sounded like Miter or Mitras. On the other side of the pillar was the figure of an animal with a horn. It was a unicorn, and its name sounded like Asphas or Aspax. It was thrusting with its horn against another evil beast which was on the third side. This had a head like an owl; it had a curved beak, four legs with claws, two wings, and a tail ending like a scorpion's. I have forgotten its name; indeed, I find it very difficult to remember such outlandish names and often mix them up. I can only say that they sounded something like this or that. Over the two fighting beasts there was an image standing on the corner of the pillar which was intended to represent the mother of all the gods. Its name sounded like the Lady Aloa or Aloas. They also called her "corn granary". A cluster of high ears of corn grew out of its body: its head was pressed down on to its shoulders and bent forward, for on the nape of its neck it bore a vessel containing wine or about to do so. They had a saying: "The Corn shall become bread, the grape shall become wine, for the refreshment of all mankind." Over this image was a sort of crown, and there were two letters on the pillar which looked to me like O and W [perhaps Alpha and Omega]. What, however, surprised me most in this temple was a little round garden, covered over with gold network and standing on a bronze altar. Above it was the picture of a virgin. In the middle of this garden was a fountain with several sealed basins one above the other, in front of which was a green vine with a beautiful red cluster of grapes which hung down into a dark-coloured wine-press. Its form reminded me vividly of the Holy Cross, but it was a wine-press. Above in a hollow trunk was fixed a wide funnel with a bag hanging from its spout. Two movable arms, fixed to each side of the hollow trunk, were used as levers to press the grapes that were in the bag so that the juice ran out of the trunk through openings made in it lower down. The little round garden, which was about five to six feet in diameter, was full of delicate green shrubs, flowers, fruits and little trees which were all, like the vine, very life-like and had the same significance as it.' (See Canticle of Canticles 4.12.) (CB)

one looked up into a starry sky set with all the constellations. They used to make alterations in this artificial sky in their temple according to the visions they saw in the heavens. Thus after the birth of Mary the illumination which had previously come from outside now came from within.

When the Blessed Virgin was born, I saw cast into the sea, from its place in the temple on an island in a river, that image of a winged woman with a balance in her hand, bending down over a child in a little ship lying in the top of a tree—the image which I had seen placed there long ago, before the time of Elias, in accordance with the forced utterance of an idol. The little tree on which lay the child in the ship, remained in its place. A church was built there later.

At the moment of Mary's birth I saw falling from the temple-ceiling pieces of that winged female figure with three breasts which I had seen fixed to the ceiling of a temple when a messenger from Elias announced his master's prophecy of a coming Virgin. The face, the three breasts, and the lower part of the body all fell down and were broken to pieces. The bushel-shaped crown, the arms with the ears of corn, the upper part of the body and the wings did not fall down.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, the day after Mary's birth, I saw in the house several other relations from the neighbourhood. I heard many names but have forgotten them again. I also saw many of Joachim's menservants arriving from the more distant pastures. All were shown the new-born child, and all were filled with great joy. The meal in the house was accompanied by much rejoicing.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of September I again saw many visiting the child Mary. Among them were relations of Joachim's from the valley of Zabulon. On these occasions the child was brought into the front part of the house in its little cradle and put on a high stand (like a sawing-bench) to be shown to the people. The child was wrapped in red, covered with transparent white stuff, up to its bare arms, and had a transparent little veil round its neck. The cradle was covered with red and white stuff.

I saw Mary Cleophas (the two- or three-year-old child of Anna's elder daughter and of Cleophas) playing with the child Mary and caressing her. Mary Cleophas was a fat, sturdy child, and wore a sleeveless white dress, with a red hem hung with red buttons like tiny apples. Round her bare arms she wore little white wreaths, which seemed to be made of feathers, silk, or wool.

[September 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>] Today I saw great preparations for a feast in Anna's house. All the furniture was moved aside, and in the front part of the house the dividing screens had been taken away to make one large hall instead of a number of small rooms. Along each side of this hall I saw a long, low table set out for a meal with many things that I had not noticed before. Fragile vases with openwork tops like baskets stood on the table; they may have been for flowers. On a side-table I saw many little white sticks, apparently made of bone, and spoons shaped like deep shells, with handles ending in a ring. There were also little curved tubes, perhaps for sucking up liquid.

In the centre of the hall a kind of altar-table had been set up, covered in red and white. On it lay a little trough-shaped basket-cradle, of red and white wicker-work, covered with a sky-blue cloth. Beside this altar stood a lectern draped in a cloth on which lay parchment

prayer-scrolls. Five priests from Nazareth stood before the altar, one of them wearing grander vestments than the others; Joachim stood near them. In the background near the altar were several men and women belonging to the families of Anna and Joachim, all in festal attire. I remember seeing Anna's sister Maraha from Sephoris, and Anna's elder daughter and others. Anna herself, though no longer in bed, remained in her room behind the hearth and did not appear at the ceremony.<sup>56</sup>

Enue, Elisabeth's sister, brought out the child Mary, wrapped to the arms in red swaddling-clothes covered with transparent white stuff, and laid her in Joachim's arms. The priests approached the altar where the scrolls lay and prayed aloud. Two of them held up the train of the principal one. Joachim then laid the child in the hands of the high priest, who, lifting her up in offering as he prayed, laid her in the cradle on the altar. He then took a pair of scissors which, like our snuffers, had a little box at the end to hold what was cut off. With this he cut off three little tufts of hair from the child's head (one from each side and one from the top) and burnt them in a brazier. Then he took a vase of oil and anointed the child's five senses, touching with his thumb her ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and breast. He also wrote the name Mary on a parchment and laid it on the child's breast. She was then returned to Joachim, who gave her to Enue to be taken back to Anna. Hymns were sung and after that the meal began, but I saw no more.

[On the evening of September 7<sup>th</sup>, the vigil of the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, Catherine Emmerich was unwontedly—as she said, supernaturally-happy, although she felt ill at the same time. She was in an unusually lively and confidential mood. She spoke of extraordinary joy in all nature because of Mary's approaching birth, and said that she felt as if a great joy was awaiting her next day, if only this did not turn to sorrow.<sup>57</sup>] There is such jubilation in nature: I hear birds singing, I see lambs and kids frolicking, and where Anna's house once stood the doves are flying about in great flocks as if drunk with joy. Of the house and its surroundings nothing now remains; it is now a wilderness. I saw some pilgrims, holding long staffs and their garments girt about them, with cloths wrapped round their heads like caps. They are going through this part of the country on their way to Mount Carmel. A few hermits from Mount Carmel live here, and the pilgrims asked them in

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<sup>56</sup> This ceremony took place on the 15th day from the birth of Mary. According to Leviticus, after giving birth to a female child, a Jewish mother was considered unclean for 14 days; the next 66 days were called "the days of her purifying" (Lev 12:5). Thus, day 15 would coincide with the first day of the Saint Ann's time of purifying and the first day after her time of uncleanness.

This ceremony, during which Mary received her name, is analogous to the ceremony for a male child on the 8th day from birth. According to Leviticus, after giving birth to a male child, a Jewish mother was considered unclean for 7 days; the next 33 days were called "the days of her purifying" (Lev 12:4). The ceremony for circumcision took place on the 8th day, which was the first day of the mother's purifying (for a male child), and the day after her time of uncleanness. During that ceremony, the male child received his name. For example, both John the Baptist and Jesus were given their names at this ceremony on the eighth day (Lk 1:59-63; 2:21). Thus, this ceremony described by AC has a basis in Scripture. (RC)

<sup>57</sup> In a vision of the Blessed Virgin, she had received the promise that on the next day, Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> (which was also her own birthday), she would be granted the favour of sitting up in bed for several weeks, leaving the bed and walking about the room several times, which she had been unable to do for some ten years. The fulfilment of this promise was attended by all the spiritual and bodily sufferings which had been announced to her at the time, as will be recounted in its proper place. (CB)

amazement what was the meaning of this joy in nature? They were told that it was ever thus in that country on the eve of Mary's birth, and that it was probably there that Anna's house had stood. A pilgrim who had passed that way before had, they said, told them that this was first noticed a long time ago by a devout man, and that this had led to the celebration of the feast of Our Lady's Nativity.

I now saw this institution of the feast myself.<sup>58</sup> Two hundred and fifty years after the death of the Blessed Virgin I saw a very devout man journeying through the Holy Land in order to seek out and venerate all the places connected with the life of Jesus upon earth. I saw that this holy man was given guidance from above, and often remained for several days in prayer and contemplation at different places, enjoying many visions and full of interior delight. He had for many years felt, in the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, a great joyfulness in nature and heard a lovely singing in the air; and at last, in answer to his earnest prayer, he was told by an angel in a dream that this was the birth-night of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He received this revelation on his journey to Mount Sinai or Horeb. It was told him at the same time that in a cave of the Prophet Elias on that mountain was a walled-up chapel in honour of the Mother of the Messias, and that he was to inform the hermits living there of both these things. Thereupon I saw him arriving at Mount Sinai. The place where the monastery now stands was already at that time inhabited by isolated hermits, and just as precipitous on the side facing the valley as it is now, when people have to be hoisted up by means of a pulley. I saw now that upon his announcement the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin was first celebrated here by the hermits on September 8<sup>th</sup> about A.D. 250, and that its celebration spread later to the Universal Church. I saw, too, how he and the hermits looked for the cave of Elias and the chapel in honour of the Blessed Virgin. These were, however, very difficult to find among the many caves of the Essenes and of other hermits. I saw many deserted gardens here and there near these caves, with magnificent fruit-trees in them. After praying, the devout man was inspired to take a Jew with them when they visited these caves, and was told that they might recognize as the cave of Elias the one that he was unable to enter. I saw thereupon how they sent an aged Jew into the caves, and how he felt himself thrust out of the narrow entrance of one of them, however much he tried to force his way in. In this way they recognized it as the cave of Elias. They found in it a second cave, walled-up, which they opened; and this was the place where Elias had prayed in veneration of the future mother of the Saviour. The big, beautifully patterned stones which made the wall were used later for building the church. They also found in the cave many holy bones of patriarchs and prophets, as well as many woven screens and objects of earlier worship. All these were preserved in the church. I saw much of Mount Horeb on this occasion, but have forgotten it again. I still remember that the place where Moses saw the burning bush is called in the language of the place 'The Shadow of God',

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<sup>58</sup> The main feature of the story, the holy man who heard music in the air and, on asking what it was, received a revelation about Mary's birthday, which then led to its general observance, is found in the *Legenda Aurea* of B. James of Voragine, O.P. (c. 1255) for Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>. The oldest documentary evidence for the feast is from the sixth century, and its general acceptance not until the eighth or ninth (*Cath. Encyc.*, art. 'Nativity' (Holweck), p. 712d). (SB)

and that one may walk on it only with bare feet. I also saw a mountain there entirely of red sand, on which, however, very fine fruit-trees grew.

I saw much of St. Bridget, and was given much knowledge of what had been revealed to this saint about Mary's conception and birth. I remember that the Blessed Virgin said to her that if women with child celebrated the vigil of her Nativity by fasting and by the pious recitation of nine Ave Marias in honour of her nine-months' sojourn in her Mother's womb; and if they renewed this devotion frequently during their pregnancy and the day before they expected their confinement, at the same time receiving with devotion the Holy Sacrament, she would bring their prayer before God and beg for a happy delivery even in difficult and dangerous conditions.

I myself had today a vision of Our Lady who came to me and told me, among other things, that whoever recited with love and devotion on the afternoon of this day nine Ave Marias in honour of her nine months' sojourn in her mother's womb and of her birth, continuing this devotion for nine days, would give the angels nine flowers each day for a bouquet which they would receive in heaven and present to the Blessed Trinity, to obtain favour for the suppliant. Later I felt myself transported to a height between heaven and earth. The earth lay below, dark and troubled; above in heaven I saw the Blessed Virgin before the Throne of God, between the choirs of angels and the ordered hosts of the saints. I saw, built for her out of devotions and prayers on earth, two portals or thrones of honour which grew at last into palaces like churches, and even into whole cities. It was strange to see how these buildings were made entirely of herbs, flowers, and garlands all intertwined, their different species expressing the different kinds and different merits of the prayers of individual human beings and of whole communities. I saw all being taken by angels or saints from the hands of the suppliants and being carried up to heaven.

## PURIFICATION OF ST. ANNE

Some weeks after Mary's birth I saw Joachim and Anna journeying to the Temple with the child to make sacrifice. They presented the child here in the Temple in devotion and gratitude to God, who had taken from them their long unfruitfulness, just as later the Blessed Virgin according to the Law offered and ransomed the Child Jesus in the Temple.<sup>59</sup> The day after their arrival they made sacrifice, and already then made a vow to dedicate their child completely to the Temple in a few years' time. Then they travelled back to Nazareth with the child.<sup>60</sup>

## III. THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN THE TEMPLE <sup>61</sup>

[On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1821, Catherine Emmerich described in these words what she was at

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<sup>59</sup> See Lev. 12.

<sup>60</sup> This ceremony at the Temple, required by Leviticus 12, occurred on the 40th day from birth for a male child or on the 80th day from birth for a female child.

<sup>61</sup> The story of the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple at the age of three years appears in the Apocryphal Gospels: *Protev.* 7, *Ps-Matt.* 6, *Nat. Mar.* 6, *Hist. Jos.* 3; and is attested by the liturgical feast on Nov. 21st. (SB)



that moment seeing in a waking vision:] The child Mary will, I think, soon be brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. Already some days ago I saw the three-year-old child Mary standing before Anna in a room in her house and being instructed in her prayers, as the priests were soon to come to examine the child in preparation for her reception in the Temple. Today a feast in preparation for this event is taking place in Anna's house, and guests are gathering there—relations, men, women, and children. There are also three priests, one from Sephoris (a nephew of Anna's father), one from Nazareth, and a third from a place on a mountain some four hours from Nazareth. The name of this place begins with the syllable Ma.<sup>62</sup> These priests have come partly to examine the child Mary to see whether she is fitted for dedication to the Temple, and partly to give directions about her clothing, which has to comply with a prescribed ecclesiastical pattern. There were three sets of garments, each consisting of a kind of petticoat, a bodice, and a robe of different colours. There were also two wreaths of silk and wool, and an arched crown. One of the priests himself cut out some pieces of these garments and arranged everything as it should be.

[A few days later (on November 2<sup>nd</sup>) Catherine Emmerich continued:] Today I saw great festivities in the house of Mary's parents. (I am not sure whether this actually happened then or whether it was a repetition of an earlier vision, for I had seen something like it before during the last three days, but because of much suffering and many interruptions it escaped my mind.) The three priests were still there, and besides them there were several relations of the family with their little daughters; for instance, Mary Heli and her seven-year-old child Mary Cleophas, who is much stouter and sturdier than the child Mary. Mary is very delicately formed, and has reddish-fair hair, smooth, but curly at the ends. She can already read, and all are astonished at the wise answers she gives. Maraha, Anna's sister from Sephoris, is also there with a little daughter, and so are other relations with their little girls.

The garments, which had been partly cut out by the priests, had now been finished by the women. During the ceremony the child was dressed in them several times and asked various questions. It was all very solemn and serious, and though the old priests sometimes smiled gently during the proceedings, they were greatly impressed by Mary's wise answers and by her parents' tears of joy. The ceremony took place in a square room near the eating-room. It was lit by an opening in the roof covered with gauze. A red carpet was spread on the floor, and on this stood an altar-table with a red cloth and a white one over it. Above this table was a picture in some sort of embroidery or needlework which hung like a curtain in front of a kind of little cupboard containing scrolls of writings and prayers. (It was a picture of a man, I think of Moses. He was dressed in a flowing praying-mantle like the one he wore when he went up the mountain to ask something of God. In the picture he was not holding the Tables of the Law in his hand; they were hanging at his side or on his arm. Moses was very tall and broad-shouldered. He had red hair. His head was very long and pointed, like a sugar-loaf, and he had a big hooked nose. On his broad forehead he had two protuberances like horns, turned inwards towards each other. They were not hard like animals' horns, but had soft skin, as it were ribbed or streaked, and only projected slightly from the forehead

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<sup>62</sup> There is a place called Madin about twelve miles north-east of Nazareth on the high ground above the Lake of Galilee. Cf. Jos. 11.1. (SB)

like two small lumps, brownish and wrinkled. He already had them as a child, but then they were little warts. This gave him a very strange appearance, which I never liked because it reminded me involuntarily of pictures of Satan. I have several times seen protuberances like these on the foreheads of old prophets and of some old hermits. Some of these had only one, in the middle of the forehead.) On the altar lay Mary's three sets of ceremonial garments as well as many other stuffs presented by her relations on the occasion of the child's entry into the Temple. There was a sort of little throne raised on steps in front of the altar. Joachim and Anna and the other relations were gathered round, the women standing at the back and the little girls beside Mary. The priests entered bare-footed. There were five of them, but only three took part in the ceremony in their vestments. One of the priests took the garments from the altar, explained their significance and handed them to Anna's sister from Sephoris, who dressed the child in them. First of all she put on her a little yellow knitted dress, and over it a coloured scapulary or bodice decorated at the breast with cords. It was put over her head and tied round her. Over this she wore a brownish robe with arm-holes, over which hung pieces of the stuff. This robe was open at the neck, but closed from the breast downwards. Mary wore brown sandals with thick green soles. Her reddish-fair hair, curling at the ends, had been combed smooth, and she wore a wreath of white wool or silk ornamented at intervals with striped feathers, of a finger's breadth and curving inwards. I know the bird in that country from which these feathers come. A big square cloth, ash-grey in colour, was then thrown over the child's head like a cloak. It could be drawn together under the arms, which rested in its folds as in slings. It seemed to be a penitential or praying garment or a travelling cloak.

As Mary stood there in this dress, the priests put to her all manner of questions which had to do with the way of life of the Virgins of the Temple. Among other things they said to her: 'When your parents dedicated you to the Temple, they made a vow on your behalf that you should never taste wine, vinegar, grapes, or figs; what will you yourself now add to this? You may reflect on this during the meal. Now the Jews, and especially the Jewish girls, were very fond of drinking vinegar, and so was Mary. After more of such questions, the first set of garments was removed and the second put on. First a sky-blue dress, then a bodice more ornamented than the first one, a bluish-white robe, and a white veil shimmering like silk, with folds at the back of the neck like a nun's head-dress and fastened round the head by a wreath of silk flower-buds with little green leaves. Then the priests put a white veil over her face, drawn together above so as to cover her head like a hood. It was held by three clasps which enabled the veil to be thrown back to uncover either a third, a half, or the whole of the face. She was instructed in the use of this veil, how it was to be lifted and then dropped at meals and when she had to give answers to questions and so forth. She was also instructed in many other rules of behaviour during the meal of which the whole party partook in the next room. Mary's place at table was between two priests, with another facing her. The women and little girls were at one end of the table, separate from the men. During the meal the child was examined several times by question and answer in the use of the veil. They also said to her: 'You are still allowed to eat any kind of food', and handed her various dishes in order to test her power of self-denial. But Mary partook of only few dishes and but little of each, and filled her hearers with great amazement by the child-like

wisdom of her answers. I saw that during the meal and during the whole examination there were angels beside her, helping and guiding her.

When the meal was over, all went once more into the other room and stood before the altar, where the child was again undressed and then clothed in ceremonial garments. This time she wore a violet-blue dress woven with a pattern of yellow flowers; over this was a bodice or corset embroidered in different colours ending in a point and fastening under the arms, where it gathered and held the fullness of the dress. Above this was a violet-blue robe, fuller and grander than the other ones, and ending in a short, rounded train. Down each side of the front of this robe were embroidered three silver stripes with what seemed to be little gold rose-buds strewn between them; the robe was fastened across the breast by a band which ran through and was held by a clasp on the bodice. The robe was open down to the lower edge of the bodice, and formed two pockets at the sides in which the arms rested. Below the bodice the robe was fastened with buttons or hooks, but showed five stripes of the silver embroidery running down to the hem. The hem itself was also embroidered. The back of this robe fell in ample folds, projecting beyond the arms on either side. Over this was thrown a great gleaming veil shot with colours, white and violet-blue. The crown which was now put on her head was a broad band of thin metal, wider above than below, its upper edge surmounted by points with knobs. Over the top of the crown five metal hands met in a central knob. These hands were covered with strands of silk, and the outside of the broad metal hand was ornamented with little silk roses and five pearls or precious stones. The inside of the hand shone like gold. Mary, dressed in these ceremonial garments, the significance of each of which had been explained to her by the priest, was led up the steps and placed before the altar. The little girls stood beside her. She then declared what she would bind herself to give up when in the Temple. She said that she would eat neither meat nor fish and would drink no milk, but only a drink made out of the pith of a reed and water, such as poor people drink in the Promised Land like rice-water or barley-water with us; sometimes she would put a little terebinth juice into the water. This is like a white treacly oil, very refreshing but not so delicate as balsam. She gave up all spices, and said that she would eat no fruit except a kind of yellow berry that grows in clusters. I know it well; in that country it is eaten only by children and poor people. She said that she would sleep on the bare earth and would rise three times in the night to pray. The other temple-maidens rose only once.

Mary's parents were deeply moved by her words. Joachim, taking the child in his arms, said, weeping: 'Oh, my dear child, that is too hard, your old father will never see you again if you mean to live so austere.' It was very touching to hear. The priests, however, told her that she was to rise only once in the night, like the others, and they made the other conditions milder; for example, on great feast-days she was to eat fish. (There was a great fish-market in Jerusalem in the lower part of the town supplied with water from the pool of Bethesda. Once when it dried up, Herod wanted to make an aqueduct and fountain,<sup>63</sup> and to meet the expense by selling sacred vessels and vestments from the Temple. This caused a

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<sup>63</sup> Pilate, not Herod, proposed to make an aqueduct with Temple funds, and thereby caused a riot of 10,000 Jews, according to Josephus (*Ant.*, XVIII, iii. 2). (SB)

real uproar. The Essenes came from all parts of the country to Jerusalem to resist it, for, as I have just remembered, it was the Essenes who had charge of the priestly vestments.)

The priests also said to the child Mary: 'Many of those virgins who are accepted by the Temple without payment or outfit are obliged, with the consent of their parents, to wash, as soon as they are strong enough, the blood-stained garments of the priests and other rough woollen cloths. This is hard work and often means bloody hands. But this you need not do, seeing that your parents are paying for your sojourn in the Temple.' Mary declared at once without hesitation that she would gladly undertake this work if she were considered worthy. While these questions and answers were being made, the clothing ceremony came to an end. During these holy proceedings I often saw Mary appear so tall among the priests that she stood high above them, whereby I was given a picture of her wisdom and grace. The priests were filled with joyful astonishment. At the end of the ceremony I saw Mary being blessed by the first among the priests. She stood on a little elevated throne between two priests, and the one who blessed her stood facing her, with others behind him. The priests prayed from scrolls, answering each other, and the first one held his hands over her as he blessed her. At this moment I was granted a wonderful insight into the inner being of the holy child Mary. I saw her as if transfused with light by the priest's blessing, and under her heart in an indescribable glory of light I saw the same appearance as I had seen in contemplating the Holy of Holies in the Ark of the Covenant. In a shining space shaped like Melchisedech's chalice I saw indescribable figures of the blessing in the form of light. It was as though corn and wine, flesh and blood, were striving to unite with each other. I saw at one and the same time how, above this appearance, her heart opened like a temple door; and how this mystery, surrounded by a kind of canopy of symbolic jewels, passed into her opened heart. It was as though I saw the Ark of the Covenant entering the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Thenceforth, the highest good then on earth was enshrined in her heart. Then I saw only the holy child Mary filled with a glow of burning devotion. I saw her as though transfigured and hovering above the ground. During this vision I perceived that one of the priests (I think it was Zacharias) had been inspired with an inner conviction that Mary was the chosen vessel of the mystery of salvation; for I saw him receive a ray from the blessing which in my vision had entered into her.

The priests now led the child, blessed and arrayed in her finest ceremonial garments, up to her parents, who were much moved. Anna lifted Mary up to her breast and gave her an affectionate but solemn kiss. Joachim, with deep emotion, gave her his hand seriously and reverently. Mary's elder sister embraced the blessed child in her beautiful dress in a much more lively manner than Anna, who did everything with reflection and moderation. Mary Cleophas, Mary's niece, threw her arms joyfully round her neck like any child. After Mary had been saluted by all present, her ceremonial garments were taken off, and she appeared once more in her ordinary ones. Towards evening several of the guests, including some of the priests, went away to their homes. I saw them standing up to take a light meal; there were fruits and rolls of bread in bowls and dishes on a low table. They all drank out of one goblet. The women ate separately.

## HER DEPARTURE FOR THE TEMPLE

I came into the house of Mary's parents at night-time, and saw several of their relations asleep there. The family themselves were busy with preparations for departure. The hanging lamp with many branches was burning before the hearth. Little by little I saw the whole house astir.

Joachim had sent menservants the morning before to the Temple with beasts for sacrifice; five of each kind, the best he had. They made a very fine herd. I saw him now busy loading the luggage on a pack-animal standing before the house. Mary's clothes were neatly arranged in separate packages and tied on to the animal, together with presents for the priests. It made quite a heavy load. A broad package was arranged to make a comfortable seat in the middle of the animal's back. Anna and the other women had packed everything in bundles which were easy to load. I also saw several kinds of baskets hanging at the donkey's sides. In one of these baskets, rounded like the tureens that rich people have for their soup, with a lid opening in the middle, there were birds of the size of partridges. Other baskets, like the ones used for carrying grapes, contained different kinds of fruit. When the loading was quite finished, a big cover with heavy hanging tassels was put over everything. In the house I saw all the stir and agitation of departure. I saw a young woman, Mary's elder sister, moving about with a lamp. I saw her daughter Mary Cleophas following her about most of the time. I noticed yet another woman whom I took to be a maidservant. I also now saw two priests there. One was a very old man wearing a hood which hung down in a point on his forehead and had flaps over his ears. His upper garment was shorter than the under one and had straps like a stole hanging on it. It was he who had taken the chief part in Mary's examination yesterday and blessed her. I saw him continuing to talk to the child and teaching her different things. Mary was a little more than three years old, very delicately and finely made, and was as developed as a child of five with us. She had reddish-fair hair, smooth, but curly at the ends; it was longer than the seven-year old Mary Cleophas' fair hair, which was short and curly. Most of the children and grown-up people wore long robes of brownish un-dyed wool.

I was particularly struck by two boys among this company who did not seem to belong to the family at all and held no converse with any of them. It seemed as if no one even saw them, though they spoke to me, and were very charming and attractive with their fair curly hair. They had books which seemed to be for learning from. (Little Mary had no book, though she could read already.) Their books were not like ours, but strips some two feet wide rolled round a stick with a projecting knob at each end. The taller of the two boys opened his scroll and came up to me, and read something out of it which he explained to me. The golden letters, each one of which stood alone, were quite strange to me; they were written the wrong way round, and each letter seemed to signify a whole word. The language was completely strange to my ears, yet I understood it. Unfortunately I have now forgotten what he explained to me, but I think it had to do with Moses; perhaps it will come back to me. The younger of the boys held his scroll in his hands as if it were a toy; he jumped about like a child and played with his scroll, swinging it in the air. I cannot at all express how much I was attracted by these children; they were different from all the people there, who seemed not to notice them at all.

[Catherine Emmerich spoke for a long time with childlike delight of these two boys, but could not clearly say who they really were. After, however, having eaten and then slept for a few minutes, she recollected herself and said:] It was the spiritual meaning of these boys that I saw; their presence there was not a natural one. They were only the symbolic representations of prophets. The taller of the two, the one who carried his scroll so solemnly, showed me in it the passage in the third chapter of the book of Exodus where Moses sees the Lord in the burning bush and is told to put off his shoes from his feet. He explained this to me; as the bush was on fire without being burnt, so now the fire of the Holy Spirit was burning in the child Mary, who, all unconscious of it, was bearing this holy flame within her.<sup>64</sup> This passage also, he said, foreshadowed the union, now approaching, of the Godhead with humanity. The fire signified God, the thorn-bush mankind. The boy also explained to me the meaning of the putting off of the shoes, but I have no clear recollection of what he said; I think it signified the removal of the outer covering to disclose the reality within; and foreshadowed the fulfilment of the law and the coming of One greater than Moses and the prophets. The other boy carried his scroll at the end of a thin stick, blowing in the wind like a flag; this signified the joyous entry of Mary on the path which was leading her to her destiny as the Mother of the Redeemer. The childish behaviour of this boy as he played with his scroll showed how Mary, though overshadowed by so great a Promise and called to so holy a destiny, kept all the innocent playfulness of a child. Actually these boys explained to me seven passages out of their scrolls, but in the interruptions and troubles of daily life I have forgotten everything except what I have now told. O my God [she here exclaimed], all that I see is so beautiful and so deep, so simple and so clear, and yet I cannot tell it properly and cannot help forgetting so much because of the miserable, detestable happenings of this wretched earthly life.<sup>65</sup>

[A year earlier, in the middle of November 1820, Catherine Emmerich, while communicating her visions of the Presentation, referred to the appearance of these boy-prophets in the following connection. On the evening of November 16<sup>th</sup> a penitential girdle was brought near Catherine Emmerich when she was asleep. It had been made by a man who was striving to mortify himself, but was without any spiritual advice or direction. He had made it with much exaggerated austerity out of leather straps pierced with nails, but he had been able to wear it for hardly an hour. Though it was two feet away from her, the sleeping Catherine Emmerich quickly drew her hands away from this girdle, saying:] Oh that is quite impossible and senseless! I, too, once wore a girdle like this for a long time, in accordance with an inner warning. It was a means of mortification and self-conquest, but

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<sup>64</sup> For the burning bush (Ex. 3.2) as a type of Our Lady, cf. the second antiphon at Lauds on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. (SB)

<sup>65</sup> One may well be alarmed by the power of the world over fallen mankind when one considers how earthly things brought forgetfulness upon this favoured soul who was not at all attached to them.

Every year about this time she saw this picture of Mary's departure for the Temple, and each time the appearance of the two prophets as boys was in some way interwoven with it. She sees them appear as boys and not at their real age, because they were not personally present at the proceeding but accompany her only as emblems. Painters, when making historical pictures, are in the habit of representing not in their real form, but as youths, genii, or angels, those persons who are intended to illustrate some truth or other. Thus we may see that this manner of representation is not a result of their poetical imagination, but lies in the nature of all visionary appearances. (CB)

was made of quite short spikes of brass wire set close together. This is a really murderous girdle; the man has taken great pains in making it, but could only wear it for a few minutes. One should never do anything like this without the approval of a wise director of souls: he did not know that, of course, because he had no director at hand. Such exaggeration does more harm than good!

[Next morning she recounted the visions of the night in the form of a dream-journey. She said, among other things:]

Hereupon I came to Jerusalem, at what period I am not sure, but it was in the time of the old Jewish kings. I have forgotten what I saw. Then I was made to go towards Nazareth to the house of Anna, Our Lady's holy mother. Before the city of Jerusalem two boys joined me who were going the same way; one held a scroll very solemnly in his hand, while the younger had tied his scroll to a little stick and was merrily playing with it in the wind as if it were a little flag. They spoke to me joyfully about the fulfilment of the time in their prophecies, for they were figures of prophets. I had with me that man's exaggerated penitential girdle which had been brought me, and showed it, by I know not what impulse, to the prophet boy who was Elias. He said to me, 'That is a belt of torture not allowed to be worn. But on Mount Carmel I made and wore a girdle and have bequeathed it to all the children of my order, the Carmelites. That man should wear this girdle, it will profit him far more'. Thereupon he showed me a girdle of a hand's breadth on which all kinds of letters and lines were inscribed, signifying various conquests and struggles, and he indicated various parts of it, saying, 'That man could wear this for eight days and this for one day', and so on. Oh, how I wish the good man could know that!

When we came near to Anna's house and I wanted to go in I could not do so, and my leader, my guardian angel, said to me: 'You must first of all lay much aside, you must be nine years old.' I did not know how this was to be done, but he helped me, I cannot remember how. Three years of my life had to disappear altogether, those three years when I was so vain about my clothes and always wanted to be a smart young girl. Well, I was suddenly nine years old, and now I was able to go into the house with the prophet boys. As I did so, the three-year-old child Mary came up to me and measured herself against me; she was just the same height as me when she stood up by me. How kind and friendly she was, and at the same time so serious!

Immediately after I was standing in the house beside the boy-prophets. Nobody seemed to notice us, and we got in nobody's way. Though they had been old men hundreds of years ago, they were not at all surprised at being present there as young boys: and I, though a nun over forty years old, was not at all surprised either at being now a poor peasant child of nine years. When one is with these holy people, one is surprised at nothing, except at the blindness and sinfulness of mankind.

I saw the travellers starting on their journey to Jerusalem at daybreak. The child Mary came running out of the house to the pack-animals, so eager was she to go to the Temple. The boy-prophets and I stood at the door following her with our eyes. They again showed me passages in their scrolls, one of which spoke of the glory of the Temple, but added that even greater glory was contained within it. The travellers had two pack-animals with them. One of the donkeys which was heavily loaded was led by a servant and was always a little

ahead of the party. On the other donkey, which stood loaded before the house, a seat had been prepared, and Mary was placed on this. She wore the little yellow dress from the first set of garments, and was wrapped in the big cloak, which was drawn round her so that her arms rested in its folds. Joachim, who led this donkey, carried a tall staff like a pilgrim's with a big round knob at the top. Anna walked a short way ahead with little Mary Cleophas. A maidservant accompanied them on the whole journey, and some of the women and children went part of the way with them. They were relations, and turned off to their homes where the roads parted. One of the priests also accompanied the party for a little time.

They had a light with them, but it disappeared completely in the light which in my visions of night journeys always illuminates the road about the Holy Family and other holy persons, though they themselves never seem to see it. At first it seemed to me that I was walking with the boy-prophets behind the child Mary, and afterwards, when she was on foot, at her side. I sometimes heard the boys singing the 44<sup>th</sup> Psalm (*Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum*) and the 49<sup>th</sup> (*Deus deorum Dominus locutus est*), and they told me that these psalms would be sung by two choirs at the reception of the child in the Temple, as I should see when they arrived.<sup>66</sup>

I saw the road going downhill at first and later rising again. When it was morning and full day, I saw the travellers resting beside a spring from which ran a brook; there was a meadow there, and they rested beside a hedge of balsam shrubs. These shrubs always had stone basins under them to catch the balsam that dripped from them, thus providing the passers-by with a refreshing drink, with which they could also fill their jugs. In the hedges there were berries which they picked and ate. They also had little rolls of bread to eat. The boy-prophets had by now disappeared. One of them was Elias, the other I think was Moses. I am sure that the child Mary saw them, but she said nothing about it. She saw them just as when one is a child one often sees holy children appearing to one (or when one is grown-up one sees holy virgins or youths) without saying anything of it to others, because in such moments one is in a state of quiet contemplation.

Later I saw the travellers stop at a house standing by itself, where they were made welcome and were given food. The people who lived there seemed to be relations. Little Mary Cleophas was sent back from here. During the day I had several glimpses of their journey, a rather difficult one. They had to pass over hill and dale, and in the valleys there were often cold mists and much dew, though here and there I saw sunny patches where flowers were showing. Before reaching their resting-place for the night they crossed a little stream. They spent the night at an inn at the foot of a hill on which there is a town. Unfortunately I can no longer say for certain what was the name of this place. I saw it on other journeys of the Holy Family, and can easily be mistaken about its name.<sup>67</sup> I can only

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<sup>66</sup> Under the current numbering of the Psalms, these would be Psalms 45 and 50.

<sup>67</sup> From the situation of this town and from the mention of its having some heathen inhabitants, and of Jesus having travelled in this direction in His thirtieth year on His way to His Baptism, we may conclude that it was Endor. For in her daily visions of the ministry of Our Lord, Catherine Emmerich saw Him celebrating the Sabbath in a small place near Endor in the middle of September of the first year of His ministry on His way to His Baptism. Also in this rather deserted hill-town she saw Him teaching the Canaanites settled here since the



say this much, but not with certainty; they travelled in the same direction that Jesus followed in the September of His thirtieth year, when He went from Nazareth to Bethany and thence to be baptized by John. The Holy Family took the same way on their flight from Nazareth to Egypt. On that flight their first shelter was at Nazara, a small place between Massaloth and a hill-town, but nearer the latter. I see so many places around me and hear so many names that I may very easily mix them up. This town stretches up the hillside and is divided into several different parts, though all belonging to each other. There is a great lack of water there, and it has to be drawn up from below with ropes. There are several old towers in ruins, and on the top of the hill is a sort of watchtower with a structure of beams and ropes for hauling things up from the town below. The many ropes make it look rather like the masts of a ship. It must be an hour's climb to the top of the hill. (The travellers stopped at an inn down below.) There is a very extensive view from this hill. Part of this town is inhabited by heathen people who were treated by the Jews as slaves and forced to do hard labour; for instance, they were made to work at the Temple and other buildings.

[On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1821, she said:] This evening I saw Joachim and Anna with the child Mary and a maidservant arrive at an inn twelve hours distant from Jerusalem. They were accompanied by a manservant who often went ahead with the heavily loaded donkey. Here they caught up with the herd of their beasts on the way to the Temple to be sacrificed; these, however, continued at once on their road. Joachim must have been very well known here, for he was as if in his own house. His beasts for sacrifice always used to stop here. He also came here when he returned to Nazareth from his hidden life among the shepherds. I saw the child Mary asleep here beside her mother. (I have had so much to do these days with the Holy Souls that I think it has made me forget part of the journey to the Temple.)

[On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1821, she related:] This evening I saw the child Mary with her parents arrive in a town to the north-west of Jerusalem, barely six hours' journey from it. This town is called Bethoron and lies at the foot of a hill. On the way they crossed a stream flowing westwards into the sea near Joppa, where Peter taught after the coming of the Holy Ghost. Great battles were once fought near Bethoron. I saw them, but have forgotten them again.<sup>68</sup> (See Joshua 10.11.) It was about two hours' journey from here to a place on a high-road from where one could see Jerusalem. I heard the name of this road or place, but cannot distinctly recall it.<sup>69</sup>

Bethoron is a large town, inhabited by Levites. Very fine, big grapes grow here, and many other fruits as well. The Holy Family stayed with friends in a well-kept house. The man was a school-teacher; it was a Levite school, and there were a number of children in

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defeat of Sisera, in whose army their ancestors had served. (CB)

Endor lies north-east of the Plain of Esdraelon, where the battle was fought in which Sisera was defeated (Judges 4). (SB)

<sup>68</sup> Upper Bethoron is on the hill and Lower Bethoron at the foot of the hill. Jos. 10.11 mentions the battle 'in the descent of Beth-horon'; and a big battle took place here as recorded in I Macc. 3.16-24. (SB)

<sup>69</sup> She remembered that the name sounded like Marion (possibly 'Marom', i.e. 'the height'). It is known that a road ran from Jerusalem past Bethoron to Nicopolis and Lydda. Catherine Emmerich gave all kinds of other details about the hills and valleys on the journey up to this point, but as she sees more distinctly than she can describe, it is impossible to reproduce these details, particularly as the topographical position from which she sees them cannot be determined. (CB)

the house. I was much surprised to see here several women related to Anna, with their little daughters, who were, I had thought, on the way to their own homes. However, as I now saw, they had taken a shorter road and had arrived here first, I suppose in order to welcome the travellers. These women and children were from Nazareth, Sephoris, Zabulon, and thereabouts; some of them had already been in Anna's house during the examination; for instance, Mary's elder sister and her little daughter Mary Cleophas, and Anna's sister from Sephoris with her daughters. The stay here was made the occasion of great rejoicing over the child Mary. She was led into a big room accompanied by the other children, and was placed on a raised seat with a canopy, arranged for her like a little throne. The school-teacher and others again asked her all manner of questions, putting wreaths on her head. All were astonished by the wisdom of her answers. I also heard about the cleverness of another girl who had passed through here a short time ago on her way home from the Temple school. Her name was Susanna, and later she followed Jesus with the holy women. It was her place that Mary was to take in the Temple, for there was a limited number of such places. Susanna was fifteen years old when she left the Temple, and thus about eleven years older than Mary. Anna, too, had been educated in the Temple, but did not go there till she was five years old. The child Mary was exceedingly joyful at being so near the Temple; I saw Joachim pressing her to his heart in tears, and saying: 'O my child, I fear I shall not see you again.'

A meal was now prepared, and while all were reclining at table I saw Mary running about full of loving gaiety, sometimes nestling against her mother or standing behind her and throwing her little arms round her neck.

[On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1821:] Today very early I saw the travellers leaving Bethoron for Jerusalem. All their relations, the children, and the people of the inn went with them. They took with them presents of clothing and fruit for the child. It looks to me as if there were going to be great festivities in Jerusalem. I learnt for certain that Mary was three years and three months old,<sup>70</sup> but she was like a little girl of five or six in our country. Their journey did not take them through either Ussen Scheera or Gophna, though they were known in those places; but they must have passed near them.

## ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM

[In the evening of November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1821, Catherine Emmerich said:] Today at midday I saw the arrival in Jerusalem of the child Mary with those accompanying her. Jerusalem is a strange city; one must not picture it with crowded streets like, for instance, Paris. In Jerusalem are many valleys, steep ways winding behind city walls. No doors or windows are to be seen, for the houses, which stand on high ground, face away from the walls. New quarters have been added one by one, each enclosing a fresh ridge of hill, but leaving the old town-walls standing between them. These valleys are often spanned by solid stone bridges. The living-rooms of the houses usually face on to inner courts; on the street side only the

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<sup>70</sup> Mary was 3 years and 3 months old in early November. Therefore, Mary was born in early August, not in September. AC saw visions of Mary's birth on September 8, because that is the day of the celebration of Mary's birth in the liturgical calendar. (RC)

door is to be seen, or perhaps a terrace high up on the top of the wall. The houses are very much shut up; unless the inhabitants have business in the markets or are visiting the Temple, they spend most of their time in the inner rooms and courtyards. In general the streets of Jerusalem are rather quiet, except near the markets and palaces, where crowds of travellers and soldiers and people going in and out of the houses fill the streets with life and movement. Rome is much more pleasantly situated; its streets are not so steep and narrow and are much more lively. When all the people of Jerusalem are assembled in the Temple, many of the districts of the city seem quite dead. (It was because of the seclusion of the inhabitants within their houses and of the number of deserted valley-paths that Jesus was so often able to go about the city with His disciples undisturbed.) Water is scarce in Jerusalem, and one often sees great structures of arches with channels to carry it in different directions, also towers to the top of which it is driven or pumped. In the Temple, where a great deal of water is needed for washing and cleansing the vessels, it is used very carefully. It is brought up from below by means of large pumping works. There are a great many dealers in the city: they usually group themselves with others of the same trade, and set up lightly-made huts in open places and markets surrounded by porticoes. There are, for instance, not far from the Sheep Gate many dealers in every kind of metal-work, gold, and precious stones. They have light round huts, brown, as if smeared with pitch or resin. Although light, these huts are quite strong; they are used as dwellings, and awnings are stretched from one to another under which the wares are set out.

The gentler slope of the hill on which the Temple lies is terraced with several streets of houses, built one above the other behind thick walls. These are inhabited partly by priests and partly by inferior temple-servants charged with menial duties, such as cleaning out the trenches into which is cast all the refuse from animals slaughtered in the Temple. On one side [she means the northern one]<sup>71</sup> the Temple hill falls very steeply into a black gully. Little gardens belonging to the priests make a green strip round the top of the hill. Work on the Temple never ceased: even in Christ's lifetime building was going on in different parts of it. There was a quantity of ore in the Temple hill, which was dug out in the course of building and made use of. There are many vaults and smelting-furnaces under the Temple. I never found a good place in the Temple to pray in: it is all so extraordinarily solid, heavy and high, and the little courts are themselves so narrow and dark and so encumbered with seats and other things, that when there are great multitudes, the narrow spaces and the crowds between the thick high walls and pillars have a really terrifying effect. The perpetual slaughtering and all the blood filled me, too, with horror, though all is performed with incredible order and cleanliness. It is a long time, I think, since I saw so clearly as I do today all the buildings, inside and out; but there is so much to describe that I shall never be able to do so properly.

The travellers, with the child Mary, approached Jerusalem from the north, but did not enter it on that side; as soon as they reached the outlying gardens and palaces, they skirted the town, turning east through part of the valley of Josaphat, leaving the Mount of Olives and the road to Bethany on their left, and entered the city by the Sheep Gate, which leads to

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<sup>71</sup> It is the eastern side of the Temple hill that falls steeply into the Valley of Kedron. (SB)

the cattle-market. By this gate is a pool, in which the sheep destined for sacrifice are washed for the first time to remove the heavy dirt. But this is not the Pool of Bethesda.<sup>72</sup> The little company soon turned again to the right between walls as though going to another quarter of the town. On their way they passed through a long valley, on one side of which rose the towering walls of one of the upper parts of the city. They went towards the western side of Jerusalem, to the neighbourhood of the fish-market, where the ancestral house of Zacharias of Hebron stood. In it was a very old man, I think he was a brother of Zacharias' father. Zacharias always stayed here when he performed his service at the Temple. He was in the city now; his time of service had just come to an end, but he had remained a few days longer in Jerusalem on purpose to be present at Mary's reception in the Temple. He was not in his house when the company arrived. There were yet other relations in the house, from the neighbourhood of Bethlehem and Hebron, with their children, amongst them two little nieces of Elisabeth, who was not there herself. These all went out with many young girls, carrying little garlands and branches, to meet the travellers, who were still a quarter of an hour away on the valley path. They gave them a joyful welcome, and led them to Zacharias' house, where great rejoicings took place. They were given some refreshment, and then preparations were made to conduct the whole company to a ceremonial inn in the neighbourhood of the Temple. Joachim's beasts for sacrifice had already been brought from near the cattle-market to stables near this special inn. Zacharias now came to lead the company from his house to the inn. The child Mary was dressed in the second set of ceremonial garments with the sky-blue dress. A procession was formed, headed by Zacharias with Joachim and Anna. Mary followed, surrounded by four girls dressed in white, and behind them came the other children and relations. They went along several streets, passing the palace of Herod and the house where, later, Pilate lived. Their way led them towards the north-eastern corner of the Temple hill; behind them was the fortress Antonia, a big high building on the north-western side of the Temple. They had to climb a high wall by a flight of many steps. They wanted to take the child Mary by the hand, but to everyone's surprise she ran up swiftly and joyfully by herself.

The house they were going to was a ceremonial inn not far from the cattle-market. There were four of these inns round the Temple, and this one had been hired for them by Zacharias. It was a large building, with a big courtyard surrounded by a kind of cloister with sleeping-places and long, low tables. There was also a large room with a hearth for cooking. The place to which Joachim's sacrificial beasts had been taken was nearby. On each side of it were the dwellings of the Temple servants who had charge of the animals for sacrifice.

When the company entered the inn, their feet were washed, as is the custom with new arrivals; the men's feet were washed by men, the women's by women. Then they went into a room where a big many-branched lamp hung from the middle of the ceiling over a large

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<sup>72</sup> John 5.2, usually rendered, 'There is at Jerusalem a pond Probatica (=sheep), which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida (or Bethesda or Bezatha)', seems to identify the sheep-pool and Bethsaida, which AC states are distinct. But the most probable rendering of the Greek is 'There is at Jerusalem by the Probatica (i.e. sheep gate) a swimming-pool called in Hebrew Bezatha', and excavations have revealed traces of a swimming-pool 'with five porches' (John, *ib.*) (cf. *Cath. Comm.*, 791c). This is evidently not the same as the sheep-dipping pool mentioned by AC. (SB)

metal basin with handles, full of water, in which they washed their hands and faces. Joachim's pack-donkey was unloaded and led by the manservant to the stable. Joachim, who had given notice of his intention to sacrifice, followed the Temple servants to the nearby stables, where they inspected his beasts.

Joachim and Anna then made their way with the child Mary to a priest's house higher up the hill. Here, too, the child ran up the steps with surprising energy as though upheld and urged by a spiritual force. The two priests in this house, one very old and one younger, gave them a friendly welcome; both had been present at Mary's examination in Nazareth and were expecting her. After they had spoken of the journey and of the approaching presentation ceremony, they summoned one of the Temple women, an aged widow who was to have charge of the child. (She lived near the Temple with other women who, like her, were occupied in various feminine employments and in the training of young girls. Their dwelling was farther away from the Temple than the rooms in which were the oratories of the women and of the maidens dedicated to the Temple. These rooms were built directly on to it, and from them one could look down unseen into the holy place below.) The woman who now came in was so muffled up that only a little of her face could be seen. The child Mary was introduced to her as her future foster-child by the priests and by her parents. She was grave but friendly, and the child was serious, humble, and respectful. They told her of Mary's disposition and character, and discussed various matters connected with the ceremony of her presentation. This elderly woman accompanied them to the inn and was given a package of the child's belongings, which she took back with her to arrange in Mary's new home. Those who had accompanied the party from Zacharias' house returned there, and only the relations who had come with the Holy Family remained in the inn hired by Zacharias. The women of the party settled themselves there and made preparations for a banquet on the following day.

[On November 7<sup>th</sup> Catherine Emmerich said:] I spent the whole of today watching the preparations for Joachim's sacrifice and for Mary's reception in the Temple. Early in the morning Joachim and some other men drove the sacrificial animals to the Temple, where they underwent another inspection by the priests; some of them were rejected, and these were at once driven to the cattle-market in the city. Those which were accepted were driven into the slaughtering-place, where I saw many things happening, but can no longer say in what order. I remember that Joachim laid his hand on the head of each animal before it was sacrificed. He had to catch the blood in a vessel, and had also to receive certain portions of the animal. There were all kinds of pillars, tables, and vessels there, where everything was cut up, distributed, and arranged in order. The bloody froth was taken away, while the fat, spleen, and liver were set apart. Everything was sprinkled with salt. The intestines of the lambs were cleansed and, after being filled with something, were put back into the body to make it seem whole again. The legs of all the animals were tied together crosswise. Some of the meat was taken into another court and given to the Temple virgins, who had to do something with it—perhaps to prepare it for their own or for the priests' food. All was done with incredible orderliness. The priests and Levites moved about always two by two, and the most difficult and complicated tasks were accomplished as if by clockwork. The pieces of meat were not actually offered up till the following day; in the meantime they lay in salt.

There were great rejoicings in the inn today, and a banquet; there must have been a hundred people there, counting the children. There were present at least twenty-four girls of varying ages; among them I saw Seraphia, who after Jesus' death was known as Veronica. She was tall, and might have been ten or twelve years old. They were making wreaths and garlands for Mary and her companions, and decorating seven candles or torches. The candlesticks, which were without pedestals, were shaped like sceptres; I cannot remember what fed the flame at the top, whether it was oil or wax or something else. During the festivities there were several priests and Levites going in and out of the inn, and these also took part in the banquet. When they expressed astonishment at the greatness of Joachim's sacrifice, he explained that he wished to show his gratitude to the best of his power; he could not forget how, by God's mercy, his shame in the Temple at the rejection of his sacrifice had been followed by the granting of his petitions. Today, too, I saw the child Mary going for a walk near the inn with the other little girls. Much else I have forgotten.

## MARY'S ENTRY INTO THE TEMPLE AND PRESENTATION

[On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1821, Catherine Emmerich related:]<sup>73</sup> Today Joachim went first to the Temple with Zacharias and the other men. Afterwards Mary was taken there by her mother Anna in a festal procession. First came Anna and her elder daughter Mary Heli, with the latter's little daughter Mary Cleophas; then the holy child Mary followed in her sky-blue dress and robe, with wreaths round her arms and neck; in her hand she held a candle or torch entwined with flowers. Decorated candles like this were also carried by three maidens who walked on each side of her, wearing white dresses embroidered with gold. They, too, wore pale-blue robes; they were wreathed round with garlands of flowers, and wore little wreaths round their necks and arms as well. Next came the other maidens and little girls, all in festal dress but each different. They all wore little robes. The other women came at the end of the procession. They could not go direct from the inn to the Temple, but had to make a detour through several streets. The beautiful procession gave pleasure to all who saw it, and at several houses honour was paid to it as it passed. There was something indescribably moving in the holiness apparent in the child. As the procession approached the Temple, I saw many of the Temple servants struggling with great efforts to open an immensely large and heavy door, shining like gold and ornamented with a multitude of sculptured heads, bunches of grapes, and sheaves of corn. This was the Golden Gate. The procession passed under this gate, to which fifteen steps led up, but whether in a single flight I cannot remember. Mary would not take the hands held out to her; to the admiration of all she ran eagerly and joyfully up the steps without stumbling. She was received in the gateway by Zacharias, Joachim, and several priests, and led under the gate (which was a long archway) to the right into some large halls or high rooms, in one of which a meal was being prepared. Here the procession dispersed. Several of the women and children went to the women's praying-place in the Temple, while Joachim and Zacharias proceeded to the sacrifice. In one

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<sup>73</sup> AC generally received visions of events either on the day of celebration in the liturgical calendar or on the actual day of the event. Since the liturgical calendar celebrates Mary's Presentation on Nov. 21, the actual date of the event was probably Nov. 8. (RC)

of the halls the priest again examined the child Mary by putting questions to her. They were astonished at the wisdom of her answers, and left her to be dressed by Anna in the third and most magnificent violet-blue ceremonial garment, with the robe, veil, and crown which I have already described at the ceremony in Anna's house.

In the meantime Joachim had gone with the priests to the sacrifice. He was given fire from the appointed place, and then stood between two priests at the altar. I am at present too ill and upset to describe all the circumstances of the sacrifice, but will tell what is still present to my mind.

The altar could be approached from three sides only. The meat prepared for the sacrifice was not put all together, but was divided into separate portions placed round the altar. Flat shelves could be drawn out of the three sides of the altar, and on these the offerings were laid to be pushed to the centre of it; for the altar was too large for the officiating priest to be able to reach the centre with his arm. At the four corners of the altar there stood little hollow columns of metal, crowned with chimneys or something similar-wide funnels made of thin copper, ending in pipes curving outwards like horns, which carried away the smoke above the heads of the officiating priests. When Joachim's sacrifice started to burn, Anna went, with the child Mary in her ceremonial dress and with her companions, into the outer court of the women, which is the place in the Temple set apart for women. This court was separated from the court of the altar of sacrifice by a wall surmounted by a grille; there was, however, a door in the centre of this dividing wall. The women's court slants upwards from the wall, so that a view of the altar of sacrifice cannot be had by all, but only by those standing at the back. When, however, the door in the dividing wall was opened, a number of the women were able to see the altar through it. Mary and the other little girls stood in front of Anna, and the other women of the family remained near the door. In a separate place there were a number of Temple boys dressed in white and playing flutes and harps. After the sacrifice, there was set up in the doorway leading from the court of sacrifice to the women's court a portable decorated altar<sup>74</sup> or sacrificial table, with several steps leading up to it.

Zacharias and Joachim came out of the court of sacrifice and went up to this altar with a priest, in front of whom stood another priest and two Levites with scrolls and writing materials. Anna led the child Mary up to them; the maidens who had accompanied Mary stood a little behind. Mary knelt on the steps, and Joachim and Anna laid their hands on her head. The priest cut off a few of her hairs and burnt them in a brazier. Her parents also said a few words, offering up their child; these were written down by two Levites. Meanwhile the maidens sang the 44<sup>th</sup> Psalm (*Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum*) and the priests the 49<sup>th</sup> Psalm (*Deus, deorum Dominus, locutus est*) accompanied by the boys with their instruments.<sup>75</sup>

I then saw Mary being led by the hand by two priests up many steps to a raised place in the wall dividing the outer court of the Holy Place from the other court. They placed the child in a sort of niche in the middle of this wall, so that she could see into the Temple,

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<sup>74</sup> This altar-table was set up in this doorway because women were not permitted to go farther. When the meeting of Joachim and Anna took place, Joachim had gone through this door into the subterranean passage, while Anna had come from the opposite direction. (CB)

<sup>75</sup> Under the current numbering of the Psalms, these would be Psalms 45 and 50.

where there were many men standing in ranks; they seemed to me to be also dedicated to the Temple. Two priests stood beside her, and still others on the steps below, singing and reading aloud from their scrolls. On the other side of the dividing wall there was an old high priest standing at an altar of incense, so high up that one could see half of his figure. I saw him offering incense and the smoke from it enveloping the child Mary.

During these ceremonies I saw a symbolic vision round the Blessed Virgin which eventually filled and dimmed the whole Temple. I saw a glory of light under Mary's heart, and understood that this glory encompassed the Promise, the most holy blessing of God. I saw this glory appear as if surrounded by the Ark of Noah, so that the Blessed Virgin's head projected above it. Then I saw the shape of the Ark about the glory change into the shape of the Ark of the Covenant, which in its turn changed into the shape of the Temple. Then I saw these shapes disappear, and out of the glory there rose before Our Lady's breast a shape like the Chalice of the Last Supper, and above this, before her mouth, a bread marked with a cross. On each side of her there streamed out manifold rays of light at the ends of which appeared in pictures many mysteries and symbols of the Blessed Virgin, as for example all the titles in the Litany of Our Lady. Behind her shoulders two branches of olive and cypress or cedar and cypress stretched crosswise above a slender palm-tree, which I saw appear just behind her with a little leafy shrub. In the spaces between this arrangement of green branches I saw all the instruments of Our Lord's Passion. The Holy Ghost hovered over the picture in human rather than dove-like form, winged with rays of light: and above I saw the heavens open and disclose, floating in the air above Our Lady, the heavenly Jerusalem, the City of God, with all its palaces and gardens and the mansions of future saints. All were filled with angels, and the whole glory, which now surrounded the Blessed Virgin, was filled with angels' faces.

How can this be expressed? Its variations, its unfoldings, and its transformations were so innumerable that I have forgotten a very great deal. The whole significance of the Blessed Virgin in the Covenant of the Old and New Testaments and to all eternity was set forth therein. I can compare this vision with the smaller one which I had a short time ago of the holy Rosary in all its glory. (Seemingly clever people who speak slightly of the Rosary are much less sensible than poor unimportant folk who pray with it in all simplicity, for these adorn it with the beauty of obedience and humble devotion, trusting in the Church's recommendation of it to the faithful.)

With this vision before me, all the splendour and magnificence of the Temple and the beautifully decorated wall behind the Blessed Virgin seemed quite dim and dingy, even the Temple itself seemed to be no longer there, so full was everything of Mary and her glory. As the whole significance of the Blessed Virgin unfolded itself before my eyes in these visions I saw her no longer as the child Mary, but as the Blessed Virgin, hovering tall above me. I saw the priests and the smoke of the offering and everything through the picture; it was as if the priests behind her were uttering prophecies and admonishing the people to thank God and to pray that this child should be magnified. All those who were present in the Temple were hushed and filled with solemn awe, though they did not see the picture that I saw. It disappeared again little by little just as I had seen it come. At last I saw nothing but the glory under Mary's heart, with the Blessing of the Promise shining within it. Then this



disappeared, too, and I saw the holy dedicated child in her ceremonial dress standing alone once more between the priests. The priests took the wreaths from off the child's arms and the torch from her hand and gave them to her companions. They placed a brown veil or hood on her head, and led her down the steps through a door into another hall, where she was met by six other (but older) Temple virgins who strewed flowers before her. Behind her stood her teachers: Noemi, the sister of Lazarus' mother, the Prophetess Anna, and still a third woman; the priests gave the child Mary over to them and withdrew. Her parents and near relations now approached; the singing was over, and Mary said farewell. Joachim's emotion was particularly deep; he lifted Mary up, pressed her to his heart, and said to her with tears, 'Remember my soul before God!' Thereupon Mary with her teachers and several maidens went into the women's dwelling on the north side of the Temple itself. They lived in rooms built in the thickness of the Temple walls. Passages and winding stairs led up to little praying cells near the Holy Place and Holy of Holies.

Mary's parents and relations went back to the hall by the Golden Gate where they had first waited, and partook of a meal there with the priests. The women ate in a separate hall. I have forgotten much of what I saw and heard, amongst other things the exact reason why the ceremony was so rich and solemn; but I do recollect that it was so as a result of a revelation of the Divine Will.

(Mary's parents were really well off; it was only as mortification and for almsgiving that they lived so poorly. I forget for how long Anna ate nothing but cold food; but their servants were well fed and provided for.) I saw many people praying in the Temple, and many had followed the procession to its gates. Some of those present must have had some idea of the destiny of Our Lady, for I remember Anna speaking with enthusiastic joy to various women and saying to them, 'Now the Ark of the Covenant, the Vessel of the Promise, is entering the Temple'. Mary's parents and other relations reached Bethoron the same day on their journey home.

I now saw a festival among the Temple virgins. Mary had to ask the teachers and each of the young girls whether they would suffer her to be among them. This was the custom. Then they had a meal, and afterwards they danced amongst themselves. They stood opposite each other in pairs, and danced in various figures and crossings. There was no hopping, it was like a minuet. Sometimes there was a swaying, circular motion of the body, like the movements of the Jews when they pray. Some of the young girls accompanied the dancing with flutes, triangles, and bells. There was another instrument which sounded particularly strange and delightful. It was played by plucking the strings stretched on the steeply sloping sides of a sort of little box. In the middle of the box were bellows which when pressed up and down sent the air through several pipes, some straight and some crooked, and so made an accompaniment to the strings. The instrument was held on the player's knees.

In the evening I saw the teacher Noemi lead the Blessed Virgin to her little room, which looked into the Temple. It was not quite square, and the walls were inlaid with triangular shapes in different colours. There was a stool in it and a little table, and in the corners were stands with shelves for putting things on. Before this room was a sleeping-place and a room

for dresses, as well as Noemi's room. Mary spoke to her again about rising often to pray in the night, but Noemi did not yet allow this.

The Temple women wore long, full, white robes with girdles and very wide sleeves, which they rolled up when working. They were veiled.

I never remember seeing that Herod entirely rebuilt the Temple: I only saw various alterations being made in it during his reign. Now, when Mary came to the Temple, eleven years before Christ's birth, nothing was being built in the Temple itself, but (as always) in the outer portions of it: here the work never stopped.<sup>76</sup>

[On November 21<sup>st</sup> Catherine Emmerich said:] Today I had a view of Mary's dwelling in the Temple. On the northern side of the Temple hall, towards the Holy Place, there were several rooms high up which were connected with the women's dwellings. Mary's room was one of the outermost of these towards the Holy of Holies. From the passage one passed through a curtain into a sort of antechamber, which was divided off from the room itself by a partition, semi-circular or forming an angle. In the corners to the right and left were shelves for keeping clothes and other things. Opposite the door in this partition steps led to an opening high up in the wall which looked down into the Temple. This opening had a carpet hanging before it and was curtained with gauze. Against the wall in the left-hand side of the room there was a rolled-up carpet, which, when spread out, made the bed on which Mary slept. A bracket-lamp was fixed in a niche in the wall, and today I saw the child standing on a stool and praying by its light from a parchment roll with red knobs. It was a very touching sight. The child was wearing a little blue-and-white striped dress woven with yellow flowers. There was a low round table in the room. I saw Anna come in and place on the table a dish with fruits of the size of beans and a little jug. Mary was skilful beyond her years: I saw her already working at little white cloths for the service of the Temple.

[Catherine Emmerich generally communicated the above visions about the time of the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady. Besides these, however, she related at different times the following accounts of Mary's eleven-year sojourn in the Temple:]

I saw the Blessed Virgin in the Temple, ever progressing in learning, prayer, and work. Sometimes I saw her in the women's dwelling with the other young girls, sometimes alone in her little room. She worked, wove, and knitted narrow strips of stuff on long rods for the service of the Temple. She washed the cloths and cleansed the pots and pans. I often saw her in prayer and meditation. I never saw her chastising or mortifying her body, she did not need it. Like all very holy people she ate only to live, and took no other food except that which she had vowed to eat. Besides the prescribed Temple-prayers, Mary's devotions consisted of an unceasing longing for redemption, a perpetual state of inner prayer, quietly

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<sup>76</sup> The phrase "Temple itself" refers to the Sanctuary portion of the Temple, where only the Jewish priests were permitted to enter. AC states that the Virgin Mary entered the Temple "eleven years before Christ's Birth," but this cannot be correct. The Virgin Mary entered the Temple when she was 3 years and 3 months old, and was dismissed from the Temple when she was over 14 years of age, a total of about 11 years. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ occurred in February, after the betrothal of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary, and the Birth of Christ occurred in November, nine months later. Therefore, Christ was born just over 12 years after the Virgin Mary entered the Temple, not 11 years. (RC)

and secretly performed. In the stillness of the night she rose from her bed and prayed to God. I often saw her weeping at her prayers and surrounded by radiance. As she grew up, I always saw that she wore a dress of a glistening blue colour. She was veiled while at prayer, and also wore a veil when she spoke with priests or went down to a room by the Temple to be given work or to hand over what she had done. There were rooms like this on three sides of the Temple; they always looked to me like sacristies. All sorts of things were kept there which it was the duty of the Temple maidens to look after, repair, and replace.

I saw the Blessed Virgin living in the Temple in a perpetual ecstasy of prayer. Her soul did not seem to be on the earth, and she often received consolation and comfort from heaven. She had an endless longing for the fulfilment of the Promise, and in her humility hardly ventured on the wish to be the lowliest maidservant of the Mother of the Redeemer. Mary's teacher and nurse in the Temple was called Noemi, she was a sister of Lazarus' mother and was fifty years old. She and the other Temple women belonged to the Essenes. Mary learnt from her how to knit and helped her when she washed the blood of the sacrifices from the vessels and instruments, or when she cut up and prepared certain parts of the flesh for the Temple women and priests; for this formed part of their food. Later on Mary took a still more active part in these duties. When Zacharias did his service in the Temple he used to visit her, and Simeon was also acquainted with her.

The Blessed Virgin's significance cannot have been quite unknown to the priests. Her whole being, the abundance of grace in her, and her wisdom were so remarkable from her childhood in the Temple onwards that they could not be entirely concealed in spite of her great humility. I saw aged holy priests filling great scrolls with writing about her, and I have been shown these scrolls, lying with other writings, though I cannot remember at what period.

#### IV. THE EARLY LIFE OF ST. JOSEPH

[We here break off Catherine Emmerich's somewhat disconnected description of the Blessed Virgin's sojourn in the Temple to give the following accounts of St. Joseph's youth.]

Among many things which I saw today of the youth of St. Joseph I remember what follows. Joseph, whose father was called Jacob, was the third of six brothers. His parents lived in a large house outside Bethlehem, once the ancestral home of David, whose father Isai or Jesse had owned it. By Joseph's time there was, however, little remaining of the old building except the main walls. The situation was very airy, and water was abundant there. I know my way about there better than in our own little village of Flamske.

In front of the house was an outer court (as in the houses of ancient Rome), surrounded by a covered colonnade like a cloister. I saw sculptures in this colonnade like the heads of old men. On one side of the court was a fountain under a stone canopy. The water issued from animals' heads in stone. There were no windows to be seen in the lower storey of the dwelling-house itself, but high up there were circular openings. I saw one door. A broad gallery ran round the upper part of the house, with little towers at each of its four corners, like short, thick pillars, ending in big balls or domes on which little flags were fastened.

Stairs led up through these little towers from below, and from openings in the domes one had a view all round without being seen oneself. There were little towers like this on David's palace in Jerusalem, and it was from the dome of one of these that he saw Bethsabee at her bath. This gallery ran round a low upper storey with a flat roof on which was another building with another little tower. Joseph and his brothers lived in the upper storey, and their teacher, an aged Jew, lived in the topmost building. They all slept in a circle in one room, in the middle of the storey which was surrounded by the gallery. Their sleeping-places were carpets, rolled up against the wall in the daytime and separated by removable screens. I have often seen them playing up there in their rooms. They had toys in the shape of animals, like little pugs. [Catherine Emmerich uses this word indiscriminately for any creatures she does not know.] I also saw how their teacher gave them all kinds of strange lessons which I did not rightly understand. I saw him making all kinds of figures on the ground with sticks, and the boys had to walk on these figures; then I saw the boys walking on other figures and pushing the sticks apart, placing them differently and rearranging them and making various measurements at the same time. I saw their parents, too; they did not trouble much about their children and had little to do with them. They seemed to me to be neither good nor bad.

Joseph, whom I saw in this vision at about the age of eight, was very different in character from his brothers. He was very gifted and was a very good scholar, but he was simple, quiet, devout, and not at all ambitious. His brothers knocked him about and played all kinds of tricks on him. The boys had separate little gardens, at the entrance of which stood figures like babies in swaddling-clothes on pillars, but sheltered a little (in niches perhaps?). I have often seen figures like these, and there were some on the curtain which hung by the praying-place of St. Anne and also of the Blessed Virgin, but on Mary's curtain this figure held something in its arms that reminded me of a chalice with something wriggling out of it. Here in St. Joseph's house the figures were like babies in swaddling-clothes with round faces surrounded by rays. In still earlier times I noticed many figures of this kind, particularly in Jerusalem. They appeared, too, in the Temple decorations. I saw them in Egypt as well, where they sometimes had little caps on their heads. Amongst the figures which Rachel carried off from her father Laban there were some like these, but smaller, as well as other different ones. I have also seen these figures lying in little boxes or baskets in Jewish houses. I think perhaps that they represented the child Moses floating on the Nile, and that the swaddling-bands perhaps symbolized the tightly binding character of the Law. I often used to think that this little figure was for them what the Christ Child is for us.

I saw herbs, bushes, and little trees in the boys' gardens; and I saw how Joseph's brothers often went in secret to his garden and trampled or uprooted something in it. They made him very unhappy. I often saw him under the colonnade in the outer court kneeling down with his face to the wall, praying with outstretched arms, and I saw his brothers creep up and kick him. I once saw him kneeling like this, when one of them hit him on the back, and as he did not seem to notice it, he repeated his attack with such violence that poor Joseph fell forward on to the hard stone floor. From this I realized that he was not in a waking

condition, but had been in an ecstasy of prayer. When he came to himself, he did not lose his temper or take revenge, but found a hidden corner where he continued his prayer.

I saw some small dwellings built against the outer walls of the house, inhabited by a few middle-aged women. They went about veiled, as I often saw women doing who lived near schools in the country. They seemed to form part of the household, for I often saw them going in and out of the house on various errands. They carried water in, washed and swept, closed the gratings in front of the windows, rolled up the beds against the walls and placed wickerwork screens in front of them. I saw Joseph's brothers sometimes talking to these maidservants or helping them with their work and joking with them, too. Joseph did not do this; he was serious and solitary. It seemed to me that there were also daughters in the house. The lower living-rooms were arranged rather like those in Anna's house, but everything was more spacious. Joseph's parents were not very well satisfied with him; they wanted him to use his talents in some worldly profession, but he had no inclination for that. He was too simple and unpretentious for them; his only inclination was towards prayer and quiet work at some handicraft. When he was about twelve years old, I often saw him go to the other side of Bethlehem to escape from his brothers' perpetual teasing. Not far from the future cave of the Nativity there was a little community of pious women belonging to the Essenes, who dwelt in a series of rock-chambers in a hollowed-out part of the hill on which Bethlehem stood. They tended little gardens near their dwellings and taught the children of other Essenes. Little Joseph went to visit these women, and I often used to see him escaping from his brothers' teasing to go to them and join in their prayers, which they read by the light of a lamp in their cave from a scroll hanging on the wall. I also saw him visiting the caves of which one was afterwards the birthplace of Our Lord. He prayed there quite alone, or made all kinds of little things out of wood; for there was an old carpenter who had his workshop near these Essenes with whom Joseph spent much of his time. He helped him with his work and so little by little learnt his craft. The art of measuring which he had practised at home under his master's tuition was here of great use to him. His brothers' hostility at last made it impossible for him to remain any longer in his parents' house; I saw that a friend from Bethlehem (which was separated from his home by a little stream) gave him clothes in which to disguise himself. In these he left the house at night in order to earn his living in another place by his carpentry. He might have been eighteen to twenty years old at that time. To begin with, I saw him working with a carpenter at Libonah.<sup>77</sup> This was the place where he first really learnt his craft.

His master had his dwelling against some ancient walls which ran from the town along a narrow ledge of hill, like a road leading up to some ruined castle. Several poor people lived in the walls. I saw Joseph making long stakes in a place between high walls with openings above to let in light. These stakes were frames for wicker-screens. His master was a poor man, and made mostly only such common things as these rough wicker-screens. Joseph was very devout, good, and simple-minded, everybody loved him. I saw him helping his master

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<sup>77</sup> It appears from various communications of Catherine Emmerich's about the ministry of Our Lord that the town in which St. Joseph first worked was not the Libnah, which is in the tribe of Judah, some hours to the west of Bethlehem, but Libonah on the south side of Mount Garizim. According to the Book of Judges 21.19, it is to be found north of Silo. (CB)

very humbly in all sorts of ways—picking up shavings, collecting wood, and carrying it back on his shoulders. In later days he passed by here with the Blessed Virgin on one of their journeys, and I think he visited his former workshop with her.

His parents thought at first that he had been carried off by robbers; but I saw that he was discovered at last by his brothers and severely taken to task, for they were ashamed of his low way of life. He was, however, too humble to give it up; though he left that place and worked afterwards at Thanath,<sup>78</sup> near Megiddo, by a small river called Kishon which runs into the sea. (This place is not far from Apheke,<sup>79</sup> the home of the Apostle Thomas.) Joseph lived here with a well-to-do master, and the carpenter's work which they did was of a higher quality. Later still I saw him working in Tiberias for a master-carpenter. He might have been as much as thirty-three years old at that time. His parents in Bethlehem had been dead for some time. Two of his brothers still lived in Bethlehem, the others were dispersed. The parental home had passed into other hands, and the whole family had come down in the world very rapidly. Joseph was very devout and prayed fervently for the coming of the Messias. He was just engaged in building beside his dwelling a more retired room for prayer, when an angel appeared to him and told him not to do this, for, as once the patriarch Joseph at about this time had, by God's will, been made overseer of all the corn of Egypt, so he, the second Joseph, should now be entrusted with the care of the granary of salvation.<sup>80</sup> Joseph in his humility did not understand this, and gave himself up to continual prayer, till he received the call to betake himself to Jerusalem to become by divine decree the spouse of the Blessed Virgin. I never saw that he was married before; he was very retiring and avoided women.

[Later in Catherine Emmerich's visions we shall come across various other allusions to the family history of Joseph and in particular of his brothers. These allusions are, however, too scattered and interwoven in the great mass of her communications for the writer to collect them all together in this place with certainty and clarity. Since, however, an opportunity occurs here unsought, we will mention an elder brother of Joseph's who lived in Galilee.

[When we were looking up in our diaries the passage where Catherine Emmerich explained on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1821, the relationship between Joseph and Joachim (see p. 21), we found a detailed account given by her on the same day (being the feast of St.

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<sup>78</sup> Thanath or Thaanath (see Josue 16.6) lies, according to Eusebius, ten miles to the east of Nablus in the direction of the Jordan, whereas the place here mentioned by Catherine Emmerich must, by her account, lie north-west of Nablus. She must therefore no doubt have meant Thaanach instead of Thaanath, and have been misunderstood by the writer, who at the time had no knowledge whatever of the geography of Palestine and no means of supplying it. Such misunderstanding was all the more likely to occur because Catherine Emmerich when ill or in a state of ecstasy often pronounced the names somewhat unclearly in her low-German Munster dialect and sometimes mixed them up. A further convincing proof that she here meant Thaanach may be found in the daily account which she gave in 1823 of the third year of Our Lord's ministry. She saw in her visions that Jesus taught on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of the month Sivan in Thaanach, a town of the Levites near Megiddo, and that He visited there the former carpenter's shop of his foster-father Joseph. (CB)

<sup>79</sup> Aphek is about twenty-five miles north of Thaanach. (SB)

<sup>80</sup> The same idea is found in St. Bernard's *Homilia 2 super Missus est*, recited in the Breviary on St. Joseph's feast. (SB)

Bartholomew) of a story from the life of that apostle. This vision had presented itself very vividly to her in connection with a relic of the saint. In the course of it she stated that the father of Bartholomew of Gessur had for some long time frequented the healing waters near Bethulia and had afterwards settled permanently in the region, chiefly on account of his friendship with an elder brother of Joseph. She added:]

He went to a valley near Dabbeseth which was the home of Zadok, a devout man and an elder brother of Joseph. The devout father of Bartholomew had become much attached to him during his sojourn at Bethulia. Zadok had two sons and two daughters, and these children were on friendly terms with the Holy Family. When the twelve-year-old Jesus remained behind in the Temple and his parents missed him, this was one of the families in which they sought for Him. I saw the sons amongst Jesus' playmates when He was a boy.

## V. A SON IS PROMISED TO ZACHARIAS

I saw Zacharias talking with Elisabeth of his grief; it was near the time for his turn of service in the Temple, and it was always with sorrow that he went, for he was looked on with contempt there because of his unfruitfulness. Zacharias had to perform his service in the Temple twice a year.<sup>81</sup>

They lived not in Hebron itself, but in Jutta, about an hour's distance from it. There were many remains of walls between Jutta<sup>82</sup> and Hebron, as if these two places had once been connected with each other. On the other sides of Hebron were also many scattered buildings and groups of houses, the remains, it seemed, of the former city of Hebron, which must once have been as large as Jerusalem. Priests of lower rank lived at Hebron, while those of higher rank lived at Jutta. Zacharias was a kind of superior of the latter. He and Elisabeth were held in great honour there for their virtue and their unbroken descent from Aaron.

I then saw how Zacharias and several other priests of the neighbourhood met together on a small farm which he owned near Jutta. There was a garden with various arbours and a little house. Zacharias prayed here with his companions and taught them. It was a kind of preparation for the forthcoming service at the Temple. I also heard him speak of his heaviness of heart, and how he had a presentiment that something was about to befall him.

I then saw him go with these people to Jerusalem; he had to wait four days more before it was his turn to sacrifice. In the meantime he prayed in the Temple. When it was his turn to kindle the incense-offering, I saw him go into the Holy Place, where the golden altar of incense stood in front of the entrance to the Holy of Holies. The ceiling above it had been

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<sup>81</sup> During this time period, there were 24 courses (or groups) of priests who took turns at service in the Temple of Jerusalem. For the regular rotation, each group was on duty for one week, from Sabbath to Sabbath, twice a year (*Ant.* 7.365). Thus, each Sabbath saw two courses of priests on duty at the same time. This was necessary because of the larger number of worshipers who would come to the Temple on the Sabbath. For much the same reason, all 24 priestly courses were on duty at the Temple of Jerusalem during the three great feasts of the Jewish faith: feast of Passover, feast of Weeks, feast of Tabernacles (Mishna, *m Sukka* 5.7). Thus, each priestly course actually served five times a year at the Temple, two in the regular rotation, and three for the three great feasts. Every able-bodied Jewish man was required to worship God at the Temple for those three feasts (Deut 16:16). (RC)

<sup>82</sup> Jutta, the modern *Yattah*, lies about five miles south of Hebron. See also n. 2, p. 146. (SB)

opened so that one could see the sky. One could not see the sacrificing priest from outside, but one could see the smoke rising up. When Zacharias had entered, another priest said something to him and then went away.<sup>83</sup>

Now that Zacharias was alone, I saw him go through a curtain into a place where it was dark. He brought something out from there which he placed on the altar, and kindled fire to make smoke. Then I saw a radiance descending upon him from the right side of the altar, and within it a shining figure approaching him, and I saw how he sank down towards the right-hand side of the altar in alarm and at the same time rigid in ecstasy. The angel lifted him up and spoke with him for a long time, and Joachim answered him. I saw the heavens opening above Zacharias, and two angels descending and ascending as if on a ladder. His girdle was loosened and his robe was open, and it appeared to me as if one of the angels took something from him and as if the other put into his side as it were a little shining substance. That was what happened also when Joachim received the blessing of the angel for the conception of the Blessed Virgin. It was usual for the priests to leave the Holy Place as soon as they had kindled the incense-offering, so when Zacharias was so long in coming out, those praying outside became anxious. He had become dumb, and I saw him writing on a tablet before coming out. When he emerged from the Temple and came into the outer court, a crowd gathered round him and asked why he had stayed so long. But he could not speak; he waved his hands and pointed to his mouth and to the tablet, which he at once sent to Elisabeth at Jutta, to tell her of the merciful promise of God and of his own dumbness. After a short time he returned there himself; Elisabeth had also been given a revelation, but I can no longer remember what it was.

[This rather incomplete account is all that Catherine Emmerich, who was ill at the time, related on this subject; see St. Luke 1.5-25.]

## VI. MARRIAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN TO JOSEPH

The Blessed Virgin lived with other virgins in the Temple under the care of pious matrons. The maidens employed themselves with embroidery and other forms of decoration of carpets and vestments, and also with the cleaning of these vestments and of the vessels used in the Temple. They had little cells, from which they could see into the Temple, and here they prayed and meditated. When these maidens were grown up, they were given in marriage. Their parents in dedicating them to the Temple had offered them entirely to God, and the devout and more spiritual Israelites had for a long time had a secret presentiment that the marriage of one of these virgins would one day contribute to the coming of the promised Messias.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Probably he had said to him, as was the custom, 'Kindle the incense-offering'. See Mishnah, tract. *Tamid*, 6, § 3, edit. Surenh, p. 305. (CB)

The tractate *Tamid*, IV-VII, describes the whole course of the daily sacrifice. This passage is in tome V, p. 305, in the edition of Surenhusius. (SB)

<sup>84</sup> Although in general late Jewish writers contest the statement that women or virgins were engaged in the service of the Temple, we find confirmation that this was so partly on the authority of the Church (which