

capture, and in his youthful curiosity rushing out to see without taking the trouble of dressing. One may justly ask : Why did he sleep there ? And surely the answer is : Since the ordinary living rooms of his home were crowded with visitors, he was sent out to sleep in the farm buildings of Gethsemani, because the garden was his father's property.

This natural explanation is strengthened by considering first the strict duty of Eastern hospitality towards our Lord. The host of the evening was bound in honour to provide shelter for his guests. As the town house was full of women he offered our Lord shelter in Gethsemani. The sheds about the oil press were not magnificent ; but our Lord's companions were accustomed to such sleeping accommodation ; they had probably spent the night there often before and they found them more comfortable than the tents of the numerous pilgrims who were encamped around Jerusalem (as do the Mohammedans to this day, before the Nebi Musa' celebrations).

The offer was accepted by our Lord who carefully observed the Eastern custom of not changing the host, which He had enjoined on his disciples (Lk. x, 7).

Judas knew these facts, and acted upon them. Our Lord, not wanting Judas to interrupt the Pasch, nor his parting instructions, nor his agony, kept the place of the Last Supper a secret from the traitor, by sending the two Apostles with cryptic instructions. But as soon as Judas had arrived at the Cenacle he knew for certain where he could find the Master that night.

Putting together the different details, i.e., the behaviour of the young Mark, the duty of the host, the politeness of our Lord, and the conviction of Judas, we find four good reasons for upholding the view that Gethsemani was the property of Mark's family. This fact coupled with the presence of guests in his father's house probably explains his being in the garden at that late hour.

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What was the difference between the drink offered to our Lord before His crucifixion (Mt. xxvii, 34 ; Mk. xv, 23) and that offered to Him just before His death (Mt. xxvii, 48 ; Mk. xv, 36 ; Jn. xix, 29) ?

There appears at first sight to be a discrepancy between Mt. and Mk. about the first drink offered. Mt. says it was wine mixed with gall, but Mk. describes it as wine mixed with myrrh. There can hardly be a doubt that they are referring to the same drink ; how are they to be reconciled ? Since myrrh is bitter, many older commentators used to say that the word "gall" was employed by Mt. to describe anything bitter and so could indicate myrrh. Others held that both myrrh and gall were put in the wine. At all events these older authors held that the drink was bitter, that it was given to our Lord to increase His sufferings and that He, knowing it was given out of mockery, refused to drink. The Gospels

do not say who gave Him to drink, but these authors assert that it was the soldiers.

Moderns take a different view. The "gall" may possibly be myrrh, as the latter was bitter. But it was not its bitterness which counted. It gave the wine a narcotic quality which it itself possessed, cf. Apuleius, *Metam.* viii, 185. The Jews were generally humane in carrying out the death penalty. Perhaps in accordance with the recommendation in Proverbs xxxi, 6, the custom arose of giving condemned criminals a narcotic to deaden pain. Now it is very unlikely that the Jews who compassed our Lord's death would have been moved by any such humane feelings and we can be sure that it was not they who gave Him to drink. The Talmud says that it was a practice of pious women to fulfil this charitable office. Fouard thinks that the drink also contained poppy, which would of course increase the deadening effect. Jesus refused to drink because He did not wish for any alleviation of His sufferings. When Jesus cried out "I thirst," they offered Him not wine, as on the first occasion, but the poor soured wine or vinegar and water, which was the ordinary drink of the Roman soldier. Evidently there was a flask of it nearby. One of the soldiers, hearing the cry, ran and filled a sponge with it, put this on a reed of hyssop (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet long) and reached up to Christ's lips. This at least is John's account, though Mt. and Mk. seem to put it immediately after the cry of dereliction. This drink was of course in no sense a narcotic. On the contrary, besides quenching thirst it would revive the senses. Why did the soldier give it to our Lord? It may be that he was moved with compassion and a desire to alleviate His thirst, even though it might also mean His feeling more pain (though the soldier may not have thought of that). Why the sponge? Because he could not get the drink to our Lord's lips without it. But how did a sponge come to be there at all? It might have been used as a rough stopper for the soldier's flask, or more probably it had been brought specially to administer drink to the condemned. In that case the purpose of the drink was not to alleviate thirst but to increase suffering by keeping the condemned man conscious as long as possible. It would have been absolutely unprecedented for the Romans to bring a drink to refresh the condemned in any way.

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