

The Gospel of John in the Light of the *Rediscovered Message*

Krist¹ had to chase the merchants out of the temple before he could be heard. Won't we also make ourselves empty to hear the voice of the Lord?²

The *Rediscovered Message* by Louis Cattiaux (1904-1953)³, a hermetic work of rare depth, is interspersed with allusions to the Gospels, of which it often offers relevant commentaries. It is a remarkable and surprising work. It takes the form of forty chapters, also called books, each of which is made up of about a hundred very dense verses. They all speak of one unique thing, but expressed in a thousand ways, "of man's fall into this lowly world, of the physical and moral consequences of this fall and of the means of his bodily and spiritual regeneration, by the mysterious way that leads to resurrection".⁴ It is certainly this that makes the *Rediscovered Message* such a good exegesis of the Gospel of John.

Louis Cattiaux, a painter by profession, devoted his short life to the Quest of the Unique, mainly through the meditation of the teachings of the masters of hermeticism and alchemy. Far from studying these two sciences with the vulgar aim of achieving chrysopoeia, he assiduously sought their spiritual foundation. This is what emerges from his correspondence: "Only Hermetists can really speak of the contact with God,"⁵ he wrote to a friend. He did not hesitate to compare the masters of alchemy to Christ himself, as in this letter: "[...] One must pray and attract the masters who have possessed this holy science [alchemy] in depth, so that one might be inspired by them in its research so long and difficult that hardly one or two men out of thousands of millions of individuals succeed without the instruction of a living, I mean incarnate, master, for the masters are the living ones par excellence, like Christ."⁶

¹ In the first twelve books of the *Rediscovered Message*, Louis Cattiaux spells the name of Christ in this way. When René Guénon asked him why, he answered (*Paris – Le Caire. Correspondance entre Louis Cattiaux et René Guénon*, Wavre, Le Miroir d'Isis, 2011, lettre du 7 avril 1948, p. 23): "I write Krist out of particular taste, but perhaps also because the root KRI means 'act' and KRIST seems to me to be the contraction of KRISTOBAL which would then mean 'the act fixed in God'. Perhaps also because the K of the alphabet which is the 11th letter corresponding to the C which is the 3rd plus the H which is the 8th, the addition of which also gives 11, the unit duplicated and added to itself. But I don't want to give you learned reasons because this kind of game is very vain and very much on the surface of things and beings."

² Louis CATTIAUX, *Le Message Retrouvé*, IX, 28.

³ This work was first published in full by Denoël in Paris in 1956. Since then, it has been republished many times in several languages. In this article, I quote the latest one: Louis CATTIAUX, *Le Message Retrouvé*, Paris, Dervy, 2015. I translate the verses into English in this article.

⁴ Charles et Emmanuel D'HOOGHVORST, « Présentation », dans Louis CATTIAUX, *op. cit.*, pp. XI-XIII ; see also *ibid.*, XXIX, 33 and 45.

⁵ Letter of Louis Cattiaux quoted from the "Florilège cattésien" in Raimon AROLA, *Croire l'Incroyable, ou l'ancien et le nouveau dans l'histoire des religions*, extract n°58, pp. 287-288.

⁶ *Ibid.*, extrait n°24, p. 259.

Alchemy and hermeticism require then the study of the various religions, postulating that they all have as their object and foundation one same mystery: the physical experience of God here below.

This helps us to understand why Louis Cattiaux inserted pairs of quotations from different traditions at the beginning and at the end of each of the forty books of his work: the *Old and New Testaments*, the *Koran*, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the Egyptian, Buddhist, Vedic or Zoroastrian traditions, the writings of Lao T'seu, Omar ibn al Farid, Heraclitus, Ambrose of Milan, Louis-Marie Grignion de Monfort, etc. By these quotations the author shows us that he has not come to announce anything new. As his disciples Charles and Emmanuel d'Hooghvorst say in the preface of the work: "Ignorant people in search of a 'new revelation' adding or removing something to the old one will be disappointed. Here is only a testimony in favour of the old one [...]."⁷

The work I propose here could thus actually be done for each of these traditions. If I have chosen the Gospel of John it is because, besides my particular affinity for it, I have often been struck by the closeness of its language to that of Louis Cattiaux. We find the explanation in his correspondence: "I will soon send you the new verses of the Rediscovered Message. In the meantime, reread the Koran, the Bible, the Gospels, especially that of John." Did the two authors come particularly close to the centre of knowledge, and therefore particularly close to each other?

The quotation proposed at the beginning of this article highlights two aspects that Cattiaux constantly underlines when he paraphrases the Gospels: the fact that they continually speak to us of a mystery being realised in man ("Won't we also make ourselves empty [...]?"⁸), and the contemporary relevance of their message ("Won't we also make ourselves empty [...]?"⁹).

In this essay, it is therefore from these two aspects that we will start in order to try to shed light on a few passages of the Gospel of John in the light of the verses of the *Rediscovered Message*. This obviously does not exclude the possibility of other interpretations, since all Sacred Scripture necessarily contains many of them⁸.

1. The Mystery Is Fulfilled in Man

Krist had to chase the merchants out of the temple before he could be heard. Won't we also make ourselves empty to hear the voice of the Lord?⁹

Actually, the Gospel of John also specifies that this Temple is a man, but a very special man: Jesus. Indeed, we read, following the episode of the merchants of the Temple:

⁷ Charles and Emmanuel d'HOOGHVORST, *op. cit.*, p. XII.

⁸ Cattiaux wrote (Louis CATTIAUX, *op. cit.*, XV, 4): "When we comment on a Sacred Scripture, a rite or a symbol, let us add for the listeners and for ourselves: 'This is one of the many interpretations of the One truth. God is the only master of clothing and nakedness.'"

⁹ *Ibid.*, IX, 28.

So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.¹⁰

Cattiaux thus emphasises in his verse an aspect already present in the Gospels, but he goes further. The Temple is no longer only Jesus, but "us". Every man can therefore imitate Jesus and "chase the merchants" out of his own temple, out of his own body.

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In other passages of the Gospels, the fact that the mystery takes place in a man is less explicit, but Cattiaux comments on them in a similar way. Let us take the example of the second testimony of John the Baptist, when he says to the Jews about Christ: "He must increase and I must diminish."¹¹ We find in the *Rediscovered Message* an echo of this passage: "If our interior life does not grow in the measure in which our exterior life decreases, we will have as our inheritance only the filth of death on the day of judgement."¹² According to this comment, Christ is in John the Baptist; John the Baptist would symbolise the external life and Christ the internal life.

The whole passage goes like this:

'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.¹³

According to Cattiaux's interpretation, therefore, Christ and the bride could be in John the Baptist, who is only the friend of the bridegroom, "who listens to him" and "rejoices at the bridegroom's voice". This brings us back to the first verse quoted, which said that the emptiness within us would allow us to "hear the voice of the Lord". The Lord must be in us. We will see that this distinction in three parts, the outer man, the bride and Christ, recurs frequently in the *Rediscovered Message*.

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The prologue of the *Gospel of John* is probably the most mysterious passage in the work. The many verses of Cattiaux speaking of light and darkness help us to consider this prologue from the same perspective of a mystery taking place in man. It would certainly be unthinkable to offer here an exhaustive commentary on this abstruse passage, but we hope at least that these two texts will shed some light on each other.

We might start from a verse where Louis Cattiaux explicitly paraphrases John's prologue:

¹⁰ *John* II, 18-20 (New King James Version).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, III, 28-30.

¹² Louis CATTIAUX, *op. cit.*, XXI, 29.

¹³ *John* III, 28-30.

“Lord of mad love, you give yourself without measure, and we must be silent and wait for your great judgement like helpless and poor people, carrying your secret that contents us beyond all expression. And we already shine with your light, but the darkness does not see it.”¹⁴

According to this passage, he to whom the Lord gave himself without measure shines with his light. Now, if the man to whom God has given himself and who “bears its secret” can “shine” with this light, it is necessarily because this light is now found in him.

One will then ask about the darkness: is it outside of this man? Or is it also within him?

The following passage seems to confirm the second hypothesis:

“The light of God will first fecundate our inner darkness; then our darkness will manifest the light of God.”¹⁵

This verse also helps us to understand how, according to St. John’s text, “those who received him” were able to “become children of God”¹⁶: their inner darkness was fecundated by the light of God. Indeed, how could one become a child of someone other than by fecundation?

The following verse further clarifies this interpretation:

“The light of our hearts cries out to God through the darkness of the body which imprisons it, and the Father delivers the stray one, and the Son appears in the splendour of the union.”¹⁷

This “Stray One” seems to be the one who is going to be fecundated. By this fecundation, she will thus become the Mother, whose union with the Father will give birth to the Son.

Other commentators have, moreover, interpreted the light referred to in the prologue of St. John as the Virgin Mary. This is the case, for example, of Albert the Great, who writes in the *Marian Bible*:

*“In the same way, she [the Virgin Mary] is our light **which**, after God, **enlightens every man who comes into this world** (John I, 9).”¹⁸*

And the Son is in her:

*“In the same way, she [the Virgin Mary] is the cloister of the humanity of the Son of God: it is in her that, as it is said, **the Word became flesh and dwelt in us** (John I, 14).”¹⁹*

Saint Albert the Great and Louis Cattiaux agree, therefore, to tell us that the man in whom this mystery is realised carries within him the Virgin Mary, who in turn carries the Son within her.

¹⁴ Louis CATTIAUX, *op. cit.*, XXXVII, 10’. We underline.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, XXXVII, 54’.

¹⁶ John I, 12: “But as for all those who received him, he gave them the power to become children of God.”

¹⁷ Louis CATTIAUX, *op. cit.*, XI, 52.

¹⁸ Albert LE GRAND, *La Bible Mariale*, Grez-Doiceau, Beya, 2019, p. 197.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

It would be like saying, to take up the image quoted above, that John the Baptist carries within him the bride and the bridegroom.

This reality is described in several verses of the *Rediscovered Message*:

*“The Father is hidden in the Son as the Son is hidden in the Mother and as the Mother is hidden in the darkness of our hearts.”*²⁰

*“The sage takes in the mother and shelters her until the child appears in daylight.”*²¹

We could multiply the examples, and show for each passage of the Gospel what has just been highlighted about the episode of the merchants of the Temple, the testimony of John the Baptist and the prologue: namely, that they speak to us of a carnal man who welcomed in him the Mother and the Son. We prefer to deepen this study by presenting the second major aspect of Cattiaux’s exegesis: his insistence on the contemporary relevance of the mystery spoken of in the Gospels.

2. An Actual Mystery

The verses of Louis Cattiaux constantly insist on the contemporary relevance of the mystery of man’s knowledge of God here below, and of the regeneration it allows. This mystery is rare, of course²², but always possible at all times, for every man. If our author makes numerous allusions to the historical Jesus (we have seen examples of this), he refuses to label him in the past as one would label insects in a dusty collection²³.

He writes, for example:

*“Christ is alive and sometimes returns on earth, but few see him, few receive him, and few taste him in truth. Incredible revelation, which makes us tremble with joy and hope.”*²⁴

And he goes on and warns:

*“Free believers can receive it and live, others cry out in scandal and reject the divine gift, because they have settled in death and have relegated the actuality of the Lord to the limbo of oblivion.”*²⁵

²⁰ Louis CATTIAUX, *op. cit.*, XVIII, 59’.

²¹ *Ibid.*, II, 51.

²² See for instance *ibid.*, XXXV, 70’: “We must preach the truth of God, but without superiority and arrogance, for only a few chosen ones know it spiritually and only a very few sons of God possess it corporally.”

²³ See *ibid.*, XIV, 44: “The mediocre bury God in the depths of their death; that is why they hate so much the freedom of life which manifests the spirit of the Lord, and why they label the letter of all the Holy Scriptures, believing that they nail the prophets as they fix insects in their collections of stale dust.”

²⁴ *Ibid.*, XXV, 40.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, XXV, 40’.

The proclamation of the contemporary relevance of this mystery must therefore make us attentive, since by considering Christ only as a historical figure, we would risk rejecting him if he were to appear to us today.

*“The proud believers nailed the golden master in the name of the ancient law that he was explaining and realising in front of them.
The conceited believers would not even notice the saint and sage master if he explained and realised the gospel again in front of them.”²⁶*

But, shall we say, do we really risk rejecting it? Why were the Pharisees disturbed by Jesus? And why should we be today? Because the word of Christ is upsetting, Cattiaux replies. It upsets our lives. For Christ condemns this world, in which we would so much rather make ourselves comfortable than look for a way out.

“O priests, O monks, O lay people who still believe in God in your hearts, reject the leaven of the prideful science of Satan. Understand that it is vain to want to organise here below the rottenness of the sin of death. Remember the words of the master who said ‘the works of the world are evil’, and do not fear the hatred of the world more than he did in bearing this testimony in front of all.”²⁷

“The right-thinking people deal with the world while continuing to claim to be from the one who condemned the world and its works. Thus they have become the worst hypocrites on earth, and the declared enemies of the master whom they affect to love as the Judases they really are.”²⁸

So let us pay attention! Cattiaux generously reminds us that there is no reason why this word should offend us any less than it did 2000 years ago, and that, moreover, we are not exempt from behaving like Judas.

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The possibility of Christ’s return at any time raises another problem: how to recognise him? How can we distinguish the one who would have revived this mystery, who would carry Christ in him, from a charlatan, a false prophet? Let us beware of appearances, for it is by the work, the weight and the word that we will recognise him:

“Christ is certainly unique in God, but his forms are manifold in the creation. Thus we will recognise him, first by the work and the weight, then by the word; but never by the appearance.”²⁹

The word of the one who knows Christ in this world would thus have a particular weight, which invites us to go back to the importance of the incarnation. If Jesus and Cattiaux condemned this world as evil, as we have mentioned, they do not deny the necessity of it, since the Christic mystery is corporeal, and therefore requires a body.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, XXV, 41 and 41’.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XVII, 3’.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 12’.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XXXI, 18’.

“Didn’t the master say, ‘No one can come to the Father unless the Father draws him to himself’? Well, now we tell you: ‘No one can find the Lord of heaven unless he makes him incarnate in himself’.”³⁰

“Let our faith in the almightiness of God be blind and idiotic, so that it may become clear-sighted and spiritual through the incarnation of the divine word that delivers from the darkness of death.”³¹

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But isn't it contradictory to want the Word to incarnate in this world if it is evil? Cattiaux also proposes an answer here: the prior necessity of purity.

*It is the purity of the Mother’s substance that will enable us to incarnate the splendour of the Father’s essence and thus become true sons of God for eternity.*³²

Now, this purity seems to have to be obtained in the course of a true purification of man. In other words, our sins must be forgiven:

“It is up to each one to seek Christ, find him, and take him in to be saved, transformed, and perfected in him.

It is the heavenly gold that we must incarnate (after having got rid of the rottenness of sin), in order to be established in eternal life.”³³

“There is one thing you do not seem to suspect, and that is the actuality of the Christic mystery which is the alchemical mystery in essence and in substance. Christ came before, during and after. He can come into the world now. He can become incarnate again, but in a substance pure of all slag, that is to say, unpolluted by the sin of Eve and Adam, which does not prevent him from dying again and rising again more glorious and more powerful than ever. This is the true Christ, the living of eternity who dwells in the sun.”³⁴

Every man can therefore have hope of receiving true forgiveness. In Christianity, forgiveness corresponds to the Marian mystery, and the Orthodox Church affirms that Mary became immaculately conceived at the time of the visit of the angel Gabriel. The carnal man who will have known this visit and who, thanks to this forgiveness, will have converted his sinful Eve (EVA) into the Virgin Mary (AVE) will be able alone to incarnate the Son in his pure flesh. He will then be like John the Baptist who hears in him the voice of the bridegroom, who himself has the bride. He will have driven the merchants out of the Temple to hear the voice of the Lord. His darkness will have been fecundated and he will in turn be a “child of God”.

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³⁰ *Ibid.*, XXV, 57'. We underline.

³¹ *Ibid.*, XXXV, 46. We underline.

³² *Ibid.*, XX, 1'.

³³ *Ibid.*, XIX, 20 and 20'. We underline.

³⁴ “Florilège cattsésien”, *op. cit.*, extract n°10, p. 250. We underline.

Cattiaux's descriptions are very precise, while remaining perfectly faithful to the biblical text³⁵. That is why it seems to us – but let each one judge freely in his heart – that it is the realisation of this Marian and Christic experience that has allowed him to comment for us on the Gospels in such a present, lively and close way.

We therefore leave the reader to conclude by offering a few final excerpts for his meditation, chosen for their relevance to our purpose:

“The prophet said: ‘And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not received it’, but that darkness was like a twilight that ended in the death of the letter. Now we can say: ‘And the light will shine in the darkness and the darkness will receive it’, for this new darkness is like a dawn that is being prepared in the secret of the purified and fruitful hearts of God.”³⁶

“Are we not sent from God and charged to prepare the royal way for the most holy advent of the victorious and glorious Lord, who will submit the whole earth to his law of love and peace?

Do we not have in us the Spirit of Elijah and are we not forerunners of the risen Lord in his glory, who comes into the darkened world for judgement, so feared by some and so hoped for by others?

We call the believers of God, but we have no one to convince in the world. Let him who hesitates and doubts therefore ask God for a sign in his heart that will fully enlighten him!”³⁷

³⁵ God willing, we will have the opportunity to show it in a future article.

³⁶ Louis CATTIAUX, *op. cit.*, XXVII, 37.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, XXXVI, 95, 95' and 95".