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13. Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John: Libermann's prayers

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Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John: Liebermann's prayers

While he was writing his Commentary on St. John's Gospel, Francis Liebermann composed some prayers which were inspired by the passages he was reflecting upon. They were written in the pigeon-loft where he lived on the roof of the Patriarca family's home in Rome, throughout the summer and autumn of 1840, as he waited to see if he could be ordained a priest.

01, 11: He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him.

Lord Jesus, come to me, your slave who belongs to you. Let me not be attached to this world as all I want is to be united to You. Should I ever turn from you, take me forcibly and lead me to obey your will. Come Lord Jesus!

01, 14: The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

O immeasurable love of God, my Jesus. What must I do to love you as you love me? I am aware of my abject nothingness before your overwhelming love. O my beloved, your greatness overshadows all that I could do for you. Do with me as you please and come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within your wretched servant.

03, 03: Unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

O Jesus, what love you have for wretches such as we are. I am ignorant, full of faults and imperfections like Nicodemus. Come to me with your boundless kindness and instruct me in your ways.

03, 08: The wind blows wherever it pleases; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit

Happy the one who listens carefully to this divine voice and obeys it. Holy and adorable Spirit of Jesus, let me listen to your sweet voice and renew me with your breath. Divine Spirit, I want to be before you like a light feather so that, with no hindrance from me, you can blow me wherever you wish.

03, 15: The Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

Merciful, sweet and good Jesus, I have the joy of being born after your crucifixion. In your kindness, you have drawn me to you and have had unimaginable mercy on such a wretched soul as I am. You have given me the precious gift of faith; increase it in me, as it is so weak through my own fault. Through a faith full of love, let me live for your love alone, sacrificing myself to you who gave yourself through love for me.

04, 08: A Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'.

Jesus, my adorable Lord, I too am miserable and wretched in the eyes of all creation. I too come to draw water, but mine is from your heavenly fountain. Reveal yourself to me and teach me all that I must do that is pleasing in your eyes and in those of your heavenly Father.

04, 15: Sir, give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty.

Lord Jesus, give me living water to refresh my soul, for without it, I give way to human passion and seek worldly solace. My human desires are strong and are always crying out for satisfaction. My thirst is unceasing and without your divine water of grace I will turn to worldly sources. My Saviour, give me your living water to satisfy my needs and save me from turning to this vain world.

04, 18: "I have no husband". Jesus answered her, "you are right to say, 'I have no husband'; for although you

have had five, the one you have now is not your husband.'

(The woman thought Jesus was as rigid as the Pharisees.)

Lord Jesus, I have many proofs of the admirable way you show your kindness, your love, your gentleness and your tender compassion for sinners, even great ones like myself. Open my heart and look at my crimes and dreadful wickedness. Prostrate before you, I acknowledge my faults. I beg you, forgive me my many sins and show me your loving mercy.

05, 16: It was because he did things like this (the cure of a paralytic) on the Sabbath that the Jews began to persecute Jesus.

O Lord Jesus, how awful are these lapses into self-love. We must be on our guard not to judge those whose way of striving for perfection is different to our own, especially when it leads us to bitterness and unrest and we let our zeal run away with us. O Lord, keep me from this hypocrisy and let me walk in your humility.

06. 69: We know that you are the Holy One of God.

To whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life. Our only desire is to be with you, our sovereign Master. We wish to think only of you and our joy and happiness are to be found in your words, which are so full of grace. These words are the words of life, of eternal life. They give us the life you came to bring and we want no other. Why should we want to leave you? On the contrary, we want to attach ourselves to you more and more, for you alone have the words of eternal life. To whom else could we go?

07, 37: If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

Let he who thirsts come and drink. Lord Jesus, I hear your call. Here I am, Lord: I am thirsty, thirsty almost to the point of collapse. I am empty, my soul is dry. Take me and let me drink from your fountain of salvation. Lower me into your heavenly waters, submerge me, drown me. Yes, Lord, drown me in these waters so desirable and desired; drown my concupiscence, my pride, all my faults and vices

so that all that comes from me may die, all belonging to my old self may vanish, leaving you alone. Give me this grace, dear Jesus, so that I may live no more but that you will live in me, as you live with the Father. Amen.

11, 11: Our friend Lazarus is resting, but I am going to wake him.

Dear Jesus, I love you, but so little and so poorly. I too am your friend, like Lazarus: like him, I am also dead. My soul is cluttered up and incapable of doing anything of value. Please come to me as well, with your tender help. Wake me from my sleep, which is so bad and dangerous. I am waiting for you, Lord, I am yearning for your presence.