

**Title: Conversations**

**Subtitle: The Grand Inquisitor**

**Second Subtitle: The Grand Inquisitor**

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"The wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence, the great spirit talked with Thee in the wilderness, and we are told in the books that so? And could anything truer be said than what he revealed to Thee? What Thou didst reject, and what in the books is called "the temptation"? It has been on earth a real stupendous miracle, it took place on that day, on that day of the temptations. The statement of those three questions was itself the miracle. Can you imagine simply for the sake of argument that those three questions of the books were utterly from the books, and that we had to restore them and to invent them? We gathered together all the wise men of the earth -- rulers, chief priests, philosophers, poets- and had set them the task to invent three questions, such as would express in three words, three human phrases, the whole future history of humanity- dost Thou believe that all the wisdom of the earth united could be of depth and force equal to the three questions which were actually put to Thee by that mighty spirit in the wilderness? From those questions alone, from the miracle, we can see that we have here to do not with the fleeting human intelligence, but with the eternal. For in those three questions the whole subsequent history of mankind is gathered together into one whole, and foretold, and in them are united all the unsolved problems of human nature. At the time it could not be so clear, since the future was only fifteen hundred years have passed, we see that everything in those three questions was divined and foretold, and has been so truly fulfilled, that nothing can be said to have happened to them.

"Judge Thyself who was right -- Thou or he who questioned Thee then? Remember its meaning, in other words, was this:

"Thou wouldst go into the world, and art going with empty hands, with so many stones which men in their simplicity and their natural unruliness cannot even understand and dread -- for nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and his freedom. But seest Thou these stones in this parched and barren wilderness? And mankind will run after Thee like a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient, trembling, lest Thou withdraw Thy hand and deny them Thy bread." But Thou, man of freedom and didst reject the offer, thinking, what is that freedom without bread? Thou didst reply that man lives not by bread alone. But dost Thou know of that earthly bread the spirit of the earth will rise up against Thee and overcome Thee, and all will follow him, crying, "Who can compare with the fire from heaven!" Dost Thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will say to their sages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only human duty, ask of them virtue!" that's what they'll write on the banner, which they will use with which they will destroy Thy temple. Where Thy temple stood will rise a new tower of Babel will be built again, and though, like the one of old, it will

mightest have prevented that new tower and have cut short the sufferings, years; for they will come back to us after a thousand years of agony with us again, hidden underground in the catacombs, for we shall be again pe will find us and cry to us, "Feed us, for those who have promised us fire it!" And then we shall finish building their tower, for he finishes the build alone shall feed them in Thy name, declaring falsely that it is in Thy name feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread so long as t they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, "Make us your slav understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all ar never, never will they be able to share between them! They will be convi never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless, and rebellious. Tho bread of Heaven, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread i sinful and ignoble race of man? And if for the sake of the bread of Heave Thee, what is to become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions have the strength to forego the earthly bread for the sake of the heavenl the tens of thousands of the great and strong, while the millions, numero who are weak but love Thee, must exist only for the sake of the great an the weak too. They are sinful and rebellious, but in the end they too will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the found so dreadful and to rule over them -- so awful it will seem to them t them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall dece not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for v